SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The term "generation gap" refers to the difference in age and opinion between parents and offspring. These two generations are born in different periods of time and experience different socio-cultural environments. The generation gap is essentially a culture gap.

Theory on generation gap began with the initial development of competing formulations regarding the concept of social generations, focusing on youth groups, in the early nineteenth century by sociologists and historians. A wave of studies on emergence of the "youth culture" followed the world-wide student unrest of the 1960s. The terms "generation gap" and "intergenerational conflict" gained use in the analysis of these youth movements. The phenomenon of generation gap was widely researched in the 1960s and 1970s. It attracted sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, journalists, family researchers and psychologists. Generation gap was empirically researched both on an age-cohort (macro) and on an intra-familial (micro) level. Intra-familial studies on generational discontinuity were conducted either by using two generations (parent-child pairs) or by comparing three generations (grandparent-parent-child) of the same family line. It became clear that inter-generational differences may range all the way from a mere feeling on the part of young people that the older generation has a set of attitudes and ways of behaviour which are not like their own, through mild disapproval, and may vary from resentment to acute tensional differences and overt conflict.

Whether or not the gap in attitudes and values is significant enough to warrant serious attention is an issue over which social scientists have been divided. Three
perspectives have emerged from research done: generation gap as an illusion, a great gap between generations and selective continuity. Those who consider the generation gap a myth have pointed out that there is nothing new in the contrast between generations. The generations differ on inconsequential issues like preferences for food, clothing, music and mundane domestic chores. Core values and standards of conduct are shared by parents and children.

In contrast with debunkers of the notion of the generation gap are the advocates of the “great-gap” hypothesis. In an age of rapid social and technological change, traditional socialization processes become dysfunctional, often exacerbated by the apparent hypocrisy of the parental generation. This results in discontinuities in attitudes between youth and their parents.

The “great-gap” theorists differ among themselves on one issue: whether the generation gap is an universal phenomenon or whether it is found only in societies undergoing a drastic socio-cultural change. This later view is the selective continuity perspective.

Generation gap means for some a clash of values between young and old and for others, a relative lack of communication between youth and adults. Thus, the generation gap can range from a subtle difference of opinion to an overt conflict. A significant contributor to the generation gap is socio-cultural change which in most societies, is a perceptible process. The social dynamics of every society undergoing technological and cultural change exhibit some degree of generational discontinuity. The generation gap occurs in an uneven rate between different generations. It is a function of the levels of exposure of the two generations to varying intensities of education, industrialization, urbanization, and the mass-media. In this sense, the generation gap is a natural and
necessary phenomenon of any dynamic society and it offers a brighter future for that society. Generation gap thus, has a functional aspect. The young can serve as instruments of innovation and societal improvement. The generation gap can be viewed as a potential resource.

Very few researchers have attempted to study the positive, functional aspect of the generation gap. The present study was undertaken with this in mind. It was decided to investigate discontinuity among parents and offspring in attitudinal modernity and value orientations.

The term "Modernity" explicitly identifies an openness and a commitment to the new as opposed to the old. It implies the consciousness of cultural change. The concept of modernity is particularly useful in the study of generation gap because it covers all the important dimensions of socio-cultural values as well as contemporary rational and scientific attitudes. It therefore highlights the important differences between parents and children. Modernity is a concept which is rooted in the individual but it relates the individual to the society. Therefore, a generation gap indicating greater modernity in the younger generation becomes a positive factor rather than a negative one.

Values are conceptions of the desirable. Definitions of the desirable may change with progression through age-related social positions. In a dynamic society, the problems, issues and conditions of life change from time to time, generation to generation. Thus, an issue of social consequence which is important to one generation may not hold as much importance for the succeeding generation. Attitudes held by individuals towards contemporary topics represent their value orientations.
The present study investigated the magnitude and nature of the generation gap in Goan society by employing socio-economic status (SES) as the independent variable and attitudinal modernity and value orientations as dependent variables.

The Attitudinal Modernity Scale was used to measure modernity in attitudes. Value orientations were measured by the Contemporary topics Questionnaire.

The main objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the extent and nature of the generation gap as a function of modernity in attitudes.

2. To examine the influence of SES and sex on the generation gap.

3. To examine the extent and nature of the generation gap in value orientations

The approach of the present research was on a micro (intra-familial) level using two generations: College-going youth in Goa and both their parents.

The analysis of modernity scores indicated a generation gap between parents and children. The percentage of modern scorers in the children generation was more than twice the percentage of modern scorers in the parental generation. Also, the differences in modernity scores between the two generations were significant, confirming the presence of a generation gap. There was a variation in the scores on the four dimensions of modernity. This produced a variation in generation gap on the four dimensions of modernity. The generation gap was greatest on the socio-cultural dimension of modernity. The younger generation displayed more modernity than the older generation on social issues such as the status of women in society, population explosion and various measures to halt it, culturally
transmitted social customs, the caste hierarchy in society and social equality in class stratified systems.

The present study also sought to verify the differential influence of SES on generation gap. SES was taken as a composite measure of parental income, education and father's occupation, supplemented with an inventory of material possessions. A sample belonging to strictly either of two categories: high SES and low SES was selected. There emerged a significant influence of SES on generational differences. The generation gap was more pronounced at the high SES level than at the low SES level.

An intra-generational comparison between SES levels revealed a significant difference for parents as well as for children. Thus, the differences in life-experiences generated by the SES level one belongs to appeared to influence the generation gap.

Further analysis showed that mothers and daughters differed significantly on attitudinal modernity between SES levels, but fathers and sons did not exhibit much differences on attitudinal modernity between SES levels. Thus, SES membership had a greater influence on the females in the sample studied.

An attempt was also made to investigate the influence of sex on the generation gap. Although the generation gap appeared to be greater in relation to mothers than in relation to fathers, no significant differences were revealed in the attitudinal modernity scores of fathers and mothers. The differences between the attitudinal modernity scores of sons and daughters too were not significant. Sex did not have a differential impact on the modernity scores of the sample studied. This can be attributed to the fact that level of education was taken as one of the main factors while assigning individuals to the two SES levels. Thus no significant sex differences were found between the modernity scores of fathers and
mothers as they were matched on education. College education seems to have neutralized sex differences in modernity scores between sons and daughters.

The present research also examined the evidence for a generation gap in value orientations by studying the attitudes held by the two generations towards contemporary topics. Findings revealed a significant generation gap on only two of the six contemporary topics studied, namely casteism and dress code. Parents seemed to settle for the status quo, unlike the younger generation which being exposed to a heterogeneous college atmosphere, welcomed change. There was no significant gap in the attitudes held by the two generations towards the contemporary topics of terrorism, sex, drug use and authority. Both the generations underplayed the importance of these issues. However, the older generation displayed more concern than did the younger generation regarding the issues of drug use and terrorism. The parental generation appeared more concerned about the impact of terrorism on the country’s future and about their college-going adolescent children getting involved in the use of drugs. The student generation has treated both these issues lightly. They do not see them as a problem of any consequence to themselves. They view these issues as far and distant, not connecting with their life. Hence, they have been less severe in their moral judgements than their parents and have taken a more permissive stance on these issues.

The following conclusions were drawn:

1. There exists a significant generation gap between the two generations on attitudinal modernity.

2. There is a variation in generation gap on the four dimensions of modernity.
3. The generation gap is greater on the dimension of socio-cultural modernity than on the other three dimensions of modernity.

4. The generation gap is least on the dimension of political modernity than on the other three dimensions of modernity.

5. There is an influence of SES on the generation gap.

6. In the high SES level, there exists a significant generation gap between children and their parents.

7. There is a significant generation gap between low SES sons and their fathers on socio-cultural modernity, political modernity and total modernity.

8. There is a significant generation gap between low SES sons and their mothers.

9. There is no significant generation gap between low SES daughters and their fathers.

10. There is a significant generation gap between low SES daughters and their mothers on socio-cultural modernity and on total modernity.

11. There is a greater generation gap in the high SES group than in the low SES group for the son/father, daughter/father and daughter/mother dyads.

12. There is a greater generation gap in the high SES group than in the low SES group for the son/mother dyad on socio-cultural modernity and health modernity.
13. There is a greater generation gap in the low SES group than in the high SES group for the son/mother dyad on personality modernity, political modernity and total modernity.

14. The generation gap in attitudinal modernity was greater in relation to fathers than in relation to mothers in the case of sons from both SES levels and the daughters form the low SES level.

15. There were no significant sex differences in generation gap.

16. The differences in the attitudinal modernity scores of fathers and mothers, who comprised the parental generation, were not wide enough to be considered significant.

17. There were no significant sex differences between the attitudinal modernity scores of the sons and daughters who comprised the student generation.

18. There exists a significant gap in the attitudes held by the two generations towards casteism and dress code.

19. There is no significant gap in the attitudes held by the two generations towards terrorism, sex, drug use and authority.

20. The attitudes held by the younger generation towards sex, casteism, dress code and authority are more progressive than those held by the parental generation towards these issues.

21. The attitudes held by the younger generation towards drug use and terrorism are less severe than those held by the parental generation towards these issues.