INTRODUCTION

This study explores the socio-cultural aspects of foodways in Goa. The study assumes that current foodways, containing elements of novelty and tradition, communicate to us the nature of socio-cultural changes and other transformations in general. An exploration into the formation of these foodways in Goa facilitates understanding the nature of the structural as well as processual aspects of food related aspects of society and culture.

Basically, the study focuses on the foodways located in the domestic sphere and the emerging and also expanding extra domestic sphere. By conducting fieldwork and analysing the oral narratives of the people an attempt has been made to have a glimpse of their recent culinary past, say for example, on the eve of liberation and afterwards. An attempt is made to observe and describe the socio-cultural aspects of the contemporary culinary practices.

While anthropological and historical interest in food and eating are as old as the disciplines themselves, it is only recently that the sociologists have become sensitive to food related issues. No wonder, in their first of its kind review volume on Sociology of Food Mennel et al. (1992) begin their introduction by stating: “Until quite recently, few sociologists have given much attention to food and eating as topics of serious intellectual interest.” According to these pioneering sociologists of food the taken for granted nature of the culinary realm may be the reason for this neglect. In order to emphasize the centrality of food for human social relations and cultural practices and also as a prelude to the elaboration of the issues addressed and the procedures followed in my study, I will describe the interface among food, society and culture: The interface constitutes the legitimate domain of sociological/anthropological study.
Biological Foundations of Food

Food intake is an inevitable physiological activity for all animals. This activity provides required nutrients for the biological sustenance of the animates. In other words, food is a bio-chemical process and a product, which sustains life. On the basis of types of food consumed the biologists and nutritional scientists classify animals into herbivores, carnivores and omnivores. Humans fall under the omnivorous category, for they obtain their nutrients from both animal and plant sources.

Nutrients or the chemical components of foods contribute to vital bodily processes: the production of energy, the growth and repair of body tissue, and the regulation and control of energy production and generation of tissue. To fulfil these functions we have nutrients that can be classified under five basic groups: carbohydrates, fats, proteins, minerals and vitamins.

There are diverse sources from which human beings can obtain and do obtain nutrients. They include a whole range of plant and animal products that contribute to the human diet. Perhaps this nutritional versatility has been a vital factor in the evolutionary success of our species, for humans have successfully colonised virtually every available habitat type (Beardsworth and Keil 1997: 50-51).

Biological Necessity and Human Culinary Practice: Towards a Definition of Foodways

Evidently, for humans eating is not simply an activity aimed at obtaining required nutrients. There is clearly much more to it than that. Moreover, there is a fundamental difference between human eating practices that are different from the food and eating habits of animals. While fulfilling their hunger and thirst humans form culinary practices -used interchangeably with the term ‘foodways’- that are not
simply matters of ‘fuelling’ or alleviating hunger pangs or taking enjoyment in
gustatory sensations: Food and eating are shaped and reshaped by culture on the one
hand and individual likes and dislikes on the other. Simultaneously, the type of food,
the availability of food, and the political economy of food influence the context and
content of eating practices. The animals do not store for tomorrow. It is common
sense knowledge that only the hungry lion hunts. While the humans not only procure
food, they also store food and spend most part of their life in ensuring sustainable
supply of food. For humans therefore it is not enough to procure food but also
preserve it. In the human socio-cultural world food procuring and preservation are
important primary foodways.

Let us elaborate the issue of diversity in human foodways as a preparation to
define them. Even though the universal human requirement of certain specific
nutrients, very rarely do humans consume similar foodstuffs throughout the world.
Even a casual observer finds plurality of foods being consumed in plurality of ways.
This observation clearly demonstrates the multiple influences on the selection of
foodstuffs and foodways. These influencing factors may be economy, ecology,
culture, and subjective liking.

The last factor, the liking, also answers the question why people rarely eat
only the essential food. Many a time we consume those substances which may not be
a proper meal as per the standards prescribed by a dietician. An important socio-
cultural aspect to be noted here is the concept of taste or palatability. Taste is not a
constant phenomenon. It continues to change with cultural innovations. Throughout
history, humans are consciously or spontaneously engrossed in inventing different
techniques of eating food and thereby making it enjoyable. Our ability to recognise
taste and modify it and develop foodways, according to social anthropologists, is a
'marker' underlying the transition from 'animal hood' to 'human hood' (Cohen 1987: 77).

Apart from taste, selection of food and eating habits, food preferences and avoidance have meanings surrounding them. In other words, the foodways are influenced by food ideologies that are being evolved in the course of our interactions with other people, cultural artefacts and the surrounding environment. Food ideologies are ideas and beliefs pertaining to the realm of food and eating. While they are the part of the abstract aspects of food, foodways, the concrete expressions of these ideologies, constitute the practical aspects of food.

Now we are ready to attempt at a definition of foodways as used in this thesis. Recently sociologists have paid increasing attention to food, eating, and nutrition, as evidenced by the growing number of publication on the subject. This newly emerged sub field of Sociology has foodways as its focal attention. This is evident from Beardsworth and Keil's textbook on the Sociology of Food entitled “Sociology on the Menu” published in 1997. The foodways are a type of 'folkways', the general standards of life developed around food and eating by the people of a given context. They are the group habits surrounding food.

The term 'folkways' defined as standards of group behaviour has been introduced by W.G. Sumner (1906), one of the early American Sociologists. Sumner, also a Social Darwinist, provides an account of the evolution and transformation of individual habits into group habits. He conceptualises group habits or the repeated ways of doing things by the members of a given group as folkways. "The folkways of a social system are a set of norms governing commonly accepted practices, customs, and habits that make up the fabric of everyday life" (quoted in Johnson 2000: 124). In this sense, foodways are a case of folkways. Social scientists studying group aspects
of food use this word interchangeably with such usages as all manners of food (Mennel 1985), foodways, menus (Beardsworth and Keil 1997), dietary patterns (Vidyarthi et al. 1979), ways of handling foods (Khare 1976) and food habits and culinary practices. Among these multiple terms I have taken the term foodways to designate human socio-cultural practices surrounding food and eating. In this sense, Foodways make the culinary social system of a given social context.

Reciprocal Relations Between Food and Eating and Society and Culture

It is possible to identify the ways in which food and eating reflect society and culture. Firstly, in all human societies there are many-fold cultural meanings and discourses surrounding food - food is a symbolic medium par excellence. Secondly, food consumption habits mark boundaries between social classes, geographic regions, nations, cultures, genders, life-cycle stages, religions and occupations. They are used to distinguish rituals, traditions, festivals, seasons and times of day. Thirdly, food structures the ‘personalities’, for example, dietary habits are used to establish and symbolise control over one’s body (Lupton 1996: 1-2).

Similarly, we can discern the influence of society and culture on the selection of food and institutionalisation of foodways. One glaring example is classification of foodways into a number of binary categories and restraining ourselves in preferring certain foods and foodways. Though fish and fish products are available in plenty in the coastal regions many Brahmanical traditions practice a taboo on eating fish. Only the Gouda Saraswat Brahmin groups in Goa eat fish. As Falk (1994: 69) rightly recognises, food as a biological category is replaced as something ‘edible’ in the course of cultural evolution. In the next step of cultural evolution, “the original Homo Culinarius divided the world into edible and inedible. For example, the Hua people (Papua, New Guinea) have a word for ‘everything’ (do, ‘ado’na) which literally
translated means 'that which can be eaten and that which cannot be eaten' (Falk 1994: 69). On this line we can identity several other culturally constructed binary oppositions of food and foodways such as good or bad, masculine or feminine, powerful or weak, alive or dead, healthy or unhealthy, a comfort or a punishment, sophisticated or gauche, a sin or a virtue, animal or vegetable, raw or cooked, self or other. These binary oppositions constitute the subject matter of structural study of foodways.

Food scarcity and food phobia are some other instances wherein we can identify the socio-cultural influences on food and foodways. Giddens, for example, describes the relationship between cultural notions of body image and food phobia in advanced industrial societies (1998:116-117). He recognises the specific problems experienced by western teenagers in relation to anorexia and bulimia². The occurrence of starvation deaths amidst plenty due to political economic dysfunctions³ is yet another example.

Religious beliefs may also play a role in the exclusion of certain items from the diet. The avoidance of pork prescribed by Judaism and Islam and the avoidance of beef prescribed by Hinduism are examples. Every human diet carries an emblematic charge along with the bundle of nutrients. Thus our view of a particular food item is shaped as much as by what that item means to us as by how it tastes or by its ability to satisfy the body’s nutritional needs.

In fact, the symbolic dimension of the foods we eat are of such central importance to us that in extreme instances we might even envisage starving rather than eat technically edible substances that our culture defines as prohibited. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that when humans eat they eat with the mind as much as with the mouth (Beardsworth and Keil 1997: 52).
The above discussion clearly demonstrates the polyvalent significance of food and eating for human culture and civilisation. Occupying a central place in the biological and socio-cultural life of human beings, food and eating play a key role in the formation of socio-cultural institutions and processes. Such a significance of food and eating has been reiterated by Hartog and Staveren (1985: 4-7 quoted in Doshi 1995: 25-26) in their 'Manual for Social survey of Food Habits and Consumption in Developing Countries'. In their view, food performs several functions for society such as gastronomic function, means of cultural identity, religious and magical function, means of communication, expressions of economic wealth and status and means of exercising influence and power. In short, it can be stated that the food of a people is evolved through a joint process wherein the people, food ideology, environment, nutritional requirements and socio-cultural institutions and processes continually interact with each other.

The issues dealt in this study squarely fall within the act of eating that “lies at the point of intersection of a whole series of intricate, physiological, psychological, ecological, economic, political, social and cultural processes” (Beardworth and Keil 1997: 6). The foodways in the domestic dining zone in Goa are subjected to multiple influences and are in a state of flux. Such a foodways constitute the subject matter of this study and I will attempt a statement of my concern in the succeeding discussion.

THE CONCERN OF THE PRESENT STUDY: DOMESTING DINING IN GOA

Domestic dining zone

For analytical purposes we can categorise the foodways as located in two different but related zones: the domestic and the extra-domestic. Whereas the former is the household set up where our daily alimentary requirements are regularly taken care of, the latter sphere includes occasions to dine/eat out side the home. In Goa, this
latter zone is expanding day by day and this study focussed on the nature of this expansion under such items as transformation of the kitchen and the swelling extra-domestic sphere in the study area.

As far as India is concerned, the domestic zone or the domain of the household is the central part of social arrangement. Indian sociologists have shown time and again that the institution of the family (household is its central zone) in association with *jati* and village community is the basis of Indian social organisation. The human network begins here in the household and expands from here. Effects of socio-cultural change on foodways and *vice versa* are encapsulated in the domestic dining practices. Domestic dining has bearing on foodways and food ideologies in the extra-domestic zone also. In fact, the domestic zone is the centre and the other zones are appended to it. The axial problem of the study is to give an account of the constant interplay between the central domestic on the one hand and the surrounding and swelling extra-domestic on the other with the principal aim of understanding the changing nature of the domestic dining zone.

**Domestic Dining Zone and Societal and Cultural Changes**

The dining practices in the domestic zone have a bearing on several aspects of society and culture. We may, for instance, look into the process of gendering of foodways. Food preparation at home absorbs huge amount of time. Provisioning and shopping, storage and preserving, preparation and cooking, serving and cleaning are regular activities necessary to sustain the regular eating habits of all. Much of such work has been done by women. Studies on domestic division of labour have shown that women’s role was mainly to carry out the domestic cooking and other related household tasks (Warde 1997: 22).
Feminist scholars also raised several questions relating to gender implications of culinary practices such as dual role management, technological changes and changing structure of kitchen and so on. In this regard, it has been observed that notwithstanding modern gadgets helping the women in the performance of domestic chores, the expectation that the women are the custodians of domestic kitchen remains unaltered. The questions like, is it so in Goa, if so why, were the initial exploratory points for us. They facilitated us to raise certain other questions like who are associated with the task of provisioning, preparing, arranging, serving and cleaning? What changes are taking place?

Along with social arrangement for cooking and serving, foodways in the domestic zone have bearing on several other aspects of society and culture such as jati, religion, economy, health, and ecology. Let us take the example of religion. Several domestic foodways are at the centre of the institutional complex of religion and the system of rituals among the households of the members of different religious groups. The practices of offering food to the deities and retrieving it as 'prasad'; fasting and food-avoidance; categorising food stuffs on the basis of notions of purity and pollution; performance of sanskaras, special pujas and associated ceremonial feasting - these and many other aspects of religion-food interface in the domestic zone are sociologically relevant. We have taken religion as a point of illustration in general.

The study considered several other societal domains.

The foodways in contemporary society have been influenced by several new trends and pressures linked to the expansion of market in terms of globalisation and changing notions of good health and 'well-shaped body', and revolution in visual and print media and migration both within and outside the country. Thus food ideologies and practices associated with food have been changing through the times. It is an
established sociological fact that the socio-cultural changes are associated with the encounter of different cultural groups.

Writing as back as 1966, Douglas noticed an ideological distinction between raw and cooked food in the context of Indian caste system. According to this ideology, when raw food is cooked it becomes ritually superior and cooking thus signifies ritual break which removes impurity caused by the contact the food has had with the lower caste when it was in raw form (quoted in Falk 1994: 71). This Western structural interpretation of ritual status of food is problematic. It does not take into consideration empirical variations in food ideologies in India. Among the cooked food also there are degrees of purity and pollution. Food cooked with ghee is superior to all other cooking mediums. Food cooked in water is very much volatile and a Brahmin could eat food cooked in water only in another Brahmin of similar status. This ideology along with other aspects such as proper food items, eating territory, times and frequency had undergone revisions and adaptations. Such changes indicate the nature of socio-cultural changes that may be systematically studied by students of sociology.

What are such practices in Goa? What are the food ideologies behind them? What are the changes and how can we account for them? To arrive at an understanding, a systematic study of the making of food ideologies and foodways in the domestic zone was undertaken.

Available Published Knowledge With Reference to Food in Goa

We can identify a few scholarly works that make a mention of food items and food habits of the people of Goa. In his attempt to give an historical and archaeological sketch of the city of Goa, Fonseca (2001 originally 1878) gives an
account of the social background of food of the people of Goa. His account is highly impressionistic.

‘Rice is the favourite article of diet, supplemented among the upper and middle classes by various dishes of meat, fish, and vegetables, dressed in the modern European style, and among the poor by fish and vegetables, meat being indulged in on Sundays or festive occasions alone. The meals are generally wound up by a course of fruits and sweets by those who can afford these luxuries. (2001: 13).

Shirodkar and Mandal (1993) have listed about 34 communities and have described in detail the food items and habits of these communities along with other ethnographic details. In his ethnographic study of village Chandor in South Goa, Gomes (1987) makes certain references to the traditional foodways of some jatis. He takes note of the prevalence of the hierarchical social order among both the Catholics and the Hindus of the village and it’s bearing on the celebration of the feasts. He observes how certain feasts are exclusively celebrated by only certain Brahmin Christian Goankars. Along with documenting the restrictions on the commensal activities, he describes the types of food being distributed during various occasions and feasts and underlying social connotations.

A recent attempt at describing the culinary transformation in Goa is found in an article by Coelho and Sen (2001). They contended that the spread of South American and African plants imported by the Portuguese was responsible for the change in culinary habits and lifestyle of the people of India especially in Goa. Chillies were specially imported from the New World and became essential ingredient in Goan cuisine. They also described how the Portuguese introduced meat in the diet of the people of Goa. The introduction of Christianity contributed to making Goans
more ‘catholic’ in eating of meat. While Hindus abstain from beef and Muslims do not eat pork, the Goan Christians eat both these in addition to chicken and lamb. The Portuguese method of cooking both fish and meat were combined with the Goan mix of spices.

Many in Goa feel that the introduction of beef and pork is associated with evangelical activity. Rodrigues (2000: 13) writes:

‘The Portuguese introduced meat in the diet of Goans, especially those converted to Christianity. In fact, beef and pork were used as a means of converting people. Historical accounts disclose that pieces of meat or animal blood were thrown on the roofs of houses to pollute Hindus and Muslims, since both beef and pork were religious taboo for the former as pork was for the latter.’

Notwithstanding the cultural significance of the above observation, the absence of specific historical account, references, and analysis makes this observation incomplete. However, the differences between the cuisine and culinary practices of the two communities, the Hindus and Christians of Goa, are too conspicuous. It may be naive if one takes the Hindu culinary practice as the earlier point in the culinary continuum, and the Christian culinary practices, because they are the product of the encounter with the European foodways, constitute the later points in the culinary continuum. With Liberation came about substantial transformation in Goa. Not only that the migration of the people of Goa within and outside Goa picked up momentum, but also there has been an increase in the number of people migrating into Goa. The various categories of people migrating to Goa brought with them their sets of foodways. Along with these instances of culture contact, the domestic foodways in Goa are being influenced by many other transformations such as occupational
transformation, market expansion, increasing dining/eating out and pressures such as
the revolution in the print and the virtual media.

As yet, we do not have any systematic discussion on the making of the
foodways in Goa, let alone with special reference to the domestic dining. To begin
with, anchoring in the domestic zone, I explored the ideological makeup and
empirical expressions of foodways in transition.

Specific Objectives

1. To explore the aspects of change and continuity in the food items of the
   people of Goa.

2. To understand the dynamics of food related beliefs in Goa with reference
to the domestic dining zone.

3. To explore the dimensions of and influences upon the foodways in the
domestic dining zone.

4. To attempt at an understanding of the emerging extra domestic zone.

It has been attempted to fulfil the above objectives with the help of
ethnographic exploration into the food and foodways of identified people of Panjim as
core area and relatives and friends of the researcher who are spread across the length
and breadth of Goa.

The core area has been selected as the universe for my fieldwork due to
historical, socio-cultural and personal reasons. Historically, the village Taleigao rose
along with the growth of Panjim as the capital of the colonial power. In fact, by the
17th century, Panjim, which was inclusive of the narrow strip of the village of
Taleigao shot up into prominence when the capital of Goa was shifted from Old Goa
to Panjim (Fonseca 2001, originally 1878).
The surrounding rural areas of Panjim including Taleigao, Caranzalem, St. Inez began to undergo transformations due to the processes of urbanisation. Though well up to October 1995 the parts of Panjim Municipality in this area included only those areas falling within 30 meters of the direct road from Panjim to Miramar right up to the Dona Paula Jetty, afterwards Panjim Municipality absorbed the entire Taleigao-Dona Paula village.

The area of Taleigao has been selected due to its rapid social ecological transformation. In this sense it can be considered as representative of Goa as a whole where social ecological transformation due to development is widespread. Some three or four decades ago Taleigao was thinly inhabited and the Plateau was almost empty. But of late it has shot up into prominence and is now considered as an elite locality. Now we find here inhabiting people from within Goa and outside Goa. The researcher herself has migrated to this area in the wake of post-liberation transformations in Goa. This helped her bring in pertinent autobiographical reflections wherever necessary. Thus in this area are inhabited original villagers who follow agriculture and fishing and members of modern occupational categories, people from other parts of Goa and from other parts of India and from abroad.

Ethnography was the orientation of this research. Taleigao-Dona Paula was the geographical context of the research. During the fieldwork along with the interactions with the members of the households of the area with the help of interview guides the researcher participated in traditional and modern dining events. It is the established view that ethnographic field research requires a high level of creativity as it aims primarily at exploring the meanings and producing meanings. To achieve this the researcher was sensitive to many aspects of the interrelations between food and socio-cultural reality.
I collected information with the help of fieldwork, the experiences of which are narrated below.

Field Experiences

In order to achieve the identified objectives, I decided that my research should be a qualitative ethnographic exploration into the food and foodways of the people of Goa. Due to the general nature of the problem, from the commencement, I felt that the study should be more of a hypothesis generating one rather than a hypothesis testing one.

Much of the data is qualitative, explorative, though there is some quantitative data material. There is no question of sampling in numbers as the research was not planned for a hypothesis testing study and such data has played a limited role in the research work.

The core area selected was the Taleigao- Dona Paula region, due to its rapid socio- ecological transformation. This area includes people of different social strata-ranging from the elite to the simple village folk- with diverse occupations including agriculture, fishing industries and business.

My field work began within a year of my registration of Ph.D., i.e. from January 2001 right unto December 2003; adopting various techniques in stages, depending on the required information. The techniques included participation/observation, eliciting oral narratives, collection of articles, advertisements and write-ups from newspapers, magazines, taking photographs, engaging in preparation and consumption of food items/events, collection of cook-books on Goan food and cooking and constructing case-histories.

The participation/observation technique was utilized for collecting information while attending several events: such as parties, weddings, religious and social
festivals, organized by known families, Institutions/Clubs and local Committees. Explanations and narrations from the people were elicited through probing questions during conversations.

During the two-year period of fieldwork, I collected relevant material on food from newspapers and magazines. Articles and advertisements on food and drink, commercial, industrial food items, write-ups and articles on health, diseases and nutrition and body care were part of the collection. I interviewed three hundred and fifty women from the field area who are known to me with the help of an interview guide which is given in the Annexure I. I want to state here that the data collected has only supportive nature and it cannot be used for any generalisation for the whole of Goa for my respondents are not identified on the basis of sampling. The opinions and beliefs of these women have been used to develop my arguments in some chapters.

Cookbooks on Goan Food and cooking were also collected in order to enable me to know the trends in cooking and their influences.

The task of building up case histories of purposively selected households with reference to changing food ways – based on the material drawn from the interview guide was outlined. This was to include the observation of household – specifically in relation to the kitchen layout the store-room wash – room, dining room, kitchen garden domestication of animals agricultural activities, etc. The observation would be linked to the interviews, thereby discerning the contemporary food habits and constructing the meanings and discourses surrounding them.

The thesis has been organized around the following themes:

1. Introduction
2. Sociological study of food: An Overview of literature (Chapter one)
3. Domestic dining: A prelude (Chapter two)
4. Documenting food items: Ecology, food, and society (Chapter three)

5. Domestic foodways: Towards industrial food (Chapter four)

6. Expansion of the extra-domestic zone (Chapter five)

7. New influences and pressures on the domestic and extra-domestic spheres
   (Chapter six)

8. Summary and conclusion

NOTES

1. Here, the word 'food ideology' is used not in the sense of dominant political idea, but in its most general connotation as people's thinking about each of the different items that might be considered as food. This connotation is very general and includes food related beliefs, attitudes, ethos, conventions and convictions held by a group of people. It includes people's concerns about the effects of eating various foods on their health and well being and suitability of some types of food for certain categories of people (Eckstein 1980: 222 quoted in Doshi 1995: 51).

2. Anorexia is an illness with no known physical origin. It is an illness of the body associated with the obsession of teenage girls and women with the ideal of achieving a slim body, who eventually give up eating altogether. Anorexia is an eating disorder, and illness of the affluent. It has no connection with religious beliefs. This notion of slimness originated among women of middle-class groups in the late 19th century. Bulimia is bingeing on food, followed by self-induced vomiting. Anorexia and bulimia are often found together in the same individual. It is obsession concerned with dieting and bodily appearance. Eating disorders are now part of the lives of millions of people in industrial
countries. Besides being purely a personal problem it can turn to be a sociological issue (Giddens 1998: 116-117).

3. The works of Amartya Sen (1981) are illustrations. The weekly News Magazine ‘Outlook’ dated September 17, 2001 in a prime article narrated the pathetic situation of 50 million starving Indians when 60 million tones of food grain rots in the godowns of the Food Corporation of India.

4. A few years ago there erupted a controversy over the publication of a book by Professor D.N. Jha entitled *Holy Cow: Beef in Indian Dietary* wherein he argued that long before the advent of Islam, a typical Indian meal included beef. The Viswa Hindu Parishad was against the publication of this book and held the view that Professor Jha had probably not referred to the correct textual sources (The Times of India, 10 August 2001).

5. One need only go through the diet and nutrition columns of popular magazines and newspapers.

6. Rodrigues (2000: 13) does not give any specific historiographic reference to her observation. It is curious to note that this view is very strongly held in the popular memory.