In this section an attempt is made to clarify the nuances of domestic dining. After a general discussion on the domestic hearth it prepares us to move on to the detailed presentation of domestic dining in Goa in subsequent chapters.

The significance of the domestic hearth magnifies the role of the family and its concerns on food and eating. Speaking of the private sphere of the family we do not imply that this private sphere is some kind of microcosm to be examined in isolation. The domestic world of the family is inextricably linked to the structures of the wider social system and this is no less true of eating than any other aspect of family life. The sociological analysis of the family is important as the family contributes to the continuity and sociability of society as a whole. Moreover the family is viewed as the continuing important unit of consumption as it asserts a powerful formative influence on its members.

In Kare's (1973) view, at the moral economy of the Indian meal lay the customary practices of domestic eating and feeding. Though much is changing socially and economically, at the domestic hearth most of the daily meal distribution and use occurs at this locus. A domestic hearth usually has to face a whole range of strains that fluctuations in income, family size, interpersonal relationships, personal health and moral choices produce, and has to find its way through them to provide feasible and acceptable meals to the household everyday. Again, it is at the domestic hearth that new notions of good taste, sufficiency, satisfaction and survival have to be negotiated. The strains of larger society get reflected sooner or later at the domestic hearth. The household clearly mirrors the moral and material condition of the larger society (Dharmasastra literature, Kane 1973 quoted in Khare 1973).
The significant contribution of the family’s role in matters of eating makes this unit, not just an area where food is consumed but also much more. First of all, the social dimension of eating and those of emotions are tied together in the context of the family. It is here that food beliefs and behaviour are developed from early childhood, and become part of the family unit. It is for this reason that the family meal is considered, even today as an important site for the construction and reproduction of the contemporary ‘family’. Meal times are also integral events at which children are acculturated into the rules and norms of ‘civilized’ behaviour. Of late, concerns are often expressed about the prevalence of take-away foods and the tendency of family members to eat meals at different times and to eat the evening meal before the television sets.

Social scientists in their studies on the significance of food and eating have emphasized the importance of family and food. According to Moraq Frazer, the sharing of food is very ancient (1994:15). Frazer goes a step further and adds that meal tables are the training ground of a family, a community, and a civilization. In fact, the ‘family meal’ and the ‘dinner table’ are potent symbols of family itself.

Through her structuralist approach Mary Douglas suggests that foodways can be seen as a kind of language encoding patterns of social relations, particularly, those connected with social boundaries and with processes of inclusion and exclusion (Douglas, 1975). She analyses the food-related ideas, categories and practices in use in her own home to examine the food language and its message.

Another sociologist Lalonde (1992) while discussing Douglas’s structural analysis of the meal as an object, prefers to describe the meal as an event and a lived experience which draws its meaning from a complex array of sensory and cognitive factors. The food consumption patterns can be seen as highlighting the boundaries of
the nuclear family. Domestic food and eating can act as linkages between the nuclear family and the extended family and indeed between the nuclear family and the wider community. According to Khare and Rao (1986) the moral and sociological conception of the Indian meal rests on the notion of both eating and feeding (i.e. shared consumption). Eating and feeding domains in India like the food in general are recognized as essentially moral activities and conditions. What people eat matters to them among other reasons for staying healthy and satisfied. One’s diet is considered to be a part of one’s medicine and both diet and medicine become an essential part of one’s “effort” (*Purusartha*) to maintain and regain health.

**Domestic Dining: Documenting the nostalgia with the help of Memory**

The patterns of eating and feeding are handed down from one generation to another. Though much is changing socially and economically, yet we all to some degree relish and retain some of the specific tastes we have acquired from our childhood days. The nostalgic memories of certain food items fill us with yearnings for the traditional items. Some of the food items still relished in the study area include the locally prepared bread or *paun* brought to our doorstep by the *Poder*. Every village had its own traditional bakery with its old-fashioned ‘hole-in-the-wall’ oven. This *paum* is baked fresh everyday (twice) flavoured with toddy and sold by the Poder who carries his basket of fresh bread from door to door. In the earlier days when I used to visit Goa during vacations i.e. soon after liberation I was awakened each morning with the sound of ‘zang-zang’ made by the bamboo staff to which loose metal discs were attached by the Poder to announce his arrival. Even today people say they prefer the local bread to the sliced bread prepared by modern industries like the Monginis, Modern or the Spencer.
Another item still eaten with much relish is the traditional *sannas* with *sorpotel*. The *sannas* are prepared from soaked rice, ground into paste to which toddy is added. These are steamed giving it an idli shape. The *sorpotel* is a delicacy of the Christian folks, made of pork meat and this is an important dish prepared for feasts.

Most Goans consider their ‘*xit-coddi*’ as their main item of diet; no meal is complete without this item. Even when they travel they are on the look out for restaurants that can provide them with this specific Goan Dish. The Goan curry differs depending on the use of type of fish. It is prepared from ground masala and the main ingredients are coconut juice and chillies. The Goan diaspora spread throughout the globe reminisce fond memories of their favourite *xit-coddi* with its gustatory appeal.

Pickles (*lonchem*) and salt fish are also widely eaten. These are special items prepared and preserved for the monsoon period when fish is a bit expensive and rare. In the seasons other than the monsoon the woman brings her basket of fish calling out as she passes from door to door ‘Nistem zai ghai’.

**The change from the Traditional to the Modern**

A visit to any supermarket, with its elaborate displays of food from all parts of the world, is a readily available demonstration of the choice and variety available to the modern consumer. The supermarket itself may be considered one of the most successful outcomes of the development of modern systems of food production and distribution. It indicates also the extent of control over quality, quantity and the reliability of supplies.

The modern market with its organized set of links between food production, distribution and consumption depicts the ongoing process of change – from the past to the present – and the ongoing period. In trying to understand the making of the
modern food system, it is necessary to be aware of both continuity and change in the social processes, which shape the ways in which food is produced, distributed and consumed. The psychological and physiological need for variety of food, the constant interaction between humans and their environment, the development of newer technological inventions and innovations all tend to cause the gradual change in the food production and distribution and the acceptance or rejection of the many changes, in eating, cooking presentation and modification of food and food items. In fact the modern food system is merely the most recent attempt of human societies to come to terms with the perennial problems of producing food.

I will specifically categorize the changes in the eating habits, cooking and preservation including storage and the latest developed trends in culinary practices of the Goans in the study area.

Staple Food

The cuisine of Goa before and soon after liberation was a blend of Portuguese preparation with Indian condiments. Traditional Goan cooking needed plenty of muscle and time for preparing food by way of grinding and marinating.

The staple diet in Goa is rice and fish curry. This ‘Xit-Coddi’ had its gustatory appeal to all high and low, rich and poor. A visitor to the house was invited to partake of Xit-coddi in true traditional Goan hospitality. The Goan curry is not stereotype; it varies for fish to fish. Varieties of fish purchased from the market made it necessary to cook the particular fish in a specific way. The curry masala was prepared from freshly ground masala, the main ingredients being coconut and chillies (dry, red). Curries would include ‘bangdeamchi’ (mackerel), tarleamchi (sardines), mori (shark) or sweet curry ‘Caldin’: Others included Khube curry, crabmeat curry, tisreao curry,
oyster curry salt fish with bimblim, or samarachi curry of fresh or dried prawns with solam and pari.

For breakfast, the upper class and rich preferred tea or coffee with bread, butter, and eggs while others prepared wheat or rice chapattis such as bakri, coiloeo poe eaten with the previous days curry or meat dish which was usually congealed in an earthen vessel over a woodfire. Goan labourers mainly ate nasne bakri or amil. At midday the meal consisted of pez (canjie) eaten at about 11 a.m. and 12 noon. The hot steaming gruel was relished with attoilolem umon and lonchem.

Lunch consisted of side dishes of meat, fish and vegetables with bread or rice, chapattis, but the main dish was xit-coddi with toca-boca (tonac launc) such as fried fish, chourisas, pickles etc. The poor and labourers have large quantities of rice/curry with lonchem (pickles or salt fish). Pork is consumed by Christians mainly on Sundays and every feast day.

Goan housewives in the past, as it is now, were mainly relegated to the kitchen. For the evening tea, they had homemade snacks like shevio, pudde, patoleo, pinaca filoz etc. Evening meals or supper usually consisted of meat, fish and vegetables with bread or chapattis. When traveling to and from, people in the 1950s and 60s carried home cooked items for the way. This bundle or pottli or bhuthi consisted of bhakris wrapped in plantain leaf.

If they were pilgrims going to old Goa for the exposition they carried their clothes, food provisions, essential kitchenware, bedding etc. they cooked their food around the church premises. The pilgrimage of Goenco Saib was a very significant journey. People being devout prayed throughout their journey (usually by foot) and ate frugal meals mainly of pez and bakri or plain rice green chutney sukee khareacho (dried fish) and lonchem (pickle). Some carried egg pao or rice.
At the church premises the familiar cheoris pao and sorpotel were the snacks/dishes available from the good old days till date. Today the hotel business in old Goa is so lucrative that people install stalls around the fair where there is a brisk business or readymade snacks, drinks, alcohol and many other goodies sold to the pilgrims. Around the church devotees stop to purchase the eatables like bazlele chonnem (fried grams), kaddieo-boddio and Khajem (mannem) Goan sweets. Every one returned home with these eatables, which are then distributed to others at home, neighbours and relatives.

Modernization and technological advancement has opened up vistas of changes in man's environment, life style, eating habits, in fact in all his living conditions. It is no less significant in his food habits and consumption pattern. It is very obvious that culinary habits are undergoing drastic changes. On my several visits to Goa before and soon after liberation, the people I reacted with spoke to and questioned on the eating habits of Goans revealed much information on the peculiar food items and choice of foodstuffs. Since 1970 I have settled in Goa and observed the process of change upon change and today the scenario is far different to the old traditional lifestyle and culinary tastes among the Goan -- even the old folk, and the villager mention the specific changes in their diet which is due to many factors that have crossed the Goan soil and condition.

In the past, just prior to liberation a visit to Goa, transported me straight to a Portuguese town. Everything - the people, the culture, the dress style, the food habits and cuisine -- reflected the Portuguese. The food was typical of a Portuguese cuisine -- the items of meat, fish wine desserts -- everything to the last detail -- including the table etiquette, cutlery, crockery -- prevailed in every upper middle class and the elite society of Goa. The aristocratic rich followed closely (copied) all the customs of the
Portuguese and even observed some reserve regarding their association with the lower class or labour communities who were engaged in working on farms and plantations.

**Domestic Kitchen**

The traditional Goan kitchen would be large, and usually attached to the well. It had a high tiled roof with ventilators for the smoke from the chulas to escape. There was a stone sink for washing the utensils, Close to the chulas or fireplace for cooking was to enclosure for the immediate requirement of firewood. Overlooking the well was the windows fitted with a pulley to draw water from the well and a large copper pot for storing water. Cooking water was stored in mud pots. In a corner of the kitchen was placed the gunsuno or rogdo (masala grinding stone) with a stool to sit on. Rice that was cooked in earthen pot was placed on the condfo — a special mud vessel for straining rice cooked in modki (mud pot). Besides there were kitchen tools like adavo (to scrape coconut and to clean fish); coito (big knife or chopper) to break the coconut or to chip firewood; a sinc-o, a coir rope contrivance to place cooked dished out of the reach of pets and children and a nolli i.e. a small 6” long copper pipe to keep fire aflame by blowing through it.

In the background, there was an outhouse for storing firewood and a ghur for pigs or fowls. There was also a khono (a big mud wall enclosure) in which all this household sweepings and other waste was dumped and burnt. The accumulated gobor (ashes) from the chulas was dumped in it and this along with addition of salt was used as manure for the coconut trees or for the fields. Also significant was the Mitachi Confi for storing the salt (a must during the monsoon period). Every household had pigs (Christian houses) and fowls reared and at times some kept cattle and goats.

Today the scene has completely changed even those who live in large bungalows do not have the old traditional kitchens. Some have maintained the old
types with or lot of modifications. Wells are to be found in village homes and rearing of animals is fast disappearing among the upper classes with the availability of government sachets of milk and all types of meat, available at the market which one usually visits almost every day, people have given up the old traditional living styles.

The old grinding stone is no longer in use. Masalas are either ground in the mixer or grinder or purchased as readily available packets from the markets. The paddy rice is replaced by raw polished rice and except those who own and maintain fields, the Goan of this period state they prefer to use the easy to cook raw rice like the basmati and other varieties as the old chulas have made way from the modern kitchen fitted with gas stove cooking. Hence one does not use mud pots, they may be seen on very remote villages where the gas cylinder have not found their ways. Another important feature is the use of pressure cookers by the women folk which saves a lot of time and since the modern housewife has to take up a job to make both ends meet – most of the modern houses are fitted with the latest household gadgets – including water heater, refrigerator, micro-wave ovens, washing machines etc.

In the recent decades many small nuclear families have opted for a living in small flats. This had of late changed the house styles, living conditions and even cooking ways of the modern homes. With the availability of all items of food and cooking needs in the supermarkets and even small village bazaars, the trend is now for easier, faster and more convenient ways of cooking and eating meals. Another feature of modern house is the style of outdoor or extra domestic eating. People prefer to go out and eat or bring ready to eat items home for consumption.

With the in migration into Goa, there has been a gradual change in food items consumed. In fact the people I have met and spoken to and at times had the occasion
to share meals with admit that they have now adopted or modified food consumption pattern. The old xit-coddi is in many a home replaced by different curries prepared fast and with ease by purchasing ready to cook sachets 'from the bazaar – like the curry-in-a hurry, karma's caffreal masala, chandelkars mutton masala etc. chapattis made less often and poe or rice chapattis hardly eaten. Even the sannas are available in the market.

**Storage**

Traditional Goan society with its ideas of storage of food items like grain, cooking ingredients, pickles, salt and other items for cooking was based on the concept of storage and storage facilities. Thus every house had a store room (dispensa) where provision and other things were stored. In it were placed much needed household amenities like the coddo- or bamboo mat, dalli for small bamboo mats for sleeping, khono or big shallow mud vessel with a cover to hold fire on the top, used for baking pastry; a compro – or copper vessel to bake sannas dantam to grind grain into flour, a bhaan or pot (either copper or mud) to place paddy, rice, cereals or mirsango a coblem or big bamboo pole with a net bag and a small knife tied at the top, used for plucking fruits such as mangoes etc. a coddem or wide mouthed mud vessel for washing clothes. In the storeroom were also found bundles of onions placed on bamboo poles on top (candeamchi mouli).

Much of the items that were required to be stored especially for the heavy monsoon rains were purchased from the bazaar like the weekly Mapusa market. People from all villages of Bardez made their way towards the Mapusa Bazar held every Friday. Even till date it is famous and because of its popularity or perhaps due to the force of habit people still visit the bazaar to buy all sorts of provisions. Assorted items like Moira plantains, Aldona chillies, salt fish, jaggery, fish,
vegetables, fruits, plants and pots and household tools and other paraphernalia are sold.

Vessels of copper, mud and stainless steel utensils are also sold. It is a tempting market place for the Goans, as well as people from Bombay and other tourists. Furniture too is sold here. Like the Mapusa Bazar there are other mini bazaars held at Calangute on every Saturday and Banasterim on Friday.

Although there is a definite change in people's attitude regarding storage of food items yet in the villages many people, especially those in traditional village houses at Ribandar and Taleigao that I visited still go to Mapusa bazaar to buy stocks especially during the month of May. Though the items to be stored have decreased in quantity and type since the Panjim and other markets sell all food articles and items throughout the year yet — they have not given up their habits of securing household articles for the monsoon period. The present domestic dining zone is the new one with modern gadgets but nostalgia for the past guides the dining practices. It is believed that the salt stored before the onset of monsoon is tastier than that which is available in packets.

It must be noted that when people change from traditional to modern food in the domestic realm they do not altogether loose their taste for the old. They believe that the traditional food is tastier because of the particular method of preparation and the use of specific vessels for preparation. As the traditional food items are rare the people develop nostalgic memories of those food items. We have to note that the methods of cooking and eating are guided by the dining practices of the past coupled with introduction of new food items due to modernisation and globalisation. Thus we find the continuation of the past with the addition of the new. There is no total dichotomy between the past and the present.