CHAPTER VI

FOLK MEDICINE AND TRADITIONS

Folk or indigenous medicine was popular among the natives throughout the Portuguese regime in Goa. A large size of rural population of Goa was not served at all by personnel and institutions working along the lines of modern medicine. When the natives fell sick, they were usually attended to, if at all, by practitioners of indigenous medicine. In some remote areas only home medicine was available.

Western medicine was not available to rural population and to the natives in towns during great part of the Portuguese rule due to various factors, such as acute shortage of doctors trained in western medicine, lack of transport, high cost of modern medicine which was not easily available and the reluctance of trained doctors to work in the villages. Besides there was the mentality of the people and their attachment to the traditional ways of cure. In the eyes of villagers a practitioner of indigenous medicine had qualities transcending those of the western trained doctors. He charged relatively low fees and did not demand payment in advance of
results. Native practitioners provided free treatment prepared by them very often from simple plants. These doctors never showed ignorance and very often accepted the native belief that diseases were caused by angry gods and or magic.

The villagers had their own old beliefs about the causes and treatment of the diseases. So they resorted to folk practitioners of various kinds such as *herbolarios* (herbalists), *curandeiros* (quacks), *feiticeiros*, (witch doctors), *ghadis* (shaman), *sangradores* (bleeders), priests, astrologers, magicians, charm sellers, thorn pullers, wound experts, snake bite curers, *dais* (midwives), surgeons, bone setters and others. They have existed generation after generation and proved useful to the people. There were *hakims* (Muslim practitioners) and *vaidays* (Hindu practitioners) who through centuries of practice became part of rural life. These practitioners received no formal training. Their therapeutic knowledge was handed over to them by their ancestors. Their remedies prepared from bark, herbs and other local products were of considerable value in the treatment of cholera, asthma and other diseases.

*Vaidyas* practised ayurvedic medicine based on the threefold elements - wind, fire and water. Good health depended on balancing these elements, while disease was a result of imbalance. The treatment consisted in determining
which kinds of humours were in excess or were insufficient. The causes of humoral imbalance were manifold: Errors in diet and excess of everyday life such as too much sexual intercourse, anger or exertion. The therapeutics of Unani medicine is less well recorded than for Ayurveda, but many ideas were the same. Another category of indigenous medicine widely practised in Goa was homeopathy.

**Indigenous Elite Medical Practitioners**

*Vaidyas*: among the several types of practitioners of the indigenous medicine were Vaidyas also known as panditos and the hakims. Vaidyas were practitioners of ayurvedic medicine. These vaidyas learnt by trial and error. When a vaidya died, he usually left behind a note-book of prescriptions and practices to his son or a close relative who secretly studied the matter and learnt to practise the same.

Side by side with ayurvedic medicine practised by panditos we had in Goa some practitioners of Unani medicine. In Goa the system was introduced by the Arabs. The practitioners were known as hakims.

*Vaidyas* played an important role, in the early Goan society, at a time when there was a dearth of efficient trained doctors in western medicine. They were in great
demand both among the natives and the Portuguese. These vaidyas were well versed in tropical diseases and had good knowledge of many basic subjects, including medicine and therapeutics.

Garcia d'Orta, the well-known Portuguese naturalist, who came to Goa in 1534 was surprised to find that vaidyas were well versed in medicinal plants and several peculiar diseases.

Many of the European travellers who visited the city of Goa in the first two centuries of the Portuguese regime were unanimous in praising the native physicians. The Dutchman Linschoten who spent five years in Goa (1583-1589) found them much respected and enjoying special privileges such as going about like the Portuguese whites under sombreiros (big umbrellas), an honour no other natives enjoyed, except ambassadors, and rich merchants. Native physicians also enjoyed another privilege of going about for their professional visits on horse-back, palanquins, and biers. This privilege aroused much jealousy among those Portuguese who enjoyed no such privilege.

Vaidyas had their own treatment for various diseases. External swelling was cured by applying the end of hot knife and then hot brass cup with long tube to suck the blood. In
case of a colic the most efficient medicine was the hot iron applied to the umbilical region. It caused sudden convulsion and stopped colic. Leeches were used to lower the high blood pressure. In all cases rigorous diet was followed.

A seventeenth-century traveller François Bernier, paying tribute to the native physicians writes: "Although their art of curing differed much from European one, the principle which guided it might serve as a lesson to western physicians any time." He continues: "You must not give much food to the patient suffering from fever, the best remedy is abstinence nothing is more harmful to an ailing body, than meat broth as the later decomposes in the stomach. The patient should be bled only in extreme cases, for instance, when there are well founded fears of cerebral fever or inflammation in chest, liver or kidneys. These methods according to him left the patient completely cured and were widely followed by the Arab, Hindu and Moghul physicians.

Native physicians cured the natives as well as the Portuguese, including the viceroys, archbishops, high government officials and friars. Native physicians had wider practice than the Portuguese ones. The latter charged fees for the treatment contrary to royal alvara (charter) of 1519. Besides the Portuguese physicians could not communicate with natives due to language barrier and they had poor knowledge of
tropical diseases. One friar from the Augustinian order, who had practised medicine for sixteen years in Portugal, found all his patients dying in Goa despite his best efforts. He called a vaidya to find out his secret of curing people. The vaidya told him that it was necessary not only to know the remedies but also the background and humour of the patient.

The vaidyas knew very well how to heal wounds, fractures, and cure fevers, but they had no knowledge of the circulatory system. This could be one of the reasons they made no attempt to bleed their patients, but instead applied leeches. The vaidyas were ignorant about internal organs of the body as they performed no autopsy. The cause of the disease was not diagnosed. If a patient did not respond to the usual treatment, they often ascribed the cause to some supernatural forces, such as Xetam (devil) and advised the patient to consult their bhat and gods.

Native physicians received no encouragement from the Portuguese rulers. Their position deteriorated during Portuguese regime. In 1563 Hindus were prohibited by a royal order from practising medicine and Hindu physicians in Goa were ordered to leave the place within a month. This order was finally not implemented. However, soon after some restrictive measures were imposed on them in the sixteenth and the seven-
teenth centuries by the Church Provincial Councils, Government and the Municipal Council (Senado).

The first Church Provincial Council, imposed restrictions on native physicians probably as it did not wish the non-Christian physicians to treat Christian people on account of many evils resulting both to faith and to morality. The same Council prevented Christian women from seeking help of Hindu dais at the time of child birth, because they used pagan rituals and witchcraft. It asked the Viceroy to tax the native physicians. Similar orders were issued by the Regent of Portugal Dom Henriques to the Viceroy Conde de Redondo, emphasizing the great harm caused by the Hindu physicians who treated the Portuguese and the native people.

The Third Church Provincial Council advised the native physicians to send for priests and advise the sick to confess before providing them with medical care. Those physicians who failed to advise the sick were fined 10 pardaos. If they repeated the same they could be sent away from Goa.

Restrictive measures were not imposed only by ecclesiastical authorities. In 1574 the Governor Antonio Moniz Barreto issued a notification banning native physicians from going about on horseback, biers and palanquins. There was one exception. The native physicians of the viceroy continued
to enjoy the privilege. This was probably due to the fact that the viceroy depended on the native physicians in the absence of the efficient Portuguese physicians. The ban was a real blow to the native physicians, for whom it was impossible to walk around the city of Goa in order to reach the sick. Many vaidyās migrated to neighbouring courts. This move raised the mortality rate. Sick people preferred to die rather than seek help of the Portuguese physicians. Despite the ban it was not possible to get rid of all vaidyās due to paucity of western physicians.

The reason for these restrictions it appears were not exactly the incompetence on the part of the native physicians but the jealousy among the Portuguese physicians. They felt slighted for by not being called by patients of their own race including the viceroy. The Portuguese physicians used their influence with the Government and other agencies to damage the practice of native physicians and they succeeded in this to a large extent.

The Portuguese doctors often behaved in a high-handed manner and were hostile towards native practitioners. Once an Augustinian friar was sick with pain and swelling in certain part of his body. The Portuguese physician could not relieve the pain. He sought the help of an old woman living nearby who offered to cure him. She did so with the help of stewed
leaves, which she applied to the painful area. The medicine relieved the pain but the woman had to pay the price. The chief physician got her arrested and she was forced to sell all her belongings to win freedom.⁸

On another occasion, the Chief Physician got a Hindu practitioner imprisoned for having refused to disclose the secret for curing scrofula. The practitioner was informed that he would win his freedom only if he disclosed the formula. The practitioner preferred to die rather than disclose it.

D. Ana Espanholim, the wife of the Governor Manuel Souza Coutinho (1588-91), who consulted native physicians, was condemned for doing it and was convicted by the Holy Inquisition to pay one thousand pardaos.⁹

In the early seventeenth century another attempt was made to regulate the practice of the Hindu physicians as may be inferred from a postura (regulation) of the Municipal Council in 1618. It directed that no one of any state or nationality is allowed to exercise the profession of physicians, surgeons, blood-letting or barber without first being examined and obtaining license. Any one who practised without a license was to be fined twenty pardaos.¹⁰
Native physicians were forbidden to move out of the city when the condition of the patient was serious. In case they really needed to go out they had to seek the permission of the Municipal Council. A physician violating the order would be struck from the roll never to be readmitted and would also pay a fine of 10 xerafins. The same postura directed bleeders to have a signboard with a picture of a man being bled. This picture was to be placed above the door. Any bleeder violating this regulation would pay a fine of two pardaos.\textsuperscript{11}

Thirty non-Christians physicians, over forty surgeons and a number of bleeders were allowed to practise in the city of Goa with license of the Municipal Council, provided they possessed a certificate issued by the Chief Physician. License was issued to them by the Municipality for a fee of 10 xerafins on condition that they should not induce their Christian patients to make offerings to Hindu deities.\textsuperscript{12} It is noticed that in the seventeenth century physicians were non-Christians while surgeons and bleeders were all Christians. Hindus probably did not take up the profession of surgeon or bleeder because of their belief in Ahimsa (non-violence). They had a distaste for cutting of flesh and to bleed. All vaidyas were men. Women were not taught medicine.
Folk Healers

While restrictive measures were adopted against indigenous elite practitioners, a vast majority of people continued to seek native medicine. Seeking the help of quacks, such as curandeiros, (quacks), herbolarios, (herbalists)feiticeiros (witch-doctors), snake bite curers and others was common not only in the villages but even in urban areas. These quacks had no real political power or legal sanction but had great influence on the people. These practitioners did not isolate their patients in the hospital far from relatives and friends.

Feiticeiros (witch-doctors) had remedies for all kinds of diseases. Each village had its own witch-doctor. Hindu witch-doctors were considered superior to Christian ones. The former performed rituals to cure diseases. Christian witch-doctors made use of holy water, prayers, relics, amulets, piece of cloth used to cover the saints, ribbon of the size of saints, rose of Jericho (a small shrub from Arabia brought by the missionaries). This rose, when immersed in water helped women to have easy deliveries.13

Witches were bizarre people, who were believed to have some supernatural powers. They dressed in outlandish clothes, including a blue colour jacket with gold colour buttons. They wore usually silver bangles, ear-rings and a scarf around
their neck. They carried a wand in their hand. Normally witches practised their craft in the forest or a cave, on a floor covered with cow-dung with burning fire and water nearby. The ritual would begin with an animal sacrifice. The witch then screamed and went into hysterical trance, and was then believed to be possessed by some force that inspired the witch in finding a cure or solution.

Bardez taluka in the north and Salcete taluka in the south were full of curandeiros and charlatans. The authorities were unable to keep a check on them due to insufficient trained doctors. For instance, in Raia (Salcete), the professional skills of Remedio Piedade Soares were certified by the parish priest and local authorities. This practitioner guaranteed cure for dysentery, diarrhea and skin disorders.

In 1687 there was only one doctor trained in western medicine. The Government was forced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to issue diplomas to several individuals to practise as doctors. From 1782-1801 Goa did not have a physician trained in western medicine. Health care was left in the hands of native medicine men. The practice of issuing diplomas was stopped by the Government in 1838. Before this date those who wished to obtain certificates had to pay 100 xerafins in addition to what they paid privately to the Chief Physician.
During this period there was acute shortage of doctors in Portugal and Goa. This acute shortage of doctors was responsible for the establishment of a Medical School in Goa in the year 1842. However, doctors trained in this school satisfied only the needs of the urban population.

In 1865 several individuals from (Mapuça's taluka town in Bardez) sent a petition to the Government requesting permission for one Tholentino Gabriel Fernandes to practise as a doctor. Similar petition was sent by the inhabitants of Siolim. Daniel Conceição Luiz, a diploma holder in medicine was allowed to issue medical certificates to various individuals to practise. New Conquests had no trained doctors in the first half of the nineteenth century with exception of military surgeons at Ponda, Bicholim and Pernem.

The medical scene at the beginning of the present century did not change much in rural areas. Embarbacem with a population of 26,118 had only one doctor in the early twentieth century. In 1945 there were 44 doctors. It is not surprising that the majority of people in New Conquests resorted to indigenous medicine. The Census of 1910 indicates that Goa had 18 curandeiros of which four practised in Panjim, five in Salcete, three in Sanquelim and three in Sanguem.
Women in rural and urban areas depended on a *dai* (midwife) at the time of delivery. There were no maternity homes for a long time. Even when these were established, women were reluctant to avail of the facilities. Dais had no formal training, but learnt their trade from their mother or an elderly woman in the family. She was illiterate usually middle aged or old and her only qualification was her experience. Unlike other male healers, she was of low caste, because among Hindus everything associated with confinement and to an extent with pregnancy was considered unclean. Dais had no knowledge of hygiene and were often responsible for the high infant mortality.

The Portuguese often resorted to *sangradores* (bleeders) who lived in the seventeenth century at Praça do Pelourinho Velho. The Portuguese who resorted to them even to cure slight fevers. In 1610 a bleeder was paid quarterly 5 *xerafortins* at the Convent of Graça. Bleeding a patient was not an easy task. It was necessary to find the correct vein. Barbers who were also bleeders were Christians. In year 1900 Goa had four *sangradores*, officially registered. Two bleeders lived in Ilhas and two in Bardez.

Dentists were few in Goa. Some had professional competence, but most were quacks. People lived without proper dental care. Caries was one major problem which the tradi-
tional extractionists tried to get rid by using oil mixed with garlic and mustard. The oil was allowed to cool and then poured with the help of a banana leaf (used as funnel) in the ear of the patient. On the side of injured tooth. After some time the patient was asked to empty the contents and the tooth puller would point out tiny threads as caries.

Every village or group of villages had curers against snake bite, the most respected among all medicine men. He learnt *mantras* to neutralize snake poison and performed many ceremonies and rituals. Snake curer was a man completely dedicated to his work. From the moment he was called he would refuse food and drinks until he found the cure for the snake bite. There were several curers against snake bite. They claimed that their ability to cure was an inherited one. For instance, a family of Mandrekars in Pernem claimed they could cure snake bite with water drawn by them from a particular well or spring which they splashed on the patient. This power was inherited by both male and female members of the family, but girls would lose their powers once they married. They could not charge fee for the treatment. It was believed that the privilege to cure snake bites was granted to the Mandrekar family by St. Thomas the Apostle, who came to India.24
Snake bite curers performed a complicated ritual to cure persons bitten by a snake. The ritual started with zaddo or zaddnim. This involved beating the head of the patient with a branch of a tree known as usky (Calycopteris Floribunda). Next, the curer gave the patient a root to chew. The identity of the root was a closely guarded secret only known to the curer. Juice extracted from the similar root was applied to the head and little juice was rubbed into the scalp. Zaddnim was performed several times on the first day. On subsequent days it was performed for half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening during seven days. On the seventh day, the patient was massaged with hot coconut oil and given a bath. The patient was kept on a diet of canjee made of orio (a kind of food grain). This cereal was consumed by Hindu women as a substitute for rice during certain ceremonial days.

During the period of the above mentioned treatment the curer had to observe certain rituals: If he was eating his dinner, should his lamp blow off, he had to stop eating his food. He could have his next meal only on the following night. In case there was a solar or lunar eclipse he had to immerse half of his body in water until the eclipse was over. A woman who was menstruating could not speak to the curer during a meal. If this happened he had to live only on fruits for four days or until the said woman completed her menstrual cycle and she had her bath.
Snake bite was also cured in those days and even today by indigenous practitioners as well as by practitioners of western medicine with help of chicken. Small chicken were used to get rid of the venom. The anus of the chicken was applied to the area bitten by the snake. The chicken sucked the venom until it dropped dead. Several chicken were used in this manner until all venom was sucked out.

In the nineteenth century, Diapana was used for snake bite. This Brazilian plant was sent by Brown and Diner from Mauritius to Goa. The plant was a powerful antidote for snake bite and other injuries. The leaves or juice extracted from them could be used as an anti-venom.26

There was another person who practiced the art of healing in the villages. It was the Bhat who suggested "preventive medicine" by advising the people to perform rituals as a means of obtaining good health, prosperity and children. He prescribed similar rituals as cures for illnesses that were believed to be caused by religious laxity. Due to this belief he would advise pilgrimages to holy places such as Pandarpur, pouring water at the roots of sacred trees and conducting of sacrifices.
Deities, Rituals, Fetishes and Miracles

Superstitions were used to cure people of various ailments. Many believed in the effect of evil eye. It was believed that some individuals have faculty to cast spell on others by looking at them. As result of the evil eye things could perish and diseases could take place leading even to death. Children were believed to be susceptible to the effect of the evil eye. For this reason many would get upset if someone admired their children's beauty or strength, because they feared that such an expression of admiration was prompted by ill will.

A barren woman was not supposed to gaze at a child as her gaze was considered to be full of desire. It was believed that evil eye made the child cry too much and suffer from various diseases. Animals, plants and fields were also considered susceptible to the effect of evil eyes.

In order to escape from the influence of evil eye people made use of incantations and charms on Sunday, Wednesday or Tuesday. Salt and chilies were often used to get rid of the evil eye. These substances were waived around the head of the patient. Salt, dry chilies and alum were placed over hot charcoal and waived around the person. A piece of alum placed in the fire was believed to change into the form of a man or a
woman. From this conjectures were made as to the sex of the person by whose evil eye the patient was affected. After the rituals the contents were placed on the roadside to repel evil eye. Chilies were probably used as they are pungent and red in colour. The red colour was said to attract the evil spirit.

The most popular charm against evil eye was soot which was smeared around the eyes or any part of child's face. Soot was prepared by filling a small earthen pot with oil, a wick of cotton lighted in it and a brass plate held over the flame. This soot is smeared around the eyes of the child to distract the eyes of the evil person from the child. In some communities a face is painted on the egg shell. The egg shell is waived over the person and placed at the junction of three roads to repel evil eye.

Coconuts were waived round the child and thrown at the boundary of the village and at places supposed to be haunted. To ward off or repel evil eye various charms and amulets were used.

An amulet is a material object, worn carried on the person or preserved in some other way. Amulets were used to cure diseases or to bring luck. Majority of children among the lower class wore amulets around their waist or neck. Some wore many amulets around their waist or neck. Some wore many
Amulets for a particular purpose. Adults also wore them in various forms. Amulets such as shoes and beads were attached to houses, fields, vegetable farms to protect from evil eye. It was looked upon as a weapon which protected the wearer against diseases and misfortune. Some of the material used were vegetables, roots, leaves, seeds, horns, animals, teeth, hair, claws, nails, relics, bones, strings, threads, beads of rudraksa and medals.

To protect against evil eye it was a practice to wear rings with elephant hair, tiger nails and bangles made of tortoise shell. Ladies often wore miniature band as a pendant. The same was worn by men on their waist. To protect children from diseases it was a practice to wear doro (black thread) or taita (effigy of Maruti).

Amulets were also used to cure and prevent various diseases. To cure dog bites a silver coin was applied to the wound. After 12 hours the coin was washed and applied to the wound on the other side. This procedure was carried on until the wound was healed. It was a traditional belief that silver had power to heal.

The rural people believed that many diseases were caused by the wrath of gods and goddesses. It was believed that when a goddess was not given due recognition and rever-
ence it would get angry and its wrath caused diseases and death. Propitiation of gods and goddesses was done through religious prayers, incantations and offering of animal sacrifices. Epidemic diseases such as cholera and smallpox are supposed to come from deities.

During the outbreak of smallpox Hindus appealed with special devotion to goddess Sitala Devi. People began to worship her after Puranic and Tantrika texts recommended her worship to avert fatal diseases and disasters. Sitala Devi was one of the minor goddesses but considered as goddess par excellence -- a living medicine. It is stated that Sitala is so called because she soothes and cures the victims from the characteristic of extreme inflammation of pox. To appease this goddess animals of different types were sacrificed and many ceremonies were performed.

In one of the rituals the goddess was placed on a vessel of earthenware or metal with flowers and a lamp filled with coconut oil. No food was fried in the house of the patient because it was believed that the blisters would take a turn for the worse.

Tender coconuts, bananas and sugar were offered to the goddess Devi. If the disease erupted in a epidemic form the villagers performed a ceremony known as Utar to which all
Bagats from the village were invited. A goat or seven to eight roosters were sacrificed in honour of the goddess. Following the ritual a procession was taken by the villagers to the outskirts of the village. They carried an earthenware pot containing coconuts, arecanut, betel, incense, flowers and fruits. The vessel was handed over to the inhabitants of the next village and passed from village to village. Finally the vessel was deposited on the border of Goa usually on the southern side or thrown in the sea. This symbolized the end of the disease in this territory.

It was a practice to burn incense and agarbatis daily when there was a case of smallpox in house. The practice was probably followed to purify the air. The floor of the house was smeared with cow-dung. Visitors disinfected themselves by splashing water mixed with cow-dung. To propitiate the goddess they drank this water. The same procedure was followed during an outbreak of cholera.

Another ceremony performed at the end of a smallpox epidemic was the farewell ceremony. The inhabitants in a small basket of bamboo placed a new handkerchief, a coconut and flowers. This container was carried to the end of the village in a procession, where it was left under a tree. This ritual was performed to placate Sital.
Just as smallpox was believed to be caused by an enraged goddess so was the case of cholera. Cholera was believed to be caused by goddess Durga. To appease her several ceremonies were performed.

Christians also believed that their saints have powers to cure disease. Goans have great faith in St. Francis Xavier and other saints. It is reported that soon after the arrival of Francis Xavier to Goa he visited the college of St. Paul in the City of Goa. On inquiring about the health of its inmates he was informed about a person who was critically ill with no hopes of recovery. Francis Xavier read the Gospel and blessed the patient. The patient recovered and lived for many years. ²⁷

Another miracle that is reported took place after the death of Francis Xavier. His body was brought in a casket and kept in the city of Goa. At this time a lady D. Joana Pereira, wife of Christovam Pereira, was seriously ill for three months. She prayed to the saint and within a short time she was well again. Yet one more reported miracle was of Antonio Rodrigues a clerk in an orphanage. He was blind for seven years. He could recognize people only by their voice. One day hevisited the college of St. Paul and touched to his eyes the relic of St. Francis Xavier and is reported to have recovered his sight. ²⁸
Miracles have also been reported to have taken place during the exposition of the body of Francis Xavier. For instance during the exposition of December 1859 at least six persons had miraculous cures. These cures were witnessed by people, certified by doctors and the church authorities. All these diseases were incurable. Bernadina Rodrigues, a widow of 34 years, suffered from paralysis of right arm for 12 years. She could not lift her hand to her mouth. On 14th December 1859 she went to Old Goa to pay homage to the saint and returned cured. Maria Isabel de Sousa, wife of Pedro Noronha from Tivim, had suffered from a uterine infection and other ailments which caused complete paralysis of her one side from neck downwards. The doctors had given her up as a hopeless case. She was preparing to resign to her fate when her mother carried her to the Basilica of Bom Jesus where she kissed the feet of the saint. Agonising pain followed — but soon after all pain disappeared and the woman could walk again without any help.

Another case was of João Thomas Fernandes of Panjim. He was cured at the age of nine of clubfoot. His condition was considered incurable until he visited Old Goa. He kissed the feet of the saint. He felt acute pain. His mother presumed it was the result of the long journey by foot. However, the next day the child could walk perfectly without any defect. Maria Antonia da Costa Campos, 13 years old daughter of an
army official was paralysed on right side from waist downwards. She could not walk nor touch her foot to the ground. She kissed the feet of Francis Xavier. No change took place. On hearing the cure of João Thomas she decided to try again. She visited Old Goa for the second time and kissed the feet of the saint. She fell back with acute pain and loss of senses. She was helped by those around. Maria Antonia soon came to senses and began to walk. The right leg had resumed its normal shape and moved naturally. This cure was certified by the doctors one year later when Maria Antonia was 14 years old. As a thanksgiving she added the name of the saint to her name and came to be known as Maria Antonia Francisca Xavier da Costa Campos.

Fifty years old Antonio Jose da Cunha from Candolim was victim of tetanus in December 1855. As result he could not wear shoes. His knee was rigid for four years and he could not kneel. In 1859 he went to old Goa to kiss the feet of the saint. He was cured and in position to wear shoes and kneel down again.29

Popular Medicine and Practices during Child Bearing

Among the masses a prima gravida was bled in sixth or seventh month of her pregnancy. This was done probably to
avoid high blood pressure. This practice of bleeding weakened the pregnant woman.

From the time the pregnancy was confirmed the pregnant woman was exempted from all laborious work. She was permitted only light work. Great care was taken to keep her segregated from all influences likely to distress her feelings. The duration of the eclipse was for her a period of inactivity. This was meant to prevent any disfigurement or deformities to the child. A pregnant woman was not allowed to visit or see a dead body as it was believed it would bring her bad luck.

The room used for the delivery was not the best in the house. They chose a dark room without proper ventilation and away from the family quarters. Child birth among Hindus was looked upon as unclean and the woman was treated as an outcast. She was kept confined to the corner of the house without any contacts with rest of the society. Close relatives could visit her and after that they had to change their clothes.

Cleanliness in the room was considered out of place. Windows and door were locked to prevent fresh air. Any openings on the walks were blocked up with papers or rags. Dirty old clothes were used during the delivery. They were good enough to pack around the woman to absorb the discharge.
Deliveries were performed either on a chamber pot or on two chairs placed in such a manner that they resembled a chamber pot. This practice was followed even fifty years ago. The child was received in a sup (winnowing fan). The umbilical cord was covered with pepper and bandaged with cloth. Through this bandage hot oil was poured daily on the navel. Many times instead of pepper they used ashes of banana leaf or limbrá (Azadirachta Indica) leaf. No bath was given to the child until the umbilical wound healed. However, the child was massaged with oil.

To bring the uterus to its original position, the mother was placed on a mat or bed. The dai would press the mother's stomach with the sole of her foot. At the same time she would try to raise the mother with her hands.

It was customary to place a container with live coal in the delivery room, in order to provide warmth to the mother and the child. To stop post delivery colics a hot smooth heated stone was applied to mother's stomach. A tampon of pepper was inserted in the vagina to prevent infection. This tampon was changed daily. Sometimes after the delivery the new mother was kept standing and the dai massaged her stomach to clear the bad blood from the uterus.
The penknife which was used to cut the umbilical cord was kept under the pillow of the child till the sixth day of the birth. Similar iron material was placed under the mother's pillow to prevent misfortune to the mother and child.

During the first six days a woman who gave birth to a child was not allowed to have a complete bath. She could have bath from the week downwards. Some kinds of leaves were boiled in the water. She was allowed a complete bath only on the 21st day. It was believed that head-bath before this period led to convulsions, tetanus and other problems. However, in some communities bath was allowed on the third day of the delivery.

The woman was regarded impure during the first eleven days of the delivery and during menstruation. If such woman participated in a religious ceremony it was believed that she transferred her impurities to the family or community, leading to misfortune or disease. She could not participate in any religious ceremony. Such women were quarantined and treated as outcasts.

A tradition was followed even among cultured people to decorate the door of the house of the newly born child with marvel (Andropogan Annulatus). It was meant to drive away evil spirits. Possibly it was an antiseptic.
During the first three days a woman who had a baby was fed with a kind of cake made of flour and jaggery. After the third day jaggery was no longer used. Milk and canjee was not advised for the mother as it was considered harmful to health. Both the items had cooling effect which was considered harmful for a woman who had just delivered a child.

On the sixth day after the birth of the child a number of traditions and superstitions were followed: Seven types of vegetables cooked with coconut were distributed to seven houses. The clothes of the mother and child were changed. Flakes of garlic were tied around the wrist of the child. The family did not consume water from their house well. The whole family kept a vigil on the night of the fifth and sixth day. They spent the night singing and playing while they waited the visit of Dame Luck and Dame Fortune. It was believed that they visited the new child on this night. For this reason, the room of the child was rearranged. Close to the mother a mound of rice was arranged, and a vessel with cereal placed over it. The vessel was closed with coconut and flowers of a shrub known as potcoli (Ixora Coccimia). The vessel represented goddess Sotvi and to her fruits and sacrifices were offered. These gifts were taken away by the dai. Sotvi was a custom followed even by Christians, despite repeated decrees both from the state and church against the custom.31
As the family waited for the Dame Luck/Fortune, the area from mother's bed to the front door was sprinkled with garlic flakes, mustard seeds and grains. The natives believed that both Luck and Fortune competed with each other on this night to be the first to enter the room where condiments were sprinkled to keep one of them busy collecting the grains while the other, usually Dame Luck, gave luck to the child and disappeared.

A mother was forbidden to nurse another boy whilst nursing her son. However, she could breast feed a baby girl. Boys were desired among the Hindus to carry on the family traditions. A mother could nurse a girl besides her son, probably because girls were not desired and they could do with less nutrition than boys.

Special ceremony was performed on the 20th day after the delivery. A sweet made of rice, coconut and milk was prepared. The dal took seven spoons one at a time, and waived it over the head of the mother and the child. At the end of the ceremony the sweet was placed in the bathroom where the mother had her bath during the first seven days.

Among the rural masses it was a practice to apply lep (paste) to the head and body of the mother. The lep made of leaves of valicodul and palm fenny (local drink) was applied
on the 21st day after the delivery and the mother was given a bath.

Woman after child birth could move out of the house only after 40 days. On the 40th day she was given a bath and allowed to go out. Despite a episcopal decree of 1784 Christians women continued to follow this practice.

Some Traditional Treatments and Medicines

Folk medicine was widely used during colonial times. This was the only medicine available to vast majority of people. Indigenous medicine received no encouragement from colonial rulers. On the contrary, several measures were passed by the colonial government to suppress such practice. This attitude on the part of the rulers, together with dominance of western medicine gave folk medicine a subsidiary status. It was looked down by educated people and doctors trained in western medicine.

Today it is regaining recognition all over India as a valid system after it was brushed aside as unscientific. The vogue for "soft medicine" and natural products in the western industrial world is assisting in this revival. Modern medicine grew out of traditional medicine with ingredients derived from plants.
Traditional medicine is not confined to extracts of plants. It includes bone setting and physical manipulation. Modern medicine has undesirable side effects. Indigenous medicine is generally free from side effects. However, home or folk medicine cannot be a substitute for scientific diagnosis and sophisticated modern therapies provided by modern medicine for certain specified diseases.

Abscess was opened with a paste of *nival kanti* (*euphorbia nerifolia*) fresh turmeric and cashewnut. A leaf of *mavlinguini* (*citrus medica*) was applied to remove pus. Coconut oil mixed with melted wax was applied to heal the wound.

For anemia a patient was prescribed a decoction made from the bark of a tree known as *Santanacho ruk* (*Alstonia scholaris*). About 1 oz. of the bark was boiled in 20 ozs. of water. The patient had to drink 2 ozs. at a time, two to four times a day. Another remedy prescribed for anemia was a decoction of bark of a tree *Davo Kudo* (*Holarrhena antidysenterica*). It was lightly warmed and the juice extracted. The extract used as ear drop was considered beneficial for ear infection and pain.

An asthma patient were given to drink milk of wild boar mixed with water.
Dr. Baronio Monteiro had a treatment for bed-sores. Patient’s spit was applied over the bed-sores with successful results.

Bleeding was stopped by placing thread in the form of a cross over the wound or cut. Sprained legs and other sprained areas of the body were cured by rubbing seven times a key or a sickle in the morning, evening and following day. It was also a practice to call a person who was born with his legs first. This person was asked to massage the sprained area.

Patients suffering from body-aches were advised by Dr. Baronio Monteiro to sun bath. This exposure to the sun relieved pain. Elements of nature were used by him to cure various illnesses. Water heated in the sun was considered good for health. He prescribed tamarind juice mixed with jaggery as a purgative. Typhoid fevers were cured with baths given every three hours.

Cataract in the eyes was reported to be cured by applying to the big toe the leaves of Boram (Zizyphus Jujuba) tree chewed by a montri (magician) for period of seven days. If the cataract was in the right eye, the paste was applied to the left foot, and vice versa.
In cases of cholera the native medicine men prescribed on paste of *Teffolans* (*Xanthoxylum rhetesu*), mustard seeds and garlic ground with vinegar. In Bicholim the people used a paste of mustard drumstick, pepper and ginger ground with fenny.

Convulsions in children were cured by fumigating the head of the child with tobacco imported from Deccan. At the same time a packet of *sapus rintho* (camphor) and *hing* (*asafetida*) was hung around the neck and given to smell. The sick person was beaten on the head with a small branch of jackfruit tree or a plant known as *Usky*. Among the Christians it was a practice to make the child smell kerosene and burnt cloth. Many children having convulsions were treated with hot metal applied to the arm or leg. Another practice was to give cold water bath to the child.

Coagulated milk in the stomach was known as *gonxes* which the indigenous believed caused convulsion gastro-enteritis and dysentery. The child was given a concoction of a creeper known as *Gonsvel* and mint leaves to prevent convulsions.

*Oddulso* (*Adathode Vasica*) a common herb around the compound walls provided relief for coughs. Pieces of coconuts, bananas and some fruits were given to the monkey to
Diabetes patients were given the skin of a root known as quivani (helicters ixora), wine of jambulão (Eugenia Fambo-lance), juice of ripe figs (Ficus Glomerata), decoction of the bark of vodel (Ficus Indica) or boiled flowers of banana tree. It was prepared by mixing 1 oz. of the bark with 1 oz. of water. Many people drank a decoction of padvali roots (Cissampelos Fareira) which was prepared with 1 oz. of roots and 20 ozs. of water.

Dysentery was controlled with decoction of the roots of cuddo (holarrhena antidesenterica) or pitmari (marengamia-lata). Ear ache was relieved with garlic (Allium Sativium) in oil. Some people used the juicy stem of a wild cactus.

Eclampsy was prevented with a paste of mustard and garlic applied to the base of the feet and head of the expectant mother.

White onion, (roasted and ground ) was applied to the forehead to get rid of headache and reduce fever.

There were many cases of leprosy in Goa during the Portuguese regime. It was an incurable disease in those days.
However, it is reported that in the early stages some traditional remedies proved effective. About 50 gms. of sap of *Neem* (*Melia azadirachta*) was prescribed to the patient daily. The body was massaged daily with the sap. In case the sap was not available the patient was prescribed 5 gms of pepper and 10 gms. of neem leaves ground into a paste. This paste had to be swollen for 40 days.

Mouth trash, popularly known as *Movem* or *Moem* was treated with a paste of dry lobster (head only) and honey applied to the affected area.

Nephralgia was cured with a leaf of jackfruit inserted in the nose in cone shape and the patient was beaten on the base of his head until he bled.

Rheumatism was cured by applying a solution made of 1 gm. of opium extract, 4 gms. belladone extract and 60 gms. glycerin with the help of cotton or cloth.\(^{34}\)

A victim of smallpox was given a concoction made of *Poripat* (*Oldenlandia Corimvosa*). The patient was fed on canjee without salt. The patient was made to sleep on a plain mat without a mattress. On the seventh day the body was massaged with wild flowers previously dipped in luke warm water. The patient was given a bath only on 21st day. No fish or any
food stuff was fried in the house. It was believed that frying prevented eruption from taking proper course. The blisters were covered with dry cowdung.

Teeth problems: To remove caries the tooth puller boiled coconuts oil with garlic and mustard. The oil after cooling was poured with the help of funnel (made of banana leaf) in the ear, on the side of the injured tooth. After a few minutes the patient was asked to empty the contents and the tooth puller would show some tiny threads as caries. This treatment was not efficacious.

Toothache was stopped by mixing pepper and fenny. The paste was applied to the side of the head. Pepper could be replaced by saffron or salt.

Tuberculosis had no cure in the early days. The sick sought the help of herbolarios and Curandeiros. The victims and their families tried to conceal the disease due to stigma attached to it. Native medicine consisted of giving the patient everyday 2 gms. of powered skull of a small deer. The patient was fed on soup of boiled frogs and bandicoot. Garlic was considered a wonderful remedy for T.B. About 2 gms. of garlic with one kilo of sugar was boiled in 250 gms. of milk, till the quantity was reduced to one fourth. This decoction was prescribed to the patient three times a day.
There are a few home remedies for mumps. A thick paste of *dutro* is applied over the swelling. Some people covered the swollen portion with a paste of dry ginger. This was done to subside the pain and decrease swelling.

For wounds, inflammation and fevers the medicine men used *Taiquilo (Cassia)* plant.

Vomiting was stopped with the help of an egg. This egg was tied around the waist with the help of a cloth. The well known medicine man Madeva Oido of Querim, (Ponda) prescribed a simple method to stop hiccups by inserting in the nostril a toothpick and moving it to make the person sneeze. This was repeated if the hiccups did not stop.

**Herbal and other Medicines**

Goa abounds in myriad herbs, plants, spices which have great therapeutic value and have played an important role in the accumulation of medical knowledge. By observation and trial, the natives came to possess intimate knowledge of the medicinal properties of the vegetable kingdom. These remedies were the basis of health care in rural area. In fact remedies of elderly female in the family was often all that was available by way of medical help. Measurements were not precise. As
the ingredients used were harmless, and a little more or a little less did not matter.

Herbal medicine consisted of roots, bark, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds, juices and gums of plants. The effect of medicine varied with the time or season. When the medicine was collected.

Medicine could not be used from a place covered with water, neither from dry sandy ground nor from one that had holes. Places destroyed by insects or where white ants had their nests, where bodies were burnt or buried. Sacred places were not proper places for raising medicinal plants. Soil in which there was much salt was unfavourable for the growth of medicine. The most favourable soil for medicine was situated near water. This soil helped the growth of trees.

The day and the time of the collection was also important to ensure cure of the disease. Medicines administered internally were taken for the first time on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. The medicine was collected when the auspicious stars were in ascendant. Before medicinal plants were gathered in the morning a prayer was said with face turned towards the north. Most medicines were taken on empty stomach for better effect.
Allopatic physicians made use of herbal medicine. Some herbal medicines were used in the Royal Hospital and later in the Military Hospital probably because they were efficacious or no other drugs were available to cure particular diseases. Indigenous medicine was sent from Goa to various Portuguese Feitorias. There is reference in the Mhamai House records to drugs sent from Goa to Portugal such as opium, xarope de brindão, leaves of malva, eyes of crabs and others.35

Some Commonly Used Goan Plants and Minerals in Goa

Ambo (Mangifera Indica) is a well known seasonal fruit from Indian subcontinent. Goa has the best varieties. The plant was exported to Brazil by the Portuguese. The fruit contains Vitamins A and C. The unripe fruit is cooked in hot ashes and the pith mixed with water and sugar. The drink obtained is good for heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Kernel of the stone of mango fruit is prescribed for diarrhoea. The skin of the fruit is recommended for uterine pulmonary and intestine disorders prepared in following manner 10 gms. extract of the skin 10 gms. in 120 gms. water. One table spoon to be given every two hours. The gum of the tree mixed with lime is used for scabies and some other skin problems. Mango is laxative.
Ankli (*Alangulm Lamarcki*). It is a large tree the fruit resembles a large apple. It is antidote for opium. It is also remedy for infantile tuberculosis. Apa Rane, a well known quack of Goa used the bark of Ankli to control rheumatic pain and pneumonia.

Anjir (*Ficus Carica*). The fruit has many medicinal properties. Few figs taken after meals acts as laxative. Supposed to be good for cough. Hastens the appearance of rash in chicken pox and Small pox. The plant was originally brought from Persia.

Bell (*Gegle Marmalos*). The pulp ground with sugar and rose water is used in diseases of the intestine, liver and dysentery. The pulp mixed with water forms a refreshing drink which offsets the effect of heat. Ripe fruit is sweet and laxative. The paste made of leaves of this tree helps inflamed eyes. The juice of the leaves mixed with honey is laxative.

Bavo (*Cassia fistula*). The plant is from Goa. This plant has smooth small branches. The leaves which are yellowish in colour fall in cold season. The fruit is laxative. The juice extracted from the leaves is used in skin disorders and harpies.
Banyan Tree (*Ficus Bengalensis*). Sap of the leaves is used in the cold season against cracked heels. Fibers hanging from its branches ground in water stop vomiting.

*Candinni* (*Cassia Carandas*) is found in the forests of Goa. The roots of this plant ground with water are prescribed two to three times a day against snake bite. Its leaves and fruits are used against scurvy.

*Catecomer* (*Aloe Socotrina*) This herb pounded with milk is given to those suffering from kidney and bladder problem.  

*Dakti Sutkant* (*Melia Azadirachta*) or Neem. The leaves, skin and other products of Neem have medicinal value. Bitter leaves are used as antiseptic. Tender shoots ground into paste helps to relieve prickly heat. Crushed leaves made into a ball and applied on boils remove the pus specially in case of smallpox. Decoction of leaves with sesame oil is used to clean wounds and boils. Oil of the fruit is used in leprosy and rheumatism. Dry flowers prepared into a tonic is given to those recovering from fevers. A decoction of the bark is prescribed in case of a colic and uterine problems.

*Dutro* (*Mactiel*) grows wild in Goa. The plant resembles an egg plant and has thorny fruits. The sap and the seeds of this fruit have many interesting uses. In early period of
Portuguese regime ladies from the upper strata used the sap to intoxicate their husbands. This was done so that they could have good time with their lovers while the husband remained in unconscious state for even longer than 24 hours. Dutro seeds are used to cure chronic colds, asthma, lack of sexual potency. The paste of dutro leaves mixed with salt is applied for mumps or in case of excessive sweating on palms. The fruit helps also to provide relief in asthma. The fruit is cut fine and dried. Next it is mixed with tobacco from Deccan. The mixture on the rolled on a banana leaf and smoked by asthma patient.

*Doxim* (*Hibiscus rosa*). A common shrub in Goa. The flowers have several colours. The most common are red, yellow and white. The roots of this shrub are used in the preparation of some kind of medicine. The roots of the shrub that produces white flowers are used mixed with milk, sugar and cumminseeds in case of blenorrhea. It is said that the flowers of this plant ground with papaya are taken to induce abortions.\(^{37}\)

*Guava* is a very nutritious fruit, good for digestion and helps in the normal evacuation of the bowels. A decoction made of leaves in used as a remedy to check vomiting and diarrhoea. The leaves are highly astrigent. It is interesting to note that the leaves arrest diarrhoea but the fruit is a laxative.
Haldi (Curcuma Longa) or turmeric is used in cooking. It adds colour and prevents flatulence. Turmeric powder is used in fractures and to relieve pain. It prevents inflammation. Turmeric is used in the treatment of gonorrhoea. Turmeric mixed with hot milk is prescribed for cough.

Khair Champa (Plumeria Acutifolia) is also known as Portugalacho Champo. The plant is believed to be brought from Brazil by the Portuguese. It is usually grown in front of churches and temples. The bark of this tree is smooth with white flowers and yellow colour in the middle. There are others kinds with red flower and also white flowers with red border. The skin of the roots is used as laxative. Sap of the plant is used in rheumatic pain.

Karatim (Cucumis trigonus) These fruits are of two kinds. The fruit boiled and ground with snake milk was prescribed by quacks for mental problems. It is supposed to improve the memory.

Kant mogro (Achyrantes Aspera) is a common shrub in India. The plant is diuretic and is used in kidney disorders.
Kaner (Nerium Adorum) is a plant of medium height with white, yellow and red flowers. Bark of the root of this plant cures many skin disorders.

Limbu (Citrus Acida /Aurantifolia ) has vitamin C. A fresh lime squeezed in a glass of warm water with four teaspoons of honey and a quarter teaspoon of salt is sipped in acute tonsillitis. A glassful of the same taken every night is natural preventive against cold. Fresh lime squeezed in tender coconut was prescribed in the treatment of typhoid, nausea and vomiting. It is also used as cosmetic, hair and stain remover.

Lasun (Allium Sativium ) is used as ingredient in food. Garlic helps to lower the blood pressure and cholesterol. Paste of garlic provides relief from pain caused by a scorpion sting. It is believed that a clove of garlic eaten everyday increases longevity. Cloves of garlic boiled in milk are used against asthma.

Nervol (Capparis Trifolidata) was used in urinary problems. Leaves ground in vinegar are used in swellings and tut (a disease that causes burning of feet).

Methi (Trigomella Foenum Gareceum ) helps to relieve constipation and lumbago. The leaves of fenugreek are used for healing ulcers in the mouth. An infusion of the leaves is
used as a gargle for recurrent ulcers. A concoction of boiled seeds is a hair conditioner and good for hair growth.

**Oddlo Gino (Leea Macrophylla).** It grows wild in the hilly areas of Goa. The plant has large leaves, and produces numerous white flowers. The fruit resembles a cherry. The white gino has many medicinal properties and is widely used by herbalists. The powder applied on wounds helps to heal them. The roots ground with water is prescribed for acute and chronic liver problems twice a day for a period of seven days. During this period a strict diet has to be followed. The patient has to refrain from alcohol, chicken, fats, fatty fish, sour and salty foods.

**Onions (Allium cepa).** The bulb of the plant has many medicinal qualities: it is an excellent medicine against cholera and diarrhoea if mixed in vinegar. Onion juice is applied to the head to bring down high fever. Onion baked in not ashes and applied to swollen piles is believed to give relief.

**Pau de Cobra (Pauwolfia Serpentina)** -- a root used for rheumatism, smallpox, cholera and fevers. In case of fevers one ounce of powdered root was mixed with water and given to the patient to drink. It caused vomiting and helped to clear the bile.
Parbatic (Nyctanthes Arbor Tristies) or Night Jasmine. The flowers of the tree open only at night. The flowers mixed with water are applied for problems of the eyes, fevers, rheumatism. In case of intermittent fevers six to seven leaves ground with water and ginger are prescribed. The patient in such cases has to keep a diet. The seeds ground into powder are applied for scalp problems. The seeds and flowers are helpful in curing piles.

Papaya (Carica papaya) -- Every part of the papaya tree is used as medicine. Raw papaya can lead to miscarriage. The fruit eaten with salt, cumminseeds and lime juice is used in the treatment of round worms and in constipation. Slices raw of papaya cooked in meat make the meat soft. Infusion of the fresh leaves is gargled to cure tonsillitis.

Pineapple (Ananosa - sativa) is originally brought from Brazil. Fresh juice of pineapple is soothing. The fruit which is rich in fibers acts a medicine for constipation.

Pomegranate (Pumica granatum) fruit diluted with water is prescribed to the patient having diarrhoea. Raw fruit is used in many digestive powders. Bark of the tree is used to get rid off intestinal worms. The dry infusion of flowers helpful in dysentery.
*Peepal (Ficus Religiosa)*. A large tree. The decoction of the bark is used to clean ulcers and wounds.

*Pitmari (Naregamia Alata)* is a small shrub. The bark boiled with rice water is prescribed for dysentery. A concoction of boiled bark with a pinch of pepper and salt is given daily for common cold, piles, scurvy and anemia.

*Ricinus (Ricinus Communis)* or castor plant grows wild in many parts of Goa. The fruit of the plant yields oil used mainly as purgative. The oil was prescribed for cholera patients. The oil mixed with some other ingredients is good against bed sores. The leaves of the tree mixed with sesame oil are applied against inflammation. Dry leaves of the plant smoked in a pipe tend to relieve hiccups.

Rhuibab imported from Macau or China was a good medicine for all kinds of liver problems and fevers. 41

*Ranudid (Terammus labialis)*. Seeds of this plant are used in cases of paralysis. 42

*Sonth (Zingileer Officinale)* or dried ginger is good remedy for headaches, specially migraines. It has to be ground with local feni (local alcoholic drink) to form poultice and applied on the forehead. Dried ginger is efficacious in rheu-
matism. Mixed with five times its quantity with jaggery, it gives protection against cold.

_Sanvor (Bombax Malabaricum)_ bark is efficacious in dealing with abscesses. The root of the tree dried in the shade and made into a powder acts an aphrodisiac.

_Savi Naravel (Viburnum foetidum)_ grows into a tree 5-10 feet high with smooth branches. The plant has many therapeutic values. A wine glass of the juice extracted from the leaves is taken everyday to prevent haemorrhage after delivery. Vaidyas and herbalists prescribe a concoction of the bark with some other ingredients in cases of fever. The juice of the leaves is applied to relieve cephalgia. In case of convulsions the juice of the leaves is applied on the head of the child.

_Savo (Argemone Mexicana)._ Yellow Thistle or Pila Datura. Its roots are used as antidote for snake poison. Powder of the seeds is used to counteract the itch due to venereal disease. Oil of seeds helps to cure scabies and leprosy.

_Salloc Kamallar (Nymphaeaceae) or Lotus_ grows in water and is found in lakes and small ponds in Goa. The flowers are usually red or white. The juice extracted from the stem of these flowers is considered refreshing and a good
tonic for hair ailments. The roots are used for relief from hemorrhoids. 43

Saisaparilha is used to purify blood. The bark of the tree was used for medical purpose in the Military Hospital of Goa. The roots are used to treat skin problems, syphilis, leucorrhoea, chronic cough, rheumatic pains and boils.

Sanders (Sercanda) are usually in three colours namely white, yellow and red. They came from the Portuguese island of Timor. They are like nut tree with fruits resembling cherries. The bark of this plant is ground and applied to the body for cooling and good smell. The Europeans in Goa used the fruit to stop headaches. Sanders were used in fevers.

Supari (Area Catechu) or Betelnut is used as an ingredient of pan. Used as a dentifrice makes the teeth sparkle.

Tamarind (Tamarindus Indica). The fruit is used extensively in cooking. Its alkaline properties counteract hyperacidity, bilious fevers, nausea and thirst. Its an appetiser.

Tulsi (Ocinum Basilicum) plant is considered sacred and grown by the Hindus in pots and courtyard. If pustules of chicken pox delay their appearance Tulsi leaves with saffron hastens the process. They are useful remedy for cough and
fever. Taken with pepper in an infusion is reported to be a good remedy against malaria.

*Turbit* (*Ipomoea Turpethum*) is used as laxative.

*Usky* (*Calycopteris Floribunda*) grows widely in hilly areas of Goa. Many people chew the leaves to stop colic. Water boiled with the leaves is used for bath to cure skin eruptions.

*Zambolli* (*Eugemia jambolona*). The fruit of this tree has many medicinal properties. Fresh juice of the fruit is given to the children having diarrhoea, *curandeiros* (quacks) often prescribe the wine of the fruit for diabetes because of its effect on pancreas. About 46 to 56 gms. of the wine with 6-12 ounces of water is to be drunk daily for diabetes. The bark of the tree is astringent. Decoction of its bark deals effectively with swollen and bleeding gums.44

Besoar Stones (Snake stone) a reddish yellow colour, there are also other colours. They are engendered in the paunch of he-goat on a very fine straw which is in the middle and so it goes on twisting and forming a rind like that of an onion. They are found in different sizes -- found in Persia, and Malaca. It was used in Goa as antidote against poison, prickly heat, leprosy, itch and ringworm.45
Pedras Cordiais do Gaspar Antonio. These were made by Jesuit Gaspar Antonio at the college of St. Paul. After the death of Gaspar Antonio the secret was passed to Jorge Unga-rate. It contained red and white corals, rubies, jacintos, topaz, sapphire, emerald, pedra bezoar, ambergris, almiscar and gold leaves. These pedras (stones) were of great demand in Europe, Asia and other places. The sale of these stones fetched the Jesuits an annual income of 50,000 xerafins. The Pedras Cordiais had wide use to cure fevers, leprosy, anemias, it helped to improve the eyesight.

Thermal Baths and Springs

The inhabitants of Goa visited periodically some of its beaches usually in the hot months of the year to find cure for many of their ailments. The sea water baths provided relief to health problems such as arthritis and skin disorders. Baga, Calangute, Colva, Benaulim, Miramar, Vagator beaches are well known for its medicinal value in folk medicine. However, it was believed that the sea water did not give relief to those staying near the sea all year around. Therefore the inhabitants of coastal areas had spring bath to cure some of their health problems. Goa has about 40 well known fresh water springs. Most of them are situated in Old Conquests.
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(17) HAG: Ms. Monções do Reino, 177 A, fls. 211-212: Ignacio Afonso a native worked as a doctor in the Royal Hospital.


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(44) A list in the Appendix 6-A gives many other medicinal plants and their uses.

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