

Name of the Project : **Studies on the Corals and Rocky Reefs of Southwest Coast of India (0253 – RdD)**

F.No.22-43/210 of CS.I. Division

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

The occurrence of coral reefs along the southwest coast was once considered meager to non-existent. But recent observations have shown that there are many reefs and coral communities in the area. The stony corals of the south west coast have not been studied well. Coral patches occur in intertidal locations and submerged banks on the continental shelf along the west coast. Their diversity at these sites is generally restricted to a few genera. If a firm and immobile substratum is available, the likelihood of establishment of coral colony would considerably increase. It proved true off Vizhinjam where almost all the colonies collected were seen attached to break water boulders with the exception of the genus *Montipora* which was attached to the sea bottom. An earlier study made by Pillai and Jasmine (1995) revealed a patchy reef with good growth of *Pocilloporid* corals from Enayam and also a few colonies from the Vizhinjam Bay attached to the boulders.

The sub-tidal rocky out crops are distributed around the Islands off Goa. Hence, three important islands namely, St. George Island, Grand Island and Pequeno Island and St. George Reef were selected for the present study. In Grand Island is located few kilometres west from Mormugao Peninsula in South Goa and about 6 km from Baina Beach. This Island is the lengthiest among the islands off Goa. It is about 6 to 7 Km in length and 1 to 2 km in breadth. The Island is covered by rich rocky reefs and number of exposed rock tips is there around the shallower regions of the Island. This Island has familiar SCUBA diving sites such as **Davy Jones Lockers, Sail Rock, Turbo Tunnel, Surge City and Bounty Bay** and ship wreck called **Suzy's Wreck**. St. George Island is located at the western side of Grand Island and separated from Grand Island by a narrow shallow channel. A light house tops the island and there is a boat jetty at the northern side of the Island. In the St. George Island there is a submerged rocky reef located in the channel in between Pequeno Island and Grand Island. The heavy water current and low visibility around this reef, made it not suitable for a diving that day. During low tide, the tip of the reef can be exposed. Pequeno Island is a small Island situated at a distance of around a kilometre from the Baina Beach of Vasco Da Gama. It is