

**MIGRATION OF FARMERS FROM TRAVANCORE TO MALABAR,
FROM 1930 TO 1960:
AN ANALYSIS OF ITS ECONOMIC CAUSES.**

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PART I

DIMENSIONS OF THE MIGRATION

INTRODUCTION

Individual farmers from different villages of Travancore, a former princely state in the south of India, started moving into parts of Malabar, a district in the former Madras Presidency in British India, from early 1920's onwards. They went to Malabar mainly in search of cultivable land. These individual excursions, grew into a migration of sizeable proportions, between 1930 and 1960.

The former princely state of Travancore, which was the source of the migration, forms the southern-most region of the present State of Kerala in the Indian Union. Travancore extended from the present Neyyattinkara taluk, in extreme south, up to parts of the present Ernakulam district in the north¹. Besides, it also had within its borders, certain majority Tamil-speaking areas, which were merged into the present state of Tamil Nadu, during the formation of linguistic states.

Between Travancore and Malabar, which is to the north of Travancore, there was the state of Cochin. The Malabar

¹ See Map of Kerala on page 3.

district was divided into four revenue divisions, in addition to Fort Cochin, which is now part of the corporation of Cochin. These four divisions - Tellicherry, Calicut, Malappuram and Palghat - roughly correspond to the present districts of Cannanore, Kozhikode, Malappuram and Palghat in the Kerala State. Kerala was formed in 1956, by integrating the majority Malayalam speaking areas of Malabar district, Cochin State and Travancore State.

The migrants from Travancore, settled down, not only within the Malabar district, but also in the border areas of the then Mysore State, Coorg and the present Tamil Nadu state. The majority of them of course, settled down within the borders of Malabar district.

Though the earliest known migrant² was from the lowland taluk of Shertallai, the majority of later migrants came from the three midland³ taluks of Neenachil, Muvattupuzha and

² The person is Mr. Avira Tharakan, Eshupanna Parayil, from Shertallai taluk. He acquired land in Koppa Kadoor in Chick-magalore, in the then Mysore State, in 1921-22, according to the information given by the relatives of the late Tharakan and other early migrants.

³ Based on geographical characteristics, Travancore used to be divided into the three natural divisions of lowland, midland and highland.

KERALA

(AS ON APRIL 1972)

DISTRICTS (11) AND TALUKS (55)

I. CANNANORE DISTRICT

- 1 Kasargode
- 2 Hosdurg
- 3 Thaliparamba
- 4 Cannanore
- 5 Tellicherry
- 6 North Wynad

II. KOZHIKODE DISTRICT

- 7 Badagara
- 8 Quilandy
- 9 South Wynad
- 10 Kozhikode

III. MALAPPURAM DISTRICT

- 11 Ernad
- 12 Tirur
- 13 Perinthalmanna
- 14 Ponnani

IV. PALGHAT DISTRICT

- 15 Ottappalam
- 16 Palghat
- 17 Alathur
- 18 Chittur

V. TRICHUR DISTRICT

- 19 Thalappilly
- 20 Trichur
- 21 Choughat
- 22 Cranganore
- 23 Mukundapuram

VI. ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

- 24 Cochin
- 25 Parur
- 26 Alwaye
- 27 Kunnathunad
- 28 Muvattupuzha
- 29 Kanayannoor

VII. IDIKKI DISTRICT

- *30 Devikulam
- **31 Thodupuzha
- *32 Udumbanchola
- *33 Peermade

VIII. KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

- 34 Vaikom
- 35 Meenachil
- 36 Kottayam
- 37 Changanasserry
- 38 Kanjirappally

IX. ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

- 39 Shortalai
- 40 Ambalapuzha
- 41 Kuttanad
- 42 Thiruvalla
- 43 Chengannoor
- 44 Mavelikkara
- 45 Karthikapally

X. QUILON DISTRICT

- 46 Karunagappally
- 47 Kunnathoor
- 48 Pathanamthitta
- 49 Pathanapuram
- 50 Kottarakkara
- 51 Quilon

XI. TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

- 52 Chirayinkil
- 53 Nedumangad
- 54 Trivandrum
- 55 Noyyattinkara

District Boundary —————

Taluk Boundary

* Formed part of Kottayam District till 1971

** Formed part of Ernakulam District till 1971

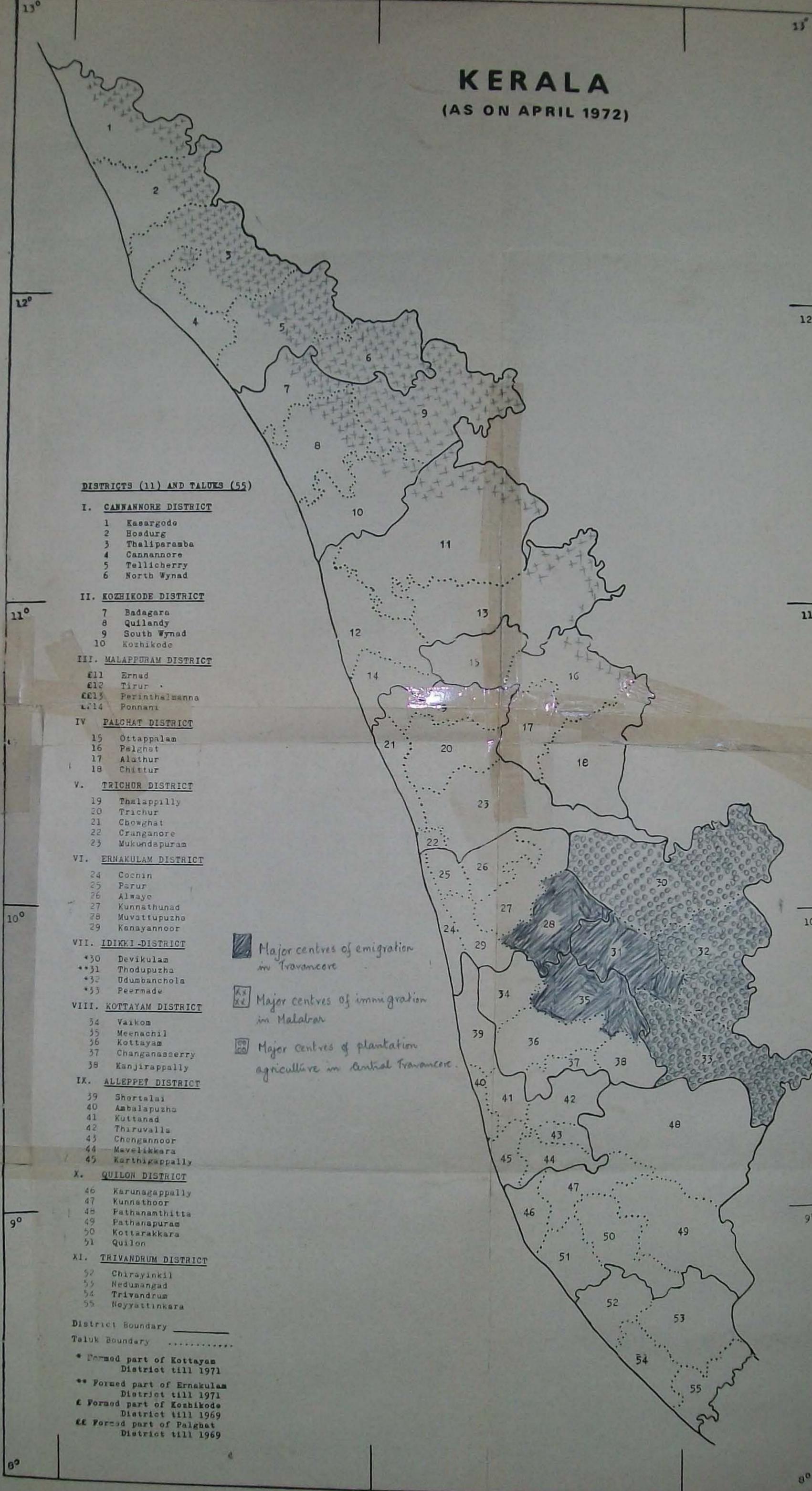
† Formed part of Kozhikode District till 1969

‡ Formed part of Palghat District till 1969

 Major centres of emigration in Travancore

 Major centres of immigration in Malabar

 Major centres of plantation agriculture in Central Travancore



Thodupuzha.⁴

We have information about nearly thirty farmers from Travancore who acquired land in Malabar between 1920 and 1930.⁵ They went either individually or in small groups. Attempts of some of them at least, to cultivate the lands acquired in Malabar, turned out to be abortive. They also had to face difficulties such as attack of Malaria and threats to life and crops from wild animals, in their isolated settlements.

Between 1930 and 1940, Travancorean farmers started coming into Malabar, in larger numbers. Among the nearly 30 pioneers who migrated to Malabar, between 1920 and 1930, many were big farmers in Travancore owning considerable acreage of land.⁶ By contrast, most of the later migrants were small farmers.

⁴ Travancore State was divided into 33 taluks. The present Kerala state has 55 taluks. Though some taluk names are common for both states, the area covered need not be the same in both cases. In order to avoid confusion, whenever reference is made to an old Travancore taluk, it will be specified as Travancore taluk ^{or} as old taluk, and all references to Kerala state taluks will be either as Kerala taluk or as present taluk. Since the same situation exists vis a vis the Malabar district taluks and Kerala state taluks, distinctive references such as Malabar taluk and Kerala taluk will also be made.

⁵ See Appendix - I. The course of the migration is traced in more detail in the Appendix - 1.

⁶ Thomas Pasheparambil: Malabar Kudiyetta Charithram (Mal) unpublished manuscript.

Note: Monsignor Thomas Pasheparambil is a senior priest of the Syrian Catholic diocese of Tellicherry. He is himself an early migrant to Malabar and his unpublished work is based on the reminiscences of many early migrants.

Between 1930 and 1940, four significant settlements of farmers from Travancore developed in Malabar. They were in Kuttiadi in the present Kozhikode district, in Mananthavadi in the old Wayanad taluk, and in Peravur and Kulathuvayal in the old Kottayam taluk. It is estimated that in the first half of the decade 1930-'40, there was an average weekly inflow of two to three families from Travancore.⁷

In the 1940 to 1950 decade, migrants from Travancore entered Malabar in still greater numbers. It is in this decade that the strongest inflow of migrants occurred. During this period, the four settlements of 1930's got enlarged and a number of new settlements emerged. It is possible to trace the development of around 50 settlements of Travancorean farmers, in Malabar, during this period.⁸

Between 1950 and 1960 and in the early years of 1960's, more settlements of Travancorean farmers emerged in Malabar. These new settlements developed, either as off-shoots of earlier settlements, in nearby areas, or independently. Meanwhile, the earlier settlements grew in population. They also started developing public institutions and facilities like schools, roads, dispensaries, convents and churches.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See appendix - I.

The migration of farmers from Travancore region to Malabar region continued even after 1960, and it is going on even today. Nevertheless, the number of persons going to Malabar now is not anywhere as large as it used to be particularly before 1950.⁹

There are three important aspects of the migration to be noted. First, the majority of the migrants from Travancore were small farmers. Among the earliest pioneers there were many big farmers. Later, from around 1940 onwards, more big farmers, who had experience in the cultivation of plantation crops in Travancore, went to Malabar, to open up estates there also.¹⁰ While the pioneering big farmers did not stay permanently in Malabar, the big farmers who migrated later, shuttled between their possessions in Malabar and Travancore. Most of them managed their estates through supervisors. As against this, most of the small farmers, who migrated to Malabar, stayed there permanently, though they retained strong links with their parent villages in Travancore. The small farmers were the life-blood of the

⁹ Discussions with Travancorean settlers in Malabar confirms this impression.

¹⁰ Pasheparambil: op.cit. and 'Kalpakavrisangal Valarunna Kuttidi' Report in the Souvenir of the Sacrosotal Silver Jubilee of Rt. Rev. Dr. Sebastian Valloppally Mal Jubilee Celebration Committee, Tellicherry, 1974.

Travancorean settlements in Malabar.¹¹

Secondly, it was in the hilly tracts of Malabar that most of the Travancorean settlements developed. Most of the migrants settled down in the hilly interior areas in the Malabar taluks of Keshikode, Kurumbanad, Kottayam, Chirakkal, Eranad, Walluvanad and Wayanad.¹² The reason for this preference for hilly tracts must have been that, in the hills, cultivable land was available in comparative plenty. The coastal region of Malabar district had long-standing towns and villages with fairly dense populations. Moreover, the hilly region had climatic and soil conditions conducive to the cultivation of different cash crops in which the migrants were interested. In fact the immigration into the northern taluks of Malabar was on a larger scale than the immigration into southern taluks, as the former had vast areas of undeveloped lands.¹³ The Wayanad taluk was so important a centre of Travancorean settlement, that, in popular usage, the migration to Malabar is sometimes referred to as the "Wayanad Migration".

¹¹ Statistical data to support this assertion can be obtained only by enumerating or surveying the Travancorean settlements in Malabar and by finding out the details of the settlers in the early years of their settlement, on which no reliable data are available. Yet, it is difficult not to get this impression on a visit to these settlements.

¹² Census Handbook 1951, Madras, p.5.

¹³ Ibid.

Yet another important aspect of the migration is that the majority of the migrants were Christians belonging to the Syrian Catholic Rite.¹⁴ Among the Christians of Kerala, those who trace their heritage to St. Thomas, the ~~first~~ Apostle of Christ, who is believed to have preached the Christian message in Kerala in the first century A.D., are known either as Mar Thoma Christians or Syrian Christians. The Syrian Christians are now members of various Christian denominations like Roman Catholic, Syrian Orthodox and Mar Thoma. It was the Syrian Christians belonging to the Roman Catholic denomination who were predominant among the migrants. The Travancore taluks of Meenachil, Thodeyusha and Muvattupusha, which were the major sources of emigration, had large Christian (predominantly Syrian Catholic) populations at the beginning of the present century and

¹⁴ Rites are divisions within the Roman Catholic Church. These divisions are based on the different languages, rituals and traditions followed in liturgical services. The Roman Catholic Church in Kerala has three such Rites viz. Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin. The first two Rites trace their heritage to St. Thomas the Apostle, and till recently used the Syriac language in religious services. The Latin Rite came to Kerala through the Portuguese missionaries who followed that Rite. For more information on the subject, see C.V. Cherian: A History of Christianity in Kerala, Kerala Historical Society, Kottayam 1973 and Abraham Nidhiry: Father Nidhiry, A History of his times, Deepika, Kottayam, 1971.

even before. The table I shows the numerical strength of Christians in the populations of the concerned taluks during the period from 1901 to 1921.

TABLE - I

Statement showing total population and Christian population in the taluks of Meenachil, Muvattupussha and Thodupussha in the year 1901, 1911 and 1921.*

Taluk	Total population in thousands			Christian population in thousands and percentage of the total population		
	1901	1911	1921	1901	1911	1921
Meenachil	70.7	78.9	160.2	38.8 (54.9%)	47.2 (59.8%)	95.4 (59.6%)
Muvattupussha	127.7	133.4	137.5	55.3 (43.3%)	64.0 (48.0%)	65.7 (47.8%)
Thodupussha	32.6	38.5	57.3	10.9 (33.4%)	14.8 (38.4%)	25.6 (44.7%)

* Figures in brackets show the ~~percentage~~ of Christian population in the total population.
as percentage of

[Source: Census of India, Travancore, 1901, 1911 and 1921]

Since the trends in agriculture (described in part II of the study) which caused the migration, affected this region and this community quite strongly, many members of the Syrian Christian community of the Meenachil, Muvattupussha and Thodupussha

taluks migrated to Malabar.

In order to ascertain the dimensions of the migration, the total number of migrants and the acreage of land brought additionally under cultivation by them in Malabar have to be found out. Of these two the number of migrants can be computed on the basis of two indicators. These indicators are the increase in Syrian Catholic or Christian population in Malabar, and the increase in number of people born in Travancore and enumerated in Malabar in successive Censuses, in the concerned period.

The Christian population in Malabar, which stood at around 54000, out of a district total of over 3 million in 1921, increased to around 1,54,000 in a district total of around 4750000 in 1951.¹⁵ The Syrian Christian population in Malabar increased from over 21,000 in 1921 to slightly over 23,000 in 1951.¹⁶

15 Respective Censuses

16 Censuses upto 1931 give separate figures for Syrian Christians.

TABLE-II

Statement showing increase in Christian population
in Malabar, 1901 - 1951*

Year	Total population in thousands	Christian population in thousands and as percentage of total population	Syrian Christian population in thousands and as percentage of Christian population
1901	2795.7	51.5 (1.84%)	N.A.
1911	3015.1	53.0 (1.76%)	21.0 (39.62%)
1921	3098.9	54.7 (1.76%)	21.8 (39.85%)
1931	3533.9	65.9 (1.86%)	23.7 (35.96%)
1941	3929.4	77.9 (1.98%)	N.A.
1951	4758.3	154.0 (3.24%)	N.A.

* Figures in bracket show percentages

[Source: Census of India, Madras, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941 and 1951]

The significant point in Table II is the sharp increase - both in absolute terms as well as percentage of the total population - in Christian population of Malabar between 1941 and 1951: The decennial percentage of increase in Christian population in Malabar is 97.69%. In the same period the total

population in Malabar increased only by 21.09%. It is significant that the peak period of the migration of predominantly Christian farmers from Travancore to Malabar, was the 1941-'51 decade.

Taluk-wise population figures for Malabar, between 1901 and 1951 should give further indication of the impact the migration had on the percentage of Christians in the total population in Malabar.

TABLE - III

Statement showing taluk-wise total and Christian population in Malabar, 1901-1951
(Figures in thousands)

Taluk	1901			1911			Percentage increase/decrease from 1901	
	Total	Christian	Christian population as percentage of total population	Total	Christian	Christian population as percentage of total population	Total	Christian
1 Kozhikode	255.6	4.5	1.76%	271.0	5.5	2.03%	+6.03%	+22.22%
2 Chirakkal	320.1	3.7	1.16%	338.6	4.3	1.27%	+5.78%	+16.22%
3 Ernad	357.1	0.7	0.20%	392.6	0.6	0.15%	+9.94%	-14.29%
4 Kottayam	209.5	2.2	1.05%	226.7	2.2	0.97%	+8.21%	0.0
5 Kurumbanad	327.3	0.7	0.21%	354.0	0.7	0.20%	+8.16%	0.0
6 Palghat	390.1	3.8	0.97%	414.0	3.8	0.92%	+6.13%	0.0
7 Pennani	478.4	19.0	3.97%	529.4	21.8	4.12%	+10.66%	+14.74%
8 Walluvanad	351.1	0.3	0.09%	375.9	0.5	0.13%	+6.49%	+66.67%
9 Wyanad	75.1	1.7	2.26%	82.5	1.8	2.18%	+9.85%	+5.88%

(Contd. on p.14)

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TABLE - III (Contd.)

	1921			Percentage increase/ decrease from 1911		1931			Percentage increase/ decrease from 1921	
	Total	Chris- tian	Christian population as percentage of total pe- pulation	Total	Christian	Total	Chris- tian	Christian population as percentage of total pe- pulation	Total	Christian
1	290.7	5.8	2.00%	+ 7.27%	+ 5.45%	347.8	7.4	2.13%	+ 19.64%	+ 27.59%
2	346.4	4.1	1.18%	+ 2.30%	- 4.65%	399.0	4.6	1.15%	+ 15.18%	+ 12.20%
3	401.1	0.4	0.10%	+ 2.12%	-35.33%	456.0	0.8	0.18%	+ 13.69%	+100.00%
4	232.3	2.1	0.90%	+ 2.47%	- 4.55%	263.7	2.5	0.95%	+ 15.94%	+ 19.05%
5	356.9	0.6	0.17%	+ 0.82%	- 14.29%	413.8	0.7	0.17%	+ 15.94%	+ 16.67%
6	427.0	3.6	0.84%	+ 3.14%	- 5.26%	463.9	4.1	0.88%	+ 8.64%	+13.89%
7	533.3	23.1	4.33%	+ 0.74%	+ 5.96%	626.5	27.2	4.34%	+ 17.48%	+ 17.48%
8	394.5	0.6	0.15%	+ 5.51%	+ 20.00%	453.8	0.9	0.20%	+ 10.47%	+ 50.00%
9	84.8	2.4	2.83%	+ 2.79%	+ 33.33%	91.8	3.8	4.14%	+ 8.25%	+ 58.33%

(Contd. on P.15)

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TABLE - III (Contd.)

	Total	Christian	1941	Percentage increase/decrease from 1931	
			Christian population as percentage of total population	Total	Christian
1	406.9	9.5	2.33	+ 16.99%	+ 28.38%
2	445.4	6.3	1.41	+ 11.63%	+ 36.96%
3	515.9	0.9	0.17	+ 13.14%	+ 12.50%
4.	297.8	2.8	0.94	+ 12.93%	+ 12.00%
5	443.0	1.5	0.34	+ 7.06%	+114.29%
6	495.6	4.3	0.87	+ 6.83%	+ 4.88%
7	686.9	30.6	4.43	+ 9.64%	+ 12.51%
8	487.1	1.0	0.21	+ 7.34%	+ 11.11%
9	106.3	4.8	4.52	+ 15.80%	+ 26.32%

[Source: Census of India: Madras, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941]

Data on the christian population in each taluk of Malabar in 1951 is not available separately. This greatly restricts the scope of bringing out the impact of the migration on the christian population in the taluks of Malabar over the whole period of the migration. In the 1931-1941 period, nevertheless, Kurumbranad alone among the four major centres of emigration in Malabar registers spectacular percentage increase in christian population. It is not very clear when other factors are taken into consideration, whether this rate of increase is either fully or mainly explainable by migration from Travancere.

TABLE - IV

Statement showing the growth of population in
taluks of Malabar, 1941 - 1951

(Figures in thousands)

Taluk	Population		Percentage of increase
	1941	1951	
Kozhikode	406.9	516.4	26.9
Chirakkal	445.4	534.9	20.1
Eranad	515.9	614.3	19.1
Kottayam	297.8	369.6	24.1
Karumbanad	443.0	554.1	24.2
Palghat	495.6	585.7	18.2
Ponnani	686.9	793.8	15.6
Wallevanad	487.1	573.5	17.7
Wayanad	106.3	169.3	59.2
MALABAR DISTRICT	3929.4	4758.3	21.1

[Source: Census Handbook 1951: Malabar District,
Growth of Population II (a) (i), p.5]

The comparatively high percentage of increase in population in the Wayanad taluk, between 1941 and 1951 is explained in the census itself as due to the Government

colonization scheme for Ex-Serviceman, Ex-members of the Indian National Army, political sufferers etc. and the migration from Travancore.¹⁷ The number of persons settled in Wayanad by 1951, under the colonization scheme of the Government, were 2850.¹⁸ Even after deducting this figure from the decennial increase of nearly 63,000 there still remains an increase of nearly 60,000. The migration from Travancore should have accounted for, to a great extent, this increase. Similarly, the high increase in population, in Kozhikode, Kottayam and Kurumbanad taluks, must also be to some extent at least, due to the inflow of migrants from Travancore into the interior hilly areas of these taluks.

The percentage increase in population between 1941 and 1951 in the rural tracts of the taluks of Malabar, was also fairly high. There is a striking contrast between the percentage increase over the decade, 1931-1941 with that in the following decade, 1941-1951. This is significant in the context of 1941-1951 decade having been the peak period of the migration, and the rural tracts of Malabar having been the major centres of immigration.

¹⁷ Census Handbook, 1951: Malabar District, p.5.

¹⁸ Ibid. p.6.

TABLE - V

decennial

**Statement showing percentage increase in population
in the rural tracts of the taluks of Malabar, 1941-1951**

(Figures in thousands)

Taluk (rural tract)	Population		Percentage of increase	Percentage of increase
	1941	1951	1941 - 1951	1931 - 1941
Kozhikode	280.5	357.6	27.5	12.9
Chirakkal	410.8	492.5	19.9	12.6
Branad	504.1	584.5	16.0	10.5
Kottayam	261.6	329.5	26.0	12.1
Kurumbanad	415.4	504.1	21.4	3.2
Palghat	440.5	516.1	17.2	6.2
Ponnani	650.3	740.5	13.9	8.2
Walluvanad	470.6	539.2	14.6	8.0
Wyanad	106.4	169.3	59.2	15.9

[Source: Census of India, Madras, 1941 and 1951]

Another indicator of the dimensions of migration from Travancore to Malabar, are the census figures of persons born in Travancore and enumerated in Malabar during 1901 - 1951 period.

TABLE - VI

Statement showing the number of persons born in Travancore and enumerated as such in Malabar in successive Censuses, 1901 - 1951

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of persons</u>
1901	3,049
1911	2,611
1921	2,030
1931	3,328
1941	N.A.
1951	88,275

[Source: Census of India: Madras, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941 and 1951]

The number of persons born in Travancore and enumerated in Malabar in the 1951 census is indeed very high compared to the previous censuses. In 1951, there is an additional factor as, by that year, Travancore was joined with the state of Cochin to form the composite state of Travancore-Cochin. From Cochin there was no migration, comparable in proportions, to that from Travancore. Therefore the 1951 figure should be fairly representative of the dimensions of migration from Travancore to Malabar.

Since majority of migrants settled down in rural areas of Malabar, the figures of the number of persons born in Travancore and enumerated in the rural tracts of Malabar, should bring out more clearly the dimensions of the migration.

TABLE - VII

Statement showing the number of persons born in Travancore - Cochin and enumerated as such in the rural tracts of Malabar district in 1951.

<u>Name of rural tract</u>	<u>Persons born in Travancore-Cochin and enumerated in Malabar in 1951</u>
Koshikode	13,636
Chirakkal	5,509
Kranad	802
Kottayam	12,655
Kurumbanad	10,612
Palghat	3,001
North Ponnani	177
Walluvanad	2,022
Wayanad	23,482

[Source: Census Handbook 1951: Malabar District p]

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TH-4



The Table VII shows that the presence of persons born in Travancore-Cochin was particularly high in the rural tracts of Wayanad, Kozhikode, Kottayam and Kurumbraud. These same taluks registered high percentages of increase in total population for the whole taluks as well as for the rural tracts alone, during 1941-1951 decade.

The total number of persons born in Travancore-Cochin and enumerated in the rural tracts of Malabar, come to slightly over 70,000 in 1951. Even after granting that a portion of this migrant population could have come from Cochin and not Travancore, this figure should still be fairly representative of the number of migrants from Travancore, in Malabar, in 1951.

The above mentioned figures of the number of persons born in Travancore-Cochin and enumerated in Malabar in 1951 can be compared with the number of Syrian Catholic parishoners¹⁹ in the Latin Catholic diocese of

¹⁹ Parishoners are members of a Parish - the administrative and ecclesiastical unit of the Catholic Church. A parish normally covers the Catholic population of one village, and has a priest designated as Vicar, as the spiritual and administrative head.

Calicut²⁰, in 1953. The figures available indicate, that over 74,000 parishoners, out of a total of around 91,000 were Syrian Catholics by the end of 1953.²¹

Three important aspects of the migration from Travancore to Malabar, emerge from this brief review of the population statistics of Malabar. First, the number of migrants from Travancore in Malabar, as it stood in 1951, can be assessed to be between 60,000 and 70,000. The second point emerging from the review is that the impact of the inflow of migrants from Travancore was felt mostly in the rural tracts of Malabar, and that too, in the Malabar taluks of Wayanad, Koshikode, Kottayam and Kurumbranad, in particular. Yet another point is that the migration assumed dimensions significant enough to attract attention, only between 1941 and 1951.

²⁰ Diocese is another administrative and ecclesiastical division in the Catholic Church. Head of the diocese is the Bishop and he has jurisdiction over a number of parishes. In the early period of the migration, there was only the diocese of Calicut, a Latin Rite diocese, in that region. So, the early migrants became parishoners of the diocese of Calicut, in spite of the fact that they were Syrian Catholics. In 1954, a new Syrian Catholic diocese was formed with Tellicherry as headquarters, for the migrant Syrian Catholic community in Malabar.

²¹ 'Malabaril Oru Sariani Roopatha' [Report], the Deepika, [Mal] Kottayam, 1-2-1954.

While the number of migrants from Travancore to Malabar can be roughly calculated, at least as it stood in 1951, the same cannot be done for the extent of land additionally brought under cultivation by the migrants, in Malabar. Most of the land deals that the migrants entered into were based on verbal agreements only. There were numerous cases of encroachments into private and reserve forests also. This means that legal documents which could have given a clue, as to how much land the migrants could have acquired and subsequently brought under cultivation in Malabar, do not exist.

Scope of the Study

This study is an enquiry into the causes of the migration of farmers from Travancore to Malabar between 1930 and 1960. Various causes - social, political, economic and demographic - have been pointed out by different observers of this migration. Here we are concentrating on the economic causes of the migration. Since the demographic developments of the concerned period are found to be related to these economic causes, they are also included within the scope of the study.

Increase in total population in the whole Travancore State, as well as in those areas which became the major sources of emigration, could have exerted pressure on cultivable land, the main source of income and sustenance for the farming community. Two factors seem to have added to the severity of these pressures. The Syrian Christian community in Kerala is a patrilineal society. They did not follow the joint-family system which used to be followed by some other major communities in this region. The tradition among the farming section of this community is of the parents dividing their properties among all their sons and settling them on their own land. This tradition could have added to the severity of the pressure on cultivable land in a period of rapidly increasing population.

Another factor that could have exerted pressure on the farmers of the midland taluks of Travancore to migrate to Malabar, in the concerned period, was the growth of commercial farming and the development of capitalist tendencies in agriculture. Commercial development in agriculture exerted different kind of pressures on the big farmers and the small farmers. Commercialisation made income from agriculture dependent on market prices. This made the small

farmers particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in prices. The sharp fall in prices of the farm produce in the 1930's would have had severe effects on the small farmers, including loss of land, and pushed them to seek their livelihood elsewhere.

The big farmers of the midland taluks of Travancore who went into plantation agriculture on capitalist lines (based on employment of hired labour on a fairly large scale), had to operate, due to historical reasons, within a tenurial system which had many hang-overs from a feudal past. This placed severe restrictions on the scope for reinvestment and expansion. Meanwhile, the Malabar region provided greater opportunities for the productive investment of investible profits made out of plantation agriculture in Travancore. This situation seems to have had a strong 'pull' effect on the big farmers of the midland taluks of Travancore, drawing them into the Malabar region.

The hypotheses tested out in the part II of this study is that it was the combination of pressure on cultivable land exerted by the increase in population and the peculiar characteristics of commercial development in agriculture in Travancore that caused the migration of farmers from Travancore to Malabar in the 1930 - 1960 period.

PART II

CAUSES OF THE MIGRATION

Population increase and pressure on cultivable land

Of the two causes for the migration of farmers from Travancore to Malabar, which are subjected to analysis here, the first one is the pressure on cultivable land due to increase in population in Travancore. The relevant period in which increase in population is to be looked at in detail, are the first three decades of the present century, which immediately preceded the period of the major flow of migration. The region to be studied in particular are the midland taluks of Travancore, especially the old taluks of Keenachil, Mavattupuzha and Thodupuzha which were the major centres of emigration.

TABLE VIII

Statement showing the population of Kerala state districts which roughly correspond to former Malabar district and to the former Travancore state, 1901-1951

District	Population in thousands					
	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951
Cannanore	784.4	841.8	865.4	997.1	1123.1	1375.1
Kozhikode	658.8	708.3	733.1	856.4	961.0	1226.1
Malappuram	682.2	747.9	764.1	874.5	977.1	1149.7
Palghat	763.9	819.7	854.0	741.3	1025.1	1214.2
MALABAR TOTAL	2889.3	3117.7	3216.6	3469.3	4086.3	4965.1
Kottayam	472.2	556.6	646.1	885.2	1078.3	1322.0
Alleppey	666.2	765.0	906.7	1127.3	1270.4	1516.9
Quilon	525.6	602.9	715.0	914.2	1145.7	1478.4
Trivandrum	484.5	569.5	666.4	856.9	1015.1	1327.8
Ernakulam*	672.4	766.3	837.5	1060.4	1281.4	1538.8
TRAVANCORE TOTAL	2820.9	3260.3	3771.7	4844.0	5790.9	7183.9

* Major portions of the present Ernakulam district were part of the former Cochin state. But this district also covers regions which were part of Travancore state, including the taluk of Muvattupuzha.

[Source: Census of India, Kerala, 1971, Part II-A]

TABLE IX

districts

Statement showing decennial percentage increase in population of Kerala states roughly
corresponding to the former Malabar district and former Travancore state,
 1901 - 1951

District	Percentage increase in population				
	1901-1911	1911-1921	1921-1931	1931-1941	1941-1951
Cannanore	+ 6.9	+ 2.8	+ 15.2	+ 12.6	+ 22.4
Kozhikode	+ 7.5	+ 3.5	+ 16.8	+ 12.2	+ 27.6
Malappuram	+ 9.6	+ 2.2	+ 14.4	+ 11.7	+ 17.7
Palghat	+ 7.3	+ 4.2	+ 10.2	+ 8.9	+ 18.5
MALABAR REGION	+ 7.9	+ 3.1	+ 7.9	+ 17.8	+ 21.5
Kottayam	+ 17.9	+ 16.1	+ 37.0	+ 21.8	+ 22.6
Alleppey	+ 14.8	+ 18.5	+ 24.3	+ 12.7	+ 19.4
Quilon	+ 14.7	+ 18.6	+ 27.9	+ 25.3	+ 29.0
Trivandrum	+ 17.5	+ 17.0	+ 28.6	+ 18.5	+ 30.8
Ernakulam	+ 14.0	+ 9.3	+ 26.6	+ 20.8	+ 19.9
TRAVANCORE REGION	+ 15.6	+ 15.7	+ 28.4	+ 19.5	+ 24.1

[Source: Census of India, 1951, Series - 9, Kerala, Part II A, General Population Tables
 Table A-II pp.56-57.

As Table IX clearly indicates that the decennial growth of population in the districts in the Travancore region were on the whole higher than in the districts in the Malabar region, in all decades from 1911 to 1941 - 1951.

More pertinent to our study is the density of population over a period of time in the Travancore region and Malabar region; particularly in relation to cultivated area. Along with this to be looked at, are the rates of increase in cultivated area.

As Table X and the Table XI in the following pages show that the percentage increase in population in Travancore from 1911 to 1951 was 119.57. During the same period the percentage increase for Malabar is only 57.81. Between 1911 and 1951 Travancore region registered a percentage increase of 47.09 in land under occupation. In the same period in Malabar, cultivated area increased only by 37.4%.

Generally, the Tables X and XI also indicate that the cultivated area in Travancore formed 73.7 per cent of the total land available for cultivation in 1911 and 98.1 per cent of the total land available for cultivation in 1951. The corresponding figures for cultivated area as percentage of the total arable land in Malabar were 59.1 in 1911 and 36.0 in 1951. These figures show the greater pressure on land in Travancore in 1911-1951 compared to Malabar.

TABLE X

**Statement showing population and the occupied area in Travancore,
1911 - 1951**

Year	Population in thousands	Percentage increase over the previous period	Land under occupation in thousands	Percentage increase over the previous period	Occupied area as percentage of total available for occupation
1911	3429	-	1943	-	73.7
1921	4006	13.9	2100	8.1	79.7
1931	5096	24.8	2537	20.8	96.3
1941	6070	19.1	2575	1.5	97.7
1951	7529	24.0	2585	0.4 (1948)	98.1

[Source: Reproduced from T.C.Varghese: Agrarian Change in Economic Consequences, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1970. Ch.6, p.124]

TABLE XI

Statement showing the population and cultivated area in Malabar, 1911 - 1951

Year	Population in thousand	Percentage in-increase over the previous period	Cultivated area in thousands	Percentage in-increase over the previous period	Cultivated area as percentage of the total arable land
1911	3015	-	1393	-	59.1
1921	3099	2.8	1442	3.5	59.7
1931	3834	14.0	1696	17.0	61.1
1941	3929	11.2	1779	4.9	34.9
1951	4758	21.1	1914	7.6	36.0

[Source: Reproduced from T.C.Varghese: Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1970, Ch.6, P.123]

The Table XII in the following page shows a significant decennial percentage increase in density of population per square mile in the Travancore taluks of Meenachil, Thodupuzha and Muvattupuzha in the 1921-'31 decade. This rise ^{is} _^ pertinent as the 1921-'31 decade immediately preceded the beginning of substantial migration from this region to Malabar.

The percentage increase in density of population in the three major centres of emigration in Travancore, in the 1931-'41 decade presents a sharp contrast to the decennial percentage increase of 1921-'31. While the rate of increase in Meenachil and Muvattupuzha taluks in 1931-'41 decade is nowhere as high as the rate of increase in 1921-'31, Thodupuzha Taluk registers a rate of decrease (- 4.8). In the same decade, 1931-'41, in Malabar, at least one of the major centres of emigration shows significant decennial percentage increase in density (+24.1).

The decennial percentage decrease and increase respectively in the major centres of emigration in Travancore and the major centres of immigration in Malabar during the 1941-'51 decade - the peak period of the migration - are particularly striking. Meenachil and Muvattupuzha taluks in [Contd. on p. 35]

TABLE XII

Statement showing the density of population per square mile and the decennial percentage increase in density in major centres of emigration and major centres of immigration, 1901 - 1951

Taluk	Density per square mile of area						Percentage increase/decrease in density				
	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1901-11	1911-1921	1921-1931	1931-1941	1941-1951
E* Meenachil	447	565	565	1625	1833	1000	+ 26.4	0.0	+ 187.6	+ 12.8	- 45.4
E* Thodupusha	64	68	118	414	394	442	+ 6.3	+ 73.5	+ 250.8	- 4.8	+ 1.2
E* Muvattupusha	321	293	314	625	741	452	- 8.7	+ 7.2	+ 99 .0	+ 18.6	- 39.0
P* Devikulam } Peermede }	25	55	51	94	116	163	+120.0	- 7.3	+ 84.3	+ 23.4	+ 40.5
I* Koshikode	674	715	767	918	1071	1384	+ 6.1	+ 7.3	+ 19.7	+ 16.7	+ 29.2
I* Kottayan	436	471	485	548	615	764	+ 8.0	+ 2.5	+ 13.5	+ 12.2	+ 24.2
I* Kurumbranad	648	701	707	819	881	1095	+ 8.2	+ 0.8	+ 15.8	+ 7.6	+ 24.3
I* Wayanad	91	100	103	112	139	206	+ 9.9	+ 3.0	+ 8.7	+ 24.1	+ 48.2

E* Centres of Emigration, Travancore.

P* Centres of Plantation agriculture, Travancore

I* Centres of Immigration, Malabar.

[Source: Census of India: Madras, Travancore, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941 and 1951]

this decade register significant rates of decrease in density (- 45.4 and - 39.0, respectively) while Thodupusha taluk registers only nominal rate of increase (+ 1.2). On the other hand, in the same decade in Malabar, all the four taluks - Kozhikode, Kottayam, Kuruambranad and Wayanad - shows significant rates of increase in density. Wayanad the most important centre of emigration, registers a decennial percentage increase in density of population, as high as + 48.2.

The brief survey of population statistics presented in the preceding pages illustrate how the higher rate of population growth and increasing population pressure on land, in Travancore could have been detrimental in the migration of farmers from Travancore to Malabar in the 1930-'60 period. Yet, such population pressure on land alone need not have unleashed the migration from Travancore to Malabar. What was perhaps a more decisive factor was that, in the same period, there was increasing commercialisation of the agrarian economy and development of capitalist tendencies in agriculture, particularly in the high ranges and the foot-hills in Travancore.

Commercialisation of agriculture in Travancore and its possible impact on the migration.

Kerala was known for its spices and hill produce from a very early period in history. The 'cash' or commercial crops always had a major share in the agricultural sector of Kerala. In the last few decades of 19th century and in the earlier decades of 20th century 'cash' crop cultivation became all the more widespread in Travancore. In the beginning of this century, developments such as rise in agricultural prices and increased transport and communication facilities favoured the growth of commercial farming.

By the latter decades of 19th century British entrepreneurs had pioneered plantation agriculture in the high ranges of Travancore.²² In the last century British investments were mostly in Coffee and Tea plantations. By the first decade of 20th century British planters started investing in Rubber.²³ Closely following the British efforts

²² The main centre of British investment in plantations in Travancore, was the Peermade-Devikulam area, known formerly as the Cardamom Hills. This area is mostly in the present Idukki district with a few portions covering the border areas of present Kottayam district.

²³ The starting of a rubber estate in Yeuthayar, in the Mundakayam valley (of the Peermade hills) in 1904, by the late J.J. Murphy, is considered to be the first successful venture in commercial planting of rubber in Travancore. See Chacko A. Kallivayalil: 'The story of Mundakayam and Rubber Plantations', All India Agricultural Industrial Science Exhibition Souvenir, Civic Committee, Mundakayam, 1969.

in the planting of rubber, some big farmers from Meenachil, Thodupuzha and other midland taluks of Travancore which lie adjacent to the high ranges, started rubber plantations from around 1910 onwards.²⁴

From around 1920 onwards a large number of small farmers from the midland taluks of Travancore started cultivating plantation crops like rubber, either in newly acquired areas in the high ranges, or in and around their own villages in the midland taluks. Planting by small landholders were particularly high in the case of rubber.²⁵

²⁴ A.V. John: 'The Mandakayam Rubber Planters Association', All India Rubber Planters Conference Souvenir, Mandakayam, 1969.

²⁵ This trend is quite in keeping with the trend in other major rubber producing countries as well. See K.M.Chandy: 'Rubber plantation Industry - a critical review', Rubber Planters Conference, (India) Souvenir, Indian Rubber Board, Kottayam, 1974. p.2.

TABLE XIII

Statement showing the share of small holdings* in the total planted area of rubber in Travancore, 1925-1952.

Year	Total planted area in Rubber (in thousand acres)	Total area of small holdings (in thousand acres)	Small holdings as percentage of total planted area
1925	93	24	25.77
1935	127	48	37.80
1951-'52**	175	56	32.00

* In plantation terminology estates below 50 acres in extent are generally called Holdings and those above 50 acres in extent are called Estates.

** Figures for 1951-'52 are for the composite state of Travancore-Cochin.

[Source: George John Ancheril: 'Rubber in a Crisis', All India Rubber Planters Conference, Souvenir, Mandakayan, 1966 and R.G.Unny: 'Pattern of Growth of Rubber Plantation Industry', Rubber Planters Conference (India) Souvenir, Indian Rubber Board, Kottayan, 1974.]

The prospects of cultivating plantation crops as well as the traditional cash-crops like pepper and ginger, in the high ranges, attracted more and persons from the adjacent midland areas to the Peermade-Devikulam area.²⁶

²⁶ Census of India: Travancore, 1941, p.41

The movement of population from the adjacent midland taluks to the Devikulam and Peermade taluks and the resultant rate of increase in density of population in these areas, are reflected in the Table XIV.

In the 1901-1910 decade, which was the period of the expansion of British planting efforts into rubber, Devikulam-Peermade area registers a decennial percentage increase of 120.0 in density. After a decline in the 1911-'21 decade, density in this area increases at a significantly high rate in the 1921-'31 decade, which was the period in which more small farmers from midland taluks started entering the rubber plantation industry.

The Table XIV also shows that in the 1911-1921 decade Thodupuzha taluk had registered a decennial percentage increase of 73.5. Since Thodupuzha was less densely populated in comparison to both Meenachil and Muvattupuzha and as this taluk had considerable hill areas conducive to the cultivation of different plantation crops, both the British and the early Indian planters must have started opening estates in this taluk in the 1911-'21 decade.

TABLE XIV *

Statement showing the density of population per square mile and the decennial percentage increase in density in the Travancore taluks of Meenachil, Thodupusha, Muvattupusha and Devikulam-Peermade (Cardamom Hills), 1901 - 1951

Taluk	Density per square mile of area						Percentage increase/decrease in density				
	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1901-1911	1911-1921	1921-1931	1931-1941	1941-1951
Meenachil	447	565	565	1625	1833	1000	+ 26.4	0.0	+ 187.6	+ 12.8	- 45.4
Thodupusha	64	68	118	414	394	442	+ 6.5	+ 73.5	+ 250.8	- 4.8	+ 1.2
Muvattupusha	321	293	314	625	741	452	- 8.7	+ 7.2	+ 99.0	+ 18.6	- 39.0
Devikulam Peermade }	25	55	51	94	116	163	+120.0	- 7.3	+ 84.3	+ 23.4	+ 40.5

* Part of Table XII is reproduced here as Table XIV for easy reference.

The particularly high percentage increase in density in all the three taluks - Heenachil, Thodupuzha and Muvattupuzha - in the 1921-'31 decade, is significant. It seems to reflect the effect of increased participation by Travancorean small farmers in plantation-agriculture as well as in the cultivation of other cash crops in this area.

Following the high decennial percentage increase in density in the 1921-'31 decade, percentage increase in density tapers off in the 1931-'41 and 1941-'51 decades, as far as the midland taluks of Heenachil, Thodupuzha and Muvattupuzha are concerned. Yet, in these decades also, the rate of increase in density per decade is quite high in the Devikulam-Peeruade area, where density of population per square mile was still comparatively low and further opportunities for expansion of cash-crop cultivation and plantation agriculture still existed.

The picture emerging from the Table XIV and the Table XII seems to be that of movement of population from the midland taluks of Travancore to the highlands, in the early years of Indian enterprise in plantation agriculture, followed by movement of population from Travancore to Malabar in the 1931 - 1951 period.

There were certain historical developments which created the objective conditions for the development of commercial agriculture in Travancore. A powerful Royal dynasty, which centralised power in the state in the 18th century, had curtailed the power and influence of local chieftains and landlords. For reasons of political expediency, the administration under this dynasty brought under its control the major portion of arable land and cultivable waste, including lands controlled by temples or Dewasoms in the state. These lands, which were known as Sircar lands, were leased out to tenants.

These developments were followed by a period of 'enlightened' land policy by the Travancore administration in the 19th century. In 1865 through the historic Patton proclamation, full ownership rights were conferred on the tenants on Sircar lands, and they were also allowed unrestricted transfer of their properties.²⁷ Following this, in 1896, through the Jennie and Kudiyan Regulation of that year, the Travancore administration conferred irredeemable tenancy rights on the tenants holding tenures under "Kamos" category from private 'Jennies' [landlords].²⁸

²⁷ For details of the land policy followed by the Travancore administration in this period, See T.C.Varghese: op.cit. chapters III and IV.

²⁸ The Regulations and Proclamations of Travancore N.E.1071-1080, Vol.II, Government of Travancore, Trivandrum, 1928, p.329.

Another historical development which had an impact on the economy of the state was the break-up of matrilineal joint-families. The two Travancore Nair regulations of 1913 and 1925 legalized conjugal unions of the female members of the matrilineal families, and also permitted partition of joint-family into different sub-families or on an individual basis.²⁹ These regulations and the comparative ease with which an independent-minded member of a joint family could acquire Government land and pass it on patrilineally, led, among other things, to the splitting up of joint-family holdings. This development eliminated a major obstacle to free transfers of land.

This particular course of historical developments created the objective conditions for development of commercial agriculture in the Travancore state, as early as the last decades of the 19th century. Since similar conditions had not developed in Malabar in this period, British capital was attracted towards Travancore in starting plantations, then towards Malabar, which was a part of British territory.

²⁹ T.C.Varghese: op.cit. pp.98-99.

One community which made good use of the opportunities provided by these historical developments was the Syrian Christian community, particularly in the central and eastern taluks of Travancore. They were the main beneficiaries in the spurt of land transactions that followed the break-up of joint-family holdings. The Christians had the advantage of having been involved in trade and commerce in the Kerala Society where there was the conspicuous absence of a trading caste within the Hindu caste structure. It was with the gains from trade that they managed to acquire ownership of large areas of land in Travancore.³⁰ Many Syrian Christians also extended their landholdings by taking up waste land, acquired educational qualifications, expanded their interests in trade, and through European planters, got an introduction to the plantation system.³¹

With the participation of the predominantly Syrian Christian farmers from the midland taluks plantation agriculture developed in Travancore over the decades of the first half of 20th century.

30 Ibid. p.107

31 Robin Jeffrey: The Decline of Nayar Dominance, Society and Politics in Travancore 1847-1908, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976. p.118.

TABLE XV

Statement showing the area under plantation crops
in Travancore, 1920-21 to 1949-50

(Area in thousand acres)

Year	Rubber	Tea	Coffee
1920 - 21	51.0	47.1	Nil
1925 - 26	53.6	67.7	Nil
1930 - 31	60.4	78.0	Nil
1935 - 36	96.7	77.6	6.2
1940 - 41	90.7	71.8	5.9
1945 - 46	111.6	77.4	7.0
1949 - 50	111.5	148.4	8.7

[Source: Reproduced from, T.C. Varghese:
Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences,
Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1970, p.117]

Plantation agriculture has many characteristics of capitalist organisation in industry.³² Plantation agriculture generally is extensive (much larger than the usual homestead farms), requires relatively large amounts of finance and is oriented to production for the market.

32. Gunnar Myrdal: Asian Drama, London, 1968, Volume .I. p.445.

Nevertheless, how far the development of plantation agriculture in the early decades of this century - as it happened within the particular historical context of Travancore, - was indicative of capitalist development in the agriculture of the state, is not fully clear. Reliable data for the concerned period, particularly for the plantation enterprises of Travancorean agriculturists, on specific indicators of capitalist development such as rate of reinvestment of surplus and employment of wage labour, do not seem to be available. Though the plantations did engage large number of labourers, from the early years of its inception in Travancore, it is nevertheless not clear, how large a share of this labour-force were actually 'free' wage labourers. The high incidence of small holdings, particularly in rubber, which could have been cultivated with high share of family labour on homestead farms and the prevalence of 'attached' labour systems in the concerned area in the period under study, makes it difficult to provide any conclusive categorizations.

Though there is not enough empirical data to conclude that plantation agriculture as it developed in Travancore in the early decades of this century was indicative of capitalist development in agriculture, it can nevertheless be confirmed that plantation agriculture was a very advanced

form of commercial agriculture, having inherent possibilities for capitalist development.

With the development ^{of} plantations which produced for the market - to a large extent for foreign market - and the consequent commercialisation of the economy, income from farm produce became largely dependent on market prices. This could have made the small farmer vulnerable to the adverse effects of decline in prices of the farm produce

By the year 1930-31, Travancore had 948000 acres under cash crops in a total cropped area of 2108000 acres. In such a situation the decline in the prices of the farm produce during the depression years of early 1930s must have had very far reaching effects. As for a rubber, the principal plantation crop cultivated by the small farmers of Travancore, there was a decline in price if the figures available for three years in the first two decades of the small farmers' enterprise in rubber ^{are considered.} The price of rubber which stood at around four hundred rupees (Rs.400/-) for hundred pounds ^{in 1922} declined to around two hundred and sixty rupees (Rs.260/-) in 1925 and further down to about twenty seven rupees (Rs.27/-) by 1935.³³

³³ A short note on Rubber Plantation Industry in India,
Indian Rubber Board, Kottayam, 1947.

Such sharp depression in the price ^{of} rubber as well as other cash crops like pepper, coconut and ginger could ^{have} had severe effects on the small farmer with inadequate financial capabilities to withstand such effects. These effects, including possibly loss of land could have driven them into the migration to Malabar, between 1930-'40 and 1940-'50. The extension of loans by the banking institutions which had developed in Travancore in the early years of this century were in relation to land value. The Travancore-Cochin Banking enquiry Commission points out that, even as late as 1955, 33.7 per cent (including clean bills) of the total advance made by banks incorporated in the State were granted on an "unsecured" basis while 26.9 per cent of the total advances were granted against real estate.³⁴ As a result of this pattern, during Economic Depression years of the 1930's when both crop prices and subsequently land prices declined, the credit forthcoming from these new banking institutions also could have shrank sharply. On the other hand, these farmers who depended the traditional money-lenders, found themselves in growing indebtedness. This was true of any period when there was a depression in crop prices. Indicative of such a situation

³⁴ T.C.Varghese, op.cit. Ch.6 p.114.

were the figures collected for the Banking committee of 1951, which showed that the total agrarian indebtedness of Travancore was around Rupees 20 crores to Rupees 25 crores.³⁵ This would mean that a minimum of Rupees 3 crores (being calculated at 15 per cent on Rupees 20 crores) or nearly one third of a possible total value of agricultural produce, of Rupees 10½ crores goes every year to the money-lender.³⁶

On the whole there are grounds to indicate that the depression in the prices of farm produces in the context of growing commercialisation of the agrarian economy and rapidly increasing population and pressure on land could be detrimental in the migration of small farmers from Travancore to Malabar in the 1930-'60 period.

Different from the case of the small farmers who migrated, in the case of the big farmers who had already opened up plantations in Travancore, there seems to have been the 'pull' of the availability in comparatively plenty, of cultivable land in Malabar. Such a situation as the one existed in Malabar, in terms of density of population and pressure on cultivable land, in contrast with the

³⁵ E.M.S.Namboothiripad: Kerala, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1968, Ch.VI. p.92.

³⁶ Ibid. p.92.

corresponding situation in Travancore, in the 1930s and the 1940s, had inherent prospects for the investment of profits made in plantations in Travancore and for expansion of holdings.

There were two factors which contributed to Travancore becoming less attractive for reinvestment and Malabar, consequently, becoming more attractive. By the time, the Indian planters had entered the field, pioneer British planters had already occupied those lands in the Travancore High Ranges which were most suitable for plantation crops. Particularly for a crop like Rubber, right elevation and climatic conditions are very important. The prospective planters among Englishmen had an advantage over their Indian counterparts, in acquiring land in the Travancorean High Ranges. While the successive memoranda of rules for the sale of waste land on the Travancorean hills prescribed an application to the Dewan (in later years to the Chief Secretary) for Indians, Britishers could forward their applications directly to the British Resident.³⁷ This arrangement could have meant

³⁷ 'Rules for the sale of Waste Land on the Travancore Hills, April, 1865, July, 1898 and November 1918', The Regulations and Proclamations of Travancore, Government of Travancore, Trivandrum, 1923, Vol.III, p.1233.

that in effect, an application forwarded by the representative of the Paramount power, would not have been easily rejected. Since in the beginning itself the Indian planters had difficulty in acquiring choice lands in the hills for plantation crops, by 1930s and 1940s when they wanted to expand, there must have been greater constrain.

The British planters, not only had the lands suitable for plantations, climatically and topographically, but they also had the advantage of acquiring Sircar (Government) lands, which were better compared to other types of land available, in terms of permanency of tenure, fixity of rent etc. As far as the Mundakayam-Peermade area where there was the greatest concentration of plantations in Travancore, and which were areas adjacent to the sources of emigration to Malabar; is concerned, there were two other types of land available for opening plantations, apart from the Sircar lands.

First of these two categories of lands available, was those belonging to the local chieftains - Panjar Raja and Vanehipasha Pandarathil (Chief). These lands came under the tenorial category of siavagais which were not defined either as Sircar lands or as jennom (private

landlord owned) lands. They were virtually 'free-holds',³⁸ and even after the Land-Revenue settlement of 1911 in Travancore, the State made no claims of revenue from these lands. In the case of Panjar Raja's lands, part of them came under another type of tenure called Sree padom. Sree padom lands were properties of the members of the Royal family. Since there were marriage relations between Panjar Raja's family and the Travancore Royal family, certain amount of Sree padom lands were also under the control of Panjar Raja, besides the edavagai lands he had. The type of tenure was not very different as far as Sree Padom and edavagai lands are concerned.³⁹

The main distinction of the edavagai and Sree padom lands is that they did not come under the purview of either the Patton Proclamation of 1865, which conferred full ownership rights on the tenant cultivators of Sircar lands and allowed unrestricted transfer of their properties, or the Jennie Kudiyan Act of 1896 which enunciated that the Kanom tenants (tenants who have leased in land directly from the

³⁸ See T.C.Varghese: op.cit. Ch.5. p.86

³⁹ "Sree Padom was considered in the settlement (Land Revenue settlement, Travancore, 1911) as an edavagai, and the majority of the lands conceded as 'free-hold'. Moreover, the lands owned by Sree Padom in a few Sircar villages were settled under the tenure called Sree Padomvaka and assessed with a small levy called Rajishheran" - T.C.Varghese: op.cit. Ch.V, p.87.

landlord) were permanent tenants with the only obligation that they should pay to the jemi (landlord) the rent and other fees. Therefore the tenants on the edvagai and aree padom lands did not enjoy permanent tenancy rights or the right to sell or transfer their properties. In addition to the 'free-hold' rights he enjoyed, in the case of the Punjar Raja there was the addition^{al} aspect of 'some 'special' rights over his old domains, (Punjar was from 18th century a vassal of Travancore) which emanate from the tradition that the ancestor of the Punjar Rajas had acquired the territory of Punjar from the Raja of Thekkumcore, with all "rights and dignities".⁴⁰

Apart from the Sircar lands and the free-holds belonging to the Punjar Raja and the Vanchiyusha Pandarathil, there was another source of land for developing plantations in the Mandakayam-Peermede area, when the farmers from foot-hill taluks started moving in there in the 1910s and 1920s. This was the devasom (temple land) land belonging to the Paschimā Bhagvathi (Goddess) temple. A little over 4,500 acres of the Paschima devasom land were leased

⁴⁰ A. Sreedhara Menon: Kerala District Gazetteers, Kottayam, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1975. pp.32-35.

out on a 30 year lease to various tenants, somewhere around 1920.⁴¹ Tenants on the paschima devason land, like the tenants on the edayagai land, did not enjoy the rights enjoyed by tenants on Sircar lands and on jenson lands as it also did not come under the perview of either the Patton Proclamation or the Jennie Kudiyan Act. Therefore there were restrictions on sale or transfer of land and even on cutting of trees by tenants on the paschima devason land.⁴² Moreover, the tenants on paschima devason lands had to go through a "Policheshuthu" (renegotiation of lease) after every thirty years, while the tenants on the Sircar lands had only to go through a "Kandeshuthu" (revenue settlement survey).⁴³

⁴¹ In 1892, 84 sq.miles of forest land in the Kanjirapally and the Ranni forest divisions were included in the Ranni (forest) reserve according to the existing Regulations governing forest lands, in Travancore. This included the lands belonging to the paschima Devason and though there were claims that Paschima Devason is an Oerama Devason (land owned by private Hindu temples), the Government declared it as "Mabuthi theeruvayilla-thathu" or in effect Sircar Devason (temple land under Government control). The leasing out in 1920, obviously was on the understanding that these lands come under the tenarial type of Sircar Devason. For more details on this subject see N.K. George Paikkatt: 'Mundakkayavum Paschima Devason Bhoenium', Souvenir of the All India Agricultural Industrial Science Exhibition, Civic Centre Committee, Mundakayan, 1969.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

The restrictions on transfer of land and the absence of permanency of tenancy, that existed in the edavagai and paschima devasom lands were indeed constraints on the reinvestment of profits and the expansion of holdings for the Indian planters who had developed plantations on these lands.

The exact magnitude of the constraints on reinvestment and expansion possibilities for the Travancorean entrepreneurs in plantation agriculture and its subsequent influence on the reported second wave of migration of big farmers from Travancore to Malabar in the 1940s (apart from the individual pioneering big farmers who went to Malabar in the 1920s), cannot be ascertained due to reliable data on the extent of land under the edavagai and devasom tenure on which plantations were developed. Nevertheless such possibilities as described in the preceding pages which placed restrictions on reinvestment and expansions seem to be fairly high and do call for further study.

Conclusion

This study presents the dimensions of the migration of farmers from Travancore to Malabar in the 1930-'60 period as well as the demographic and possible economic causes for the migration. As far as the magnitude of the migration is concerned, the number of Travancorean migrants settled in Malabar, as revealed in the census reports of the concerned period, seem to be around 70,000 by 1951. The magnitude reflected in the population statistics may not be true to the real dimensions of the migration over the whole period of the migration, when the comparative inaccessibility of the hilly tracts where the migrants settled and the possibility of high rate of mortality among them in the early years of settlement in Malabar are considered.

So far as the extent of land brought additionally under cultivation by the migrants from Travancore, in Malabar, is concerned, the only available indication is in the significant decrease in the forest area under private ownership in the three districts of Cannanore, Keshikode and Palghat, in the Malabar region.

TABLE XVI

Statement showing availability of Forest lands in the districts of Cannanore, Kozhikode and Palghat in the years 1940 and 1970

(Area in square kilometers)

Particulars	Cannanore	Kozhikode	Palghat
<u>1940</u>			
i) Forest area under public ownership	460	690	870
ii) Forest area under private ownership	880	1500	970
-----	-----	-----	-----
Total in 1940	1340	2190	1840
-----	-----	-----	-----
<u>1970</u>			
i) Forest area under public ownership	457	662	792
ii) Forest area under private ownership	269	822	409
-----	-----	-----	-----
Total in 1970	726	1484	1201
-----	-----	-----	-----
<u>Area lost between 1940 and 1970</u>			
i) For agriculture and habitation by assignments and encroachment	350	340	325
ii) For settlement of hill tribes, colonization etc.	43	50	50
iii) Reservoirs and hydel and irrigation schemes	..	15	50
iv) Rubber, Coffee, Pepper and other plantation crops	220	302	214
Total	613	707	639

[Source: Forest Resources of Kerala: A Quantitative Assessment, Forest Department, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1973, Table 32, p.51.]

The forest area lost between 1940 and 1970 for agriculture and habitation by assignments and encroachments and for rubber, coffee, pepper and other plantation crops are quite substantial. Though the whole area lost in this period cannot be explained by the encroachments into private and government forests and development of plantations by the migrants from Travancore, their share in these two developments must have been quite high.

The rapidly increasing population and subsequent pressure on cultivable land in Travancore in the early decades of the present century, as shown by the census statistics seems to have been a major factor that caused the migration of farmers from Travancore to Malabar in the 1930+'60 period. The increasing commercialization of agriculture and particularly the development of plantations which had certain characteristics similar to capitalist organization of industry, in Travancore in this period, indicate the strong possibility of these developments in agriculture having strengthened further the demographic pressures, in unleashing the migration to Malabar.

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PART III

1. **Appendix I - COURSE OF THE MIGRATION**
2. **Appendix II - SELECT TITLES FOR REFERENCE**

Appendix I

The Course of the Migration*

Hardly any systematic work on the actual course of the farmers' migration from Travancore to Malabar is available. The only feasible way to reconstruct the different stages of the migration is with recourse to memories of the early migrants and their relatives. We present here the few details available on the course of the migration. These details had been gathered mainly from discussions with migrants and the publications of the Syrian Catholic diocese of Tellicherry.

1920 to 1930

During the first decade of the migration, 29 persons from Travancore can be identified as to have acquired land in Malabar or nearby areas. The earliest migrant known is ^{Sri.} Eshapurama Panayil. Avira Tharakan, who acquired land in Koppa-Kadoor in Chick-magalore in 1921-22. He was followed by Sri. Jese Kattakayam to the Coimbatore district and the famous economist Dr. P.J. Thomas to the present Cannanore district area, in 1925. Another big farmer from Travancore, Sri. Kochuppa Tharakan, acquired land in Malabar

in 1927. Among these four big farmers who acquired land in Malabar only Sri. Jose Kattakayan seem to have succeeded in cultivating the land for long.

The land acquired by Dr.P.J. Thomas was sold in parcels to later migrants. We have information about five farmers from Travancore, who bought land from Dr.P.J. Thomas and settled down in Vayattuparambil - Karuvanchal area, near Alacode in the present Canannore district. They were Sri. Sebastian Punnathura, Sri. Paulese Elakkattuparambil, Sri. Emmanuel Vellapalli, Sri. Lukose Pallithara and Sri. George Pullatt. Five more persons - Sri. Thomas Mannankari, Sri. Pappan Parayidathil, Dr.P.A.Mathew, Sri. Thomas Konnakal and Mr. Joseph Peranganal, came from Travancore and settled in the same area by the end of 1926.

Between 1926 and 1928 another big farmer from Travancore, Sri. Jacob Thomas Kariypparambil, acquired land in Pulikezhu, near Mannarkadu, in the present Palghat district. Around 1929, Sri. E.F. Mathew Kudakkachira, Sri. Mathachen Kattakayan, Sri. Mathai Cherian, Sri. Itty Vakil and Sri M.C.Peter Nadikunnel, settled down in Peravar - Kolayott area in the Malabar taluk of Kottayam.

Between 1927 and 1930, a batch of small farmers, consisting of Sri. Rattel Asan, Sri Mathai Pallath,

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Sri Mani Chelakkandathil and the then Sacristian (assistant in religious services) of the Lalam Church in Palai, settled down in Kuttiadi in the present Kozhikode district. They were soon joined by Sri. Kuriako Vadakkedath, Sri. Varkey Pongampara, Sri. Scaria Kollarinkal, Sri. Thomas Purayadathil and Sri. Joseph Pullatt.

These are the pioneers of the migration who can be traced.

1930 to 1940

From 1930 onwards it is feasible to trace the development of settlements of migrants from Travancore, in Malabar. During 1930-40, four such settlements of significant proportions are known to have emerged. They were Kuttiadi in the present Kozhikode district, Manathavadi in the old Wayanad taluk, and Peravur and Kulathuvayal in the old Malabar taluk of Kottayam.

In addition to these four major settlements, small groups of migrant farmers from Travancore had moved into Palakushikunnu, Tharinjal and Porur near Manathavadi in old Wayanad taluk. In small numbers they had also moved into, places like, Neduvayal, Vashavatta and Theneri, near Sulthan Bathery in the Malabar taluk of Wayanad. Similarly small groups had also moved into Kanichiyar, near Kulathuvayal in the old Kottayam taluk.

1940 to 1950

This was the peak period of the migration. The three or four scattered settlements of the 1930s got developed further, and around 50 new settlement emerged in this period.

Later Settlements

Between 1950 and 1960, the earlier settlements increased in population and new settlements developed either as off-shoots of earlier ones, in nearby places or independently. Nearly 30 new settlements emerged in this period.

This was the period in which the older settlements started developing public facilities and institutions such as schools, dispensaries, roads and churches. The pattern of development of most of the settlements were to first build a church and then a road to nearby town or settlement, followed by school and dispensary.

It was in 1953 December that the Syrian Catholic diocese of Tellicherry was formed; for the migrant population. The number of Syrian Christian migrants from Travancore had increased to such an extent that they formed the majority in the Latin Catholic diocese of Calicut in 1953.

With the formation of the diocese, the church organisation enters into migration history in a significant way. Apart from establishing schools, hospitals etc. the diocese leadership also played crucial roles in situations where the interests of migrant population were affected.

1960 seems to be a turn-off point as far as the migration is concerned. after 1960, the inflow of migration is not as strong as it used to be before 1960.

* The information given here are gathered from the following sources:

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2. The Giridheepam [Mal], Tellicherry, ^{December} 1976, Supplement.
3. Thomas Pasheparambil: Malabar Kudiyetta Charithram [Mal], unpublished.
4. Discussions with the migrants.

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