Chapter VIII

CONCLUSIONS
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The researcher has made an honest attempt to present the ‘Cultural History of Bicholim taluka of North Goa since 1510 A.D. on the basis of methodology as given in chapter I.

The year 1510 was an historic accident in the history of Goa as the Portuguese set their foot firmly on the soil of Goa to rule for almost 450 yrs. However, some parts of Goa including Bicholim taluka was ruled by the Portuguese only for 180 yrs. A historic accident, unlike cultural drift, cannot be predicted from evidence within an existing culture. The Portuguese conquest of Goa is such an historic accident whose antecedents were not pre-existing in the culture of Goa.

Chapter I deals with introduction, the setting and the historical background of Goa. The introduction discusses various aspects and related inter-linkages between history and culture on the basis of review of related literature on various aspects of history and culture and various definitions of culture given by Bacon (1605), Humbold (1836), Jawaharlal Nehru (1946), and others.

The significance of oral history is analysed and examined for studies of culture with reference to the Work of Louis Starr (1996), and others. The definitions of research and historical research, besides the reasons for which historical research is undertaken are given in brief. A cursory overview of Indian historical traditions is provided and the importance of cultural history is stressed showing how history, culture and civilisations are interlinked.
Attempt has been made to cite the reasons or arguments favouring a strong case of selecting the taluka as a viable unit of study for micro level history. It is also highlighted that there are previous works exclusively devoted to Goan cultural history but barring one or two exceptions, there is not a single research work exclusively on Bicholim taluka or its cultural history. After reviewing the position and the scattered material on Goan cultural history, it was observed that the Bicholim taluka offers rich scope for studying its micro-history.

The present work is based mainly on villagewise field study of 31 revenue villages in Bicholim taluka which covers an geographical area of 238.80 sq.kms and its percentage to total geographical area of Goa is 6.45. Cultural, religious, social life and archaeological angles constituted the focus of the field study and the information or knowledge derived through the study is incorporated in the related chapters of this research work.

The introduction elaborates the importance of historico-cultural studies and the methodology employed for the research work.

The setting discusses historical geography of Bicholim taluka along with its population, climate, physiography etc. from the point of view of requirement of the setting for cultural history. It has provided the setting discussing the position of Bicholim taluka in the district of North Goa and some of the details of place names and revenue villages in the taluka. Population details have also been furnished which sets out the strategical and geographical importance of the taluka. The Etymology of the name of Bicholim taluka (Dicholi), its original name of Bhatgram is discussed in detail. The original name ‘Bhatgram’ was later changed to ‘Divchal’, ‘Dicholi’ and the Portuguese corrupted name ‘Bicholim’ is also explained.
The boundaries of the Bicholim taluka which touch the state of Maharashtra, has river Mandovi flowing through its villages to drain the land and facilitate navigation and fisheries activities.

The total population of 90,734 with density of 380 persons per sq. kms. against the state average of 364 (1991 census). The main activities of agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and mining show dominance of primary as well as secondary sector activities of the economy. From 1510 A.D. till the beginning of 20th century, people had agriculture, horticulture, and fisheries as the main activities on which the livelihood of the people of Bicholim was solely dependent. However, the advent of mining activities in full bloom since the beginning of the 20th century changed the reliance and the thrust of the people which shifted from primary sector to secondary sector activities like mining and industries. The advent of the Portuguese also brought about a change in agriculture and horticulture as better agro technological practices were introduced.

The historical background provides a sketch of the ancient and medieval history of the taluka of Bicholim. Gaudas/Mahars have been identified as the original settlers belonging to Proto-Austroloid people. The origin of the institution of Gaonkaris could not be accurately traced but the system of common lineage known as vangod or vangore shows that the first settlement in the taluka might be of the Proto-Austroloid vangod. Subsequently other communities were also integrated in this system.

From the available historical information the taluka was ruled for unknown period of time by feudatories of Mauryas. After the decline of Mauryas, the Satavahanas established their powerful presence in South western India. The Satavahanas liberally patronised Buddhism and it was
during their rule that the worship of Santeri or mother goddess and Naga images became popular here in Goa. Konkan Maurya’s rule extended over Goa between 525 A.D. and 566 A.D.

Bhojas rule extended over Goa for almost three centuries and commercial activities flourished during their regime. The trade routes might have been developed during their rule in Goa. Shaivite worship along with Vedic god and goddess and sun worship might have been popular during their rule.

The Konkan region including Goa was dominated by the Chalukyas of Badami for two hundred years and their cultural influence can be seen in the worship of Narayana and Ganesha which is supported by the sculptures found at Mulgao, Cudne (Kudne) villages.

RashtraKutas ruled from 753 A.D. Out of the three branches of the Shilaharas, the South konkan branch of the Shilaharas ruled over Goa as feudatories of RashtraKutas from 765 A.D. to 1015 A.D. Mahalaxmi and Bhagvati worship at various places in Bicholim can be attributed to the cultural influence of South konkan Shilaharas.

The Goa branch of Kadambas of Banavasis followed the South konkan shilaharas. Various traces of Kadamba style architecture have been noticed in Bicholim taluka. Kadambas were the first rulers to establish Agraharas and Brahmpuris in Goa.

There was a state of political anarchy after the end of Kadamba rule over Goa. However Madhav Mantri, the able minister of Vijaynagar empire brought the entire region from Konkan to Mangalore under the control of Hindu rulers of Vijaynagar. The Bahamanis succeeded in fighting against them in 1473. Vijaynagar had their distinct style of
architecture which can be traced in the sculptural remains found in the form of the deepstambhas at Piligao and Narve village and the remains of a Jain temple at Jainkot area in Narve.

Yusuf Adilkhan the commander of Bahamanis, formed a separate entity to establish the Adilshahi dynasty of Bijapur. His rule was also extended to Goa including Bicholim taluka. The Kudal Deshmukhs and later Sawant Bhosales of Sawantwadi who ruled the Bicholim, Sankhali and Pernem, owed their allegiance to Adilshahi, but controlled this region independently.

The Portuguese who arrived in Goa in 1510 A.D, captured the present Bicholim Taluka region from Sawant Bhosles in 1781 and ruled till 1961 the year of Goa’s Liberation. The rule of Pre-Portuguese era upto 1781 A.D. in one part and the Portuguese rule from 1781 to till 1961 A.D of about 180 years has given a unique flavour to the cultural ethos and history of Bicholim taluka which has been discussed and explained in the subsequent chapters.

The above discussion of historical background of the taluka and also of Goa leads to the following conclusions:

- The myth of Parshuram having created this land of Goa by shooting an arrow in the sea has been proved wrong in the light of discovery of petroglyphic rock art in South Goa in 1993 which has shown that food gatherer was very much evolved in Goa around 10,000B.C and the settlement of original inhabitants was very much there before the advent of the Aryans led by Parshuram in Goa.
- Although since 1510 A.D. Adilshaha, Marathas and Bhosales of Sawantwadi ruled Bicholim, the actual reins of power were in the
hands of their feudatories - the Desais. They shifted their loyalties very often for the sake of their own interests. That’s why they never took side of Shivaji & Sambhaji at any point of time. Rather they helped the Portuguese to keep the balance of power in their favour. Their’s was the case of opportunism at the best.

- Even the Marathas could not fully concentrate their attention and forces to liberate Goa from the clutches of Portuguese power as neither Bhosales nor Desais were on their side.

The next two chapters namely chapter II & Chapter III deal with monuments and archaeological remains. **It for the first time the dating of the sculptures in Bicholim taluka has been done through this research work exclusively. This has been done with help of archaeological expertise by carrying out extensive field work research. Almost all the monuments and sculptures of Bicholim taluka have been taken in to account.**

The followings conclusions were noted:

- Bicholim taluka presents a wide variety in the sculptural wealth. It includes Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Jainism and a strong base of the worship of the folk deities.

- Various elements of nature and super natural powers are represented through the sculptures.

- Sculpture of Gajalaxmi and Mahishasurmardini seems to be very common and present in almost each and every village of the study area. The deity such as Sateri is worshiped in many of the villages. This deity was originally worshipped in the form of anthill, which symbolized the concept of the worship of the earth, especially the fertility aspect of the earth. Interestingly it has been observed that the
growing development in the field of Iconic form of worship was accepted by the locals and Sateri was worshipped in the form of Mahishasurmardini as well. That is why many temples in the present study contain the sculpture of Mahishasurmardini as an object of worship. At the same time there are a few temples which have an age old continuous tradition of venerating the anthill as Sateri. Presence of both the forms of worship suggests that the locals have adopted the development in the field of iconography and have accepted the form of Mahishasurmardini for Sateri. The earliest Sculpture of Sateri in the form of Mahishasurmardini is from the village Usap. This idol can be dated to 10-11th century CE.

- Another common deity is Gajalaxmi which is found at several villages in the present study area. The goddess is locally known as Kelbai and Bhavkadevi and has a close affinity with deities such as Sateri, Vetal etc. The placement of this goddess in the premises of vetal temple is noteworthy as it has been observed that various Vetal temples in this study area have Kelbai at the left side of the Vetal sculpture or the shrine.

- Various folk deities have strong hold on the people’s belief system and it can be easily observed that the folk deities are worshipped out of the fear that they may cause something harmful for the people. So the worship of folk deities such as Ravalnath, Sateri, Kelbai Vetal, and the semi divine deities such as Devchar, Kulpurush is basically out of fear of ill rather than the faith.

- Sculpture of Indra which was found in a tank in Vargao is an exceptional thing which tells us about the worship of a vedic deity in such an area where the worship of folk deities have always been dominant.
• Similarly the finding of the sculpture of Sugriva is also an unique aspect attached with the cultural diversity of the study area.

• It is noted that the temples, tanks, lakes and various other public places in the area of study are associated with the sculptures. Many of such places have an iconic representation of local deities as well. Suggesting that the natural resources which were necessary for the livelihood of the locals were given divine status by associating them with the folk deities. This was probably done for effective and proper management of such resources like water, forest, medicinal plants etc since all these resources were considered as owned by community rather than individual.

• Various forms of deities such as folk deities, semi divine deities, puranic deities, vedic deities and cult deities were noticed during the present study.

• Though we find the continuous sculpture making activity from 10th century but many of the surviving sculptures of 13-14th centuries suggest that the activity was on high scale than previous times. These sculptures are of better art and proportion than of the later times.

• The sculptures of 16-17th century onwards are disproportionate and more in folk art rather than in any particular art form. It probably suggests the decline in art of sculpture making and this can be related with the disturbed political and socio-religious conditions of the period.

• Jain sculptures of Tirthankara and Yakshi suggest the prevalence of Jain community in this area since the early medieval times. Jain settlements at Kudne, Narve and Kothambi, and their remnants are
part of the present study which indicates the importance of Jain settlements and the associated ports, markets of the medieval times.

- It is observed that most of the sculptures and also the temples of Ravalnath in Bicholim taluka are in southward direction i.e facing south. Jyotiba or Kedar Ravalesh worshipped at Wadi Ratnagiri near Kolhapur is venerated as Ravalnath in Goa and Konkan as a folk deity. Therefore, the iconographical attributes of Jyotiba and Ravalnath are found to be the same. Jyotiba is also known as Dakshin Kedar and he came down to south from Himalayas at the invitation of Goddess Mahalaxmi of Kolhapur to annihilate demon Kolhasur as is believed by the local tradition. This might be the logical reason of Ravalnath Sculptures and temples facing southward direction. This is also to mark his southern victory (Dakshin –Vijay) by according the prominence to South direction.

- In most of the villages of Bicholim taluka where the village institutions like Devasthan Mahajans (Mazanias) and Communidades are controlled by Kshatriya Maratha class due their numerical majority. It is found that the folk deities – Ravalnath and Betal, occupy a prominent place of worship either as Gramdevata (village deity) or Ishtdevata (tutelary deity). This can be attributed to the fact that Kshatriya Maratha class is considered as class of warriors because of their aggressive nature. The folk deities – Ravalnath and Betal are identified as warrior deities and at many places they are considered as Kshetrapal (Village Protector / guardian) of that particular village or area. The worship of these two folk deities must have came alongwith the entry of Kshatriya Marathas in this region and after establishing their superiority and dominance in the village
affairs, these folk deities might have been accorded with their present status of prominence in worship.

- The priests in the temples of folk deities Ravalnath and Betal in most cases happen to be Guravs or Jain Guravs. Brahmin class priest are not found as priests to these folk deities for the simple reason that peafowl (birds like cock) and sheep / goat (animal) sacrifice is offered to the folk deities. Gurav class of Priests is often non-vegetarian and indulges in animal & bird sacrifice to the deities. This Gurav class have surnames as Bhagat, Sawant, Gurav and Ghadi.

- Santeri worship in the form of ant hill must have been the original worship of aborigines of this land of Goa including Bicholim taluka. Gavdas and Mahars must been the original settlers of this land. The Gavdas known as Bhoomi – putra (sons of the soil) naturally worshipped the land (Bhumi) and anthill being the symbol of fertility was worshipped as Santeri. Later with the popular trend of worshipping the deities in a sculptural form of stone or metal, Santeri found expression in sculptural form of Mahishasura Maradini, Mahalaxmi, Shantadurga, Navdurga etc. and during procession in village feasts and festivals including local zatra’s the ‘Kollos’ or finial (Metal pot) of the deity found symbolic representation. It is observed that the exclusive right to hold atop this finial or ‘Kollos’ of Santeri is still assigned to Gavdas known by surname Jalmi, although the Mahajan class of the village temple Committee may belong to Kshatriya Maratha or Saraswat Brahmins or other Communities like Bhandari. This might be an acknowledgment on the part of dominant class of Mahajans that Gavdas were the original settlers and the worship of Santeri was the first worship of the village and therefore the privilege or the honour of holding the finial or ‘kollos’ should go
to the original settlers of the village. The element of fear of invoking wrath of the ‘Santeri’ goddess might have weighed heavily in bestowing the honour upon Gavdas.

- Most of the sculptures found are of schist stone. The reason for this seems to be its softness for intricate carving and easy chiseling nature which enabled the sculptors to chisel and carve out the sculptures from schist stone. Secondly, the schist stone was available in abundance from stone quarries at Akeri, a village nearby Sawantawadi on the border of Goa. This must have prompted the sculptors to reside at Akeri and a peculiar school of sculptors developed at Akeri on account of the above factor.

- The local tradition believes that the Gajalaxmi sculpture which finds place at the left side of the Betal sculpture or shrine is to be identified as Bhavkadevi. In case of the sculpture being in worship independently, the same is identified as Kelbai.

- The Nagdevata sculpture found at Cudne (Kudne) village is the singular and exceptional case of example of Nagdevata in Bicholim taluka. Perhaps, the Nagdevata worship at Cudne might have been prevalent from Badami Chalukyan rule. It also points out to existence of nature worship in the past. Interestingly, the only other similar Nagdevata sculpture found in Goa is at Talauli – Ponda, dating back to the times of Bhoja king Devrajah. The Anthropomorphic figure of Nagdevata at Cudne carved out in schist stone gives ample proof of the rich sculptural wealth of Bicholim taluka.

- Hero stone found near Kalbhairav temple at Narve depicts a figure of royal person flanked by a lady and a child figure. The parasol or royal umbrella with flag held over the head of the person indicates
the prominent status of the person as an authority, noble or a minister of king. It may be that the family had sacrificed in service of king or the provincial ruler and so its memory is immortalized by carving out the said hero stone. Depiction of parasol or royal umbrella might have been at the behest of the provincial ruler or king to show out of gratitude the status of the sacrificing officer/nobleman and also as an acknowledgment to the services of the dead hero and his family.

- The Sculptures of Brahmanimaya deity found at Usap, Cudchirem and Cansarpale depict the goddess holding a snake each in both her hands. Although local tradition believes it as a folk deity, it may be the iconographic representation of Adishakti, Adimaya or Shantadurga and the snakes in her hand may be symbolic representation of Vishnu and Shiva – the two powerful deities of Hindu Pantheon. It might be an attempt to show how these two powerful deities hold subsidiary position to all powerful Adimaya or Adishakti.

- The Sculptures of Vishnu found in Bicholim taluka are in the form of epithets of Keshav (Surla, Nanoda, Narve, Pale), Trivikrama (Nanoda), Narayan (Mulgao, Narve), Janardan (Naveli) and Vasudev (Amona). Most of the sculptures have insignias (Ayudhas) Shankha, Chakra, Gada, and Padma. However, the sculpture of Janardan (Naveli) is shown holding Akshamala (Rosary of beads) instead of Padma in his hand. Such replacement of Padma with Akshamala is rarely found in Vishnu sculptures.

- Gad–Vounsh and Mharingan are the two common affiliate worships to main deities, which are found in majority of the villages in Bicholim Taluka. Actually Gad–Vansh is Gavda vounsh (the clan deity of Gavdas) and Mharigan of the Mahars. As is known, Gavdas
and Mahars were the original settlers, however just as Kshatriya Marathas who settled later and occupied the prominent position in local institutions due to their numerical majority. They also established their folk deities such as Ravalnath and Betal as the chief deities of the village. However, the thought of giving a due place of recognition to the deities of the aborigines might have prevailed out of fear of invoking wrath of these deities and this might have prompted to include Gad-vounsh (Gavda Vounsh) and Mharingan in the local worship as affiliate deities.

- Betal or Vetal Sculptures in some cases have been found carved out of wood of ‘champak’ (Michelia champaca) or locally known as ‘Champha’ tree. This phenomenon has been noted during Portuguese rule. Since Betal Sculptures are usually as tall as a man, the sculptors or Shilpi might have had difficulty of procuring suitable size stone and easy availability of champha tree wood might have prompted to carve out sculpture of Betal in wood.

- It is also noted the Betal Sculptures before entry of the Marathas in Goa were having the sword as an inseparable part of the stone Sculpture of Betal. However, since the advent of Marathas, the sculptures of Betal have been noted with a hollow groove of the hand and the metal sword is found fitted in the fist (hollow part of the hand). This may be the definite sculptural development due to the influence of Maratha rule and the warriors.

- In places like Sal, Cotombi and Mayem, a pair of Betal Sculptures were found in worship which again is quite interesting phenomenon. There is a tendency to identify on the height parameters of the sculptures in local traditions. In such a pair – the tall one is called
‘Betal’ and the shorter height sculpture as ‘Vetal’. When the twin images are found of equal height one is considered as ‘Agiyo’ (fiery) Vetal, and the other sculpture in the pair as ‘Gorakha’ Vetal. The other name (Gorakha) suggests appropriation of Vetal in Nath Pantheon.

- It is observed that many deities presently venerated in temples of Bicholim taluka were originally from Bardez and Tiswadi Taluka which were under Portuguese rule. The reason behind such shifting of the deities was the oppressive religious policy of the Portuguese and notorious ‘Inquisition’ policy of the Missionaries backed by Government support. It is noted that these shifted deities have been located in only seven villages / towns namely Advalpale, Mulgao, Nanoda, Narve, Mayem, Piligao and Bicholim. The reason behind this factor was that these two talukas were geographically close through either riverine or land route to these villages. Secondly the shifting was mostly before 1781 A.D. when Bicholim taluka was under the rule of Sawant Bhosles of Sawantadi who were Hindu rulers and naturally did not oppose such shifting. In fact, they extended their every possible patronage and co-operation through their local Chieftains like Sardessais by offering space or land and logistics for construction of the temples of the shifted deities.

- The influence of Muslim architecture is evident in few temples of Bicholim taluka. The traditional pyramid forms of the ‘Shikhara’ - the tower over the Sanctuary, are seen replaced by a dome resting on an octagonal base. Saptakoteshwar temple is one of best example of such dome styled temple. The reason of Muslim architectural influence might be attributed to Adilshahi rule over Bicholim Taluka.
• The rock cut caves of Arvalem and Lamgao might have been cut initially by Buddhists but including the Arvalem, Lamgao and other caves of Mayem, Narve, and Surla, all are Brahminical (Shaivitie) caves.
• Rock cut caves found in this area are related with Shaivism and represents the tradition of rock cut architecture from 6-7th century C.E. which continued up to 13-14th century C.E. and this period was also the part of the declining phase of the cave architecture of India.

The fourth chapter deals with social life. Caste system, hierarchical superiority and custom of sati prevailed in the society. Side by side communal harmony also prevailed. Generally the life was peaceful barring some stray incidents of disturbance. Joint family system was mostly prevalent in the society with head of the family commanding respect from family members and the decision making authority was vested in him. Caste system also prevailed in the society and thus encouraged hierarchical superiority of higher castes like Brahmins and Kshatriya Marathas which was clearly evident. Because of their learning power and wisdom, the Brahmins enjoyed superior positions as priests in temples and as teacher in pathshalas. The Gaud Saraswat Brahmins were part of decision making power because of their positions as local revenue officers (Culcarnis or regidores) in the administrative setup of the villages or at taluka level. The Kshatriya Marathas, the majority caste and community in Bicholim controlled the village institutions due to their dominance and numerical majority and aggressive nature. The custom of sati prevailed till 1781 A.D. as subsequently the Portuguese laws immediately banned the prevalence of the custom any further. ‘Panch Partavan’ especially amongst Gawda community highlights a unique aspect of after marriage traditions in
various castes existing in Bicholim taluka such as Kshatriya Marathas, Naik Bhandari or Kshatriya Bhandari, Daryavardy Marathas or Gabits or Kharvis, Gawdas, Gaurav, Panchal Brahmins (Sutar/ Kansar) Vaishyas or Vani, Daivadnya Brahmin or sonars, Brahmins including the Chitpavan, Karade, Padhey and or Kramvant Joshi, Gaud Saraswats etc. Amongst all the castes and communities, the Kshatriya Marathas are a dominant community or caste in Bicholim due to their numerical majority and also due to the fact, that they control the village institutions like comunidades and temple committees.

As a result of impact of Portuguese rule for over a considerable time, the change in furniture, utensils, jewellery, house etc. were partially evident. The ‘Gaunkari’ or institution of village communities prevailed since ancient times. This is an age old institution existing in Goa since time immemorial and whose date is lost in antiquity of time.

Chapter five deals with religious practices. They played key role to influence the society at large. It was the very basis of the life of people of Bicholim taluka and also of Goa. Religious tolerance was there as the Portuguese power was on the decline on the world scenario and as such they were in compromising mood and adopted the policy to retain their hold in Goa which was the only colony in their hands then. Earlier before the Portuguese regime, during the rule of Wadikar Bhosales, Bicholim taluka provided shelter to many temples and deities shifted from Bardez and Salcete talukas as result of religious persecution policy of the Portuguese.

Feasts and Festivals, religious ceremonies were continued without being affected. The best example of communal harmony and religious
tolerance is found in Hindu dominated Surla village where Muslim Pir is an affiliate deity of Siddheshwar temple.

The taluka offers an extensive study of wide range of religious practices. The Hindus were the dominant religion whereas the Muslims and the Christians communities were sizeable in number. Between 1781 to 1961, there was no interference in religions practices of the people. Even under the previous Adilshahi rule there was no interference in religious practices for the simple reason that the officers appointed by the Adilshahs were in most of the cases Hindus who did not disturb or interfere in the religious matters of the people of Bicholim taluka.

Communal harmony existed amongst different religious groups and in religious matters. As a result, the people belonging to a particular faith often joined in the celebrations of each other’s festivities. In Surla village, the Muslim Pir is an affiliate deity of Siddheswar & Navdurga. The procession of ‘Pir’ for the religious function of the Hindu deity is an unique event. In earlier times, the Dessais supported the religious activities. We find mention of Suryarao Sardesai of Bicholim arranging to bring the phallus/ling of Saptakoteshwar from the Portuguese area and venerating it at the present site of the temple at Narve and also rendering help for reconstruction of Ram Mandir temple at Gimone hamlet in Piligao village, which was earlier desecrated by Prince Shahalam during his expedition against Chhatrapati Sambhaji. The temple of Saptakoteshwar at Narve was also ordered for reconstruction by Chhatrapti Shivaji Maharaj to convey a message to the Portuguese that such attitude of religious intolerance would not be tolerated or entertained by the Hindu rulers.
As such even after the Portuguese takeover of Bicholim taluka region in 1781, the Portuguese thought it fit not to interfere in religious matters of the majority Hindu populace. Various feasts and festivals like Ganesha Chaturthi (Chavath), Eid, All Souls Day, Easter celebrations, Diwali, Tripoorari Poornima, Makharotsav, Ramnavami, Gokulashtami, Navratra, Masandevichi Zatra continued.

In the VI\textsuperscript{th} chapter related to cultural heritage, different folk art forms like Dhalo, Fugadi, bring together the womenfolk of the taluka are discussed. Bhajan, Kirtan, Lalit add variety to the devotional music forms practiced in the taluka. The pioneer of the Bhajan tradition who popularised this form of devotional music was none other than one Shri Sukdo alias Manohar Shirgaonkar of Sirigaon/Shirgaon village in this taluka. Folk items like horbala, chapay, Radha showcase the cultural prowess of the Dhangar community whereas Morulo, the peacock dance expresses the joy of peasant community. Ghodemodni in full swing enlivens the bravery of the Kshatriya Marathas the warrior class. The Veerbhada performance interlinks the influence of earlier Karanataka rulers. The Dashavatavata tradition bears testimony to the influence of Vijaynagara empire in Goa, Thus, the cultural heritage of Bicholim taluka offers a rich and varied picture. Zatra\text{\textsuperscript{s}} add a flavour to the varied religious precepts and practices.

Thus chapter VI deals with cultural heritage which was unaffected and which preserved its cultural identity and tradition. Folk art was the very basis of the cultural heritage and many folk art forms performed in ritualistic ceremonies.

The cultural heritage of Bicholim taluka is portrayed through the various institutions, like Goankaria, village institutions including
communidades, temple management committees, Mahajans or Mazanias, Khazan fields, sacred groves, Maand etc. ‘Maand’ is in fact the symbolic support and base of cultural emotions and artistic expression of folk life, which is found almost in all villages of Bicholim taluka. The villages on the embankments of rivers are characterised by Khazan fields which are fertile and yield good crop produce.

The sacred groves or ‘Devrais’ is an important characteristic of the biodiversity of Bicholim taluka. The sacred groves like Siddhachi Rai-Vadaval, Barazanachi Rai-Cudchirem, Devachi Rai-Surla which nurture the animal inhabitant and foliage, are havens for species of birds and animals. The flora and fauna are protected due to this and the existence of sacred groves at Vadaval and other places of the biodiversity establishes them as the treasure trove of our cultural heritage.

The VIIth Chapter deals with education and literature. Although educational sanskaras were very much there among the elite people and therefore when the Portuguese came they found civilized people in this land. There were no school like the present day ones but education was given on temple porches and at open places by the Kulkarnis. Literature had not made much / any progress because of absence of printing press. However, people were well versed in religious scriptures which were handwritten.

It is, therefore, safe to conclude that historical accident of Portuguese rule in Goa and also in Bicholim could not shake the foundations of society in Bicholim taluka. It preserved its rich traditions inspite of all odds and protected its religious and cultural heritage in the best possible manner.