

Migration from Travancore to Malabar: A Historical Study

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Abstract: *Migration was a historical event which began in the first quarter of the 20th century. A certain type of subsistence economy prevailed in Travancore till the end of the 19th century. No migration took place so long as the subsistence economy prevailed. The subsistence economy gives way to a developing economy in the first quarter of the 20th century. Obviously when a subsistence economy gives way to a developing economy, migration of peasants and agricultural labourers is a distinct possibility. The peasant migration from Travancore would seem to have been the result of individual decision making by groups of peasants made on the basis of expected costs and returns in the wake of socio-economic transformation that was taking place in Travancore in a particular historical context.*

Index terms: *Travancore, Migration, Malabar, Tapioca, World War, subsistence economy.*

Introduction

Migration is a term which encompasses a wide range of patterns. From the geographical point of view it may involve the movement of people from one locality to another within the country or from one country to another. Such geographical mobility may take place from rural areas to rural areas or from rural areas to urban areas. Urban to rural or urban to urban migrations are also possible. On the basis of duration of the process, migration may be classified into permanent or short term [1].

One of the significant features of this migration has been that the migrants constituted a distinct socio-economic category of peasant farmers. Large number of peasant farmers of the former princely State of Travancore moved out and settled down in the erstwhile Malabar district of the former Madras Presidency. It will be noted that the migrants from Travancore settled down in the jungle lands of Malabar as self-employed peasants and not as wage labour. Since the land so purchased was highly suitable for the cultivation of crops and returns might have influenced them in their decision making [2].

Prior to Independence, Malabar formed part of British India and subsequently of Madras State. It was to this 'foreign' land that people from Travancore migrated in an unprecedented scale since 1928. Migration to Malabar turned out to be a mass movement of tremendous magnitude - a movement of half a million people. Families left their parental villages in Travancore for reasons of their own, and settled in the mountainous expanses of Malabar. The majority of immigrants were small farmers, who went to make Malabar their permanent abode.

The topographical conditions of Travancore were not suitable for large scale extension of paddy cultivation. Tapioca, which is used as a substitute for rice, could, however, be extensively cultivated. At the time when the World War broke out cultivation of tapioca was on the decline. On the other hand significant increase was being registered in area under cash crops such as rubber, cashewnut, pepper and coconut. Apparently, much of the land suitable for cultivation of tapioca was being diverted for the cultivation of these cash crops. No wonder, the people of Travancore, especially in the taluks of Meenachil, Thodupuzha and Kanjirappally where paddy lands are relatively scarce, fell into a sorry predicament when imports of rice were abruptly cut off. Many of them did not even have land suitable for extending tapioca cultivation to tide over the shortage of food caused by the War conditions. During this difficult period, the information received from the pioneering migrants on the availability of plenty of land suitable for cultivation of crops, including tapioca, enthused a large number of starving peasant farmers. They readily sold their small bits of land at fairly high prices and proceeded to Malabar. Thus began once again an exodus of peasant farmers from Travancore to the jungles of Malabar. Large number of colonies of peasant farmers from Travancore sprang up in Malabar, towards the end of the war, from Kanthagad in the north to Thiruvambadi in the south [3].

Travancore turned into a deficit region in the production of rice, the staple food of the bulk of the people. Such a change could itself induce people to migrate in search of land suitable for paddy cultivation. However very little wet lands were available for extension of paddy cultivation. The alternative was to cultivate paddy at a higher cost in the dry lands. However, two developments of the period made such efforts unnecessary. Firstly, tapioca, a tuber crop suitable for cultivation throughout Travancore was introduced. When rice became a scarce commodity, dry fallow lands in the coastal and midland regions began to be increasingly utilised for the cultivation of tapioca. Besides, tapioca remained exempt from taxes on the ground that it formed the poor man's staple diet. Thus cultivation and consumption of tapioca became widespread among the peasantry. The local availability of such a cheap substitute for rice was a disincentive to migration [4].

It was to those malaria-infested jungle lands that the peasant farmers from Travancore had opted to migrate. The movement which started in dripless from the twenties acquired the characteristic of a stream during the Second World War period when an acute food shortage also developed in Travancore. The flow continued even after the end of the War and by 1951 nearly 80,000 persons of Travancore origin migrated and settled in the interior parts of Malabar from north to south. With the influx of migrants from Travancore more areas of land, hitherto uncultivated wasteland, were brought under cultivation. In Travancore, from where the peasant migration originated, the very process began to appear as part of the process of development ushered in during the years following the First World War [5].

Migrants act as some sort of innovators. The peasants who migrated from Travancore had sufficient experience in cash crop cultivation. Unlike the land owning classes in Malabar, they suffered no taboo against engaging in agricultural operations. Most of them hailed from the midland regions of Travancore. The topography and agro-climatic conditions of the areas occupied by them in Malabar were similar to that of their places of origin in Travancore. Such favourable conditions facilitated the change in the land use pattern at the shortest possible period of time.

The migrants from Travancore cleared the jungle and converted them into paddy fields and plantations of rubber, coffee and orchards of coconut and gardens of areca and pepper in the upland regions of Malabar from north to south. The development consciousness which set in motion the migratory movement of the peasants of Travancore seems to have ruled the roost in shaping and reshaping the land use pattern it

different stages. Any development is feasible only with material resources in terms of money. Naturally the pattern which they introduced was to raise those crops which can fetch the maximum yield in terms of value and discontinue those crops which do not command a good price in the market. On seeing the success of the venture, the native people who were indifferent to reclaim cultivable wastelands in the past also came forward and opened plantations and orchards in many parts of the interior areas of Malabar.

However, the peasants who migrated from Travancore, not only acquired cultivable waste lands but also occupied forest lands. Nearly 40 percent of the land occupied by them were forest lands. Such lands were also converted into arable lands. Similarly forests in other parts of Malabar were also occupied by the migrants and converted into arable lands. Needless to say, the depletion of forest can result in ecological disturbances. On the other hand, the migration of peasants and the new land use pattern introduced by them could lead to the development of Malabar region in general and of the centres where migrants settled down in particular. The roads, schools and hospitals constructed by them could contribute to the progress of the region. The places inhabited by the peasants are noted for high literacy rate also. The overall economic development and the prosperity discernible in the region have to be attributed by and large to the migration and to the land use pattern [6].

Migration is a major factor in economic development and manpower planning. The impact of migration on the social and cultural life of the people of particular places also deserves much consideration. Movement of people from one place to another for temporary or permanent settlement due to social, economic, political, religious or other reasons is a familiar phenomenon. Although migration is as old as human history, the massive population movements of the modern times have wider social, economic, political, demographic and ecological implications.

Among the cash crops which contributed much to the increase in export earnings mention may be made of two crops, rubber and cashew. These two crops which had been introduced by the Europeans either in the 19th century or in early 20th century are highly suitable for cultivation in the midland regions. While almost all the other crops require more of moisture content in the soil, these two crops can thrive even on hill slopes or barren lands with low moisture content. Even since its introduction, rubber has spread rapidly throughout the midland region of Travancore. Cashew also attracted the active attention of the peasants as a remunerative commercial crop [7].

The hardworking peasants from Travancore reclaimed forest lands and raised rice and tapioca. Interestingly when one of the capitalist farmers who introduced tapioca in Malabar at the beginning of the thirties, found that not even a single native of Malabar had been willing to purchase it, he had to abandon cultivation of tapioca altogether at a heavy loss. In contrast, demand for tapioca became widespread throughout Malabar during the War period and it turned out to be a welcome food to the masses of Malabar. Apparently, a Bengal-type famine was averted in Malabar by the timely arrival of migrants from Travancore and the introduction of tapioca on a large scale. Needless to say, the high demand for tapioca in Malabar provided conditions for making handsome profits to the not so well-off migrants whose predecessors had met with many travail in Malabar. Many of them were able to thrive because of the rise in the demand for and the price of tapioca.

Mention may also be made of another significant development which took place around this time. All the colonies till then were those established independently by individual peasant farmers. However during the Second World War period, an organised colony was set up at Rajapuram by the Knanite diocese of Kottayam. Two more colonies of this type were subsequently opened. Their success induced the Nair Service Society (N.S.S.) to start a colony at Panathady in Hosdurg. Since then, capitalist farmers also became very active in purchasing land in different parts of Malabar. Interestingly, one of the prominent migrant planters from Travancore was a prince of the Royal Family of Poonjar in the Kottayam District of Travancore.

During the initial stages, migrants had to suffer from a variety of natural calamities, like malarial fever. The migrants had in the earlier days of migration to trek on foot miles to secure any medical aid. It was difficult even to secure quinine during the war period. Needless to say, mortality rate among migrants was very high in the early days of migration. Along with agricultural development migrants were also concerned with the development of education. Hailing from a region which had made tremendous progress in education, they were keenly aware of the potentialities of education as a development agent. It was not easy to start schools in those days because of paucity of funds and the difficulty of getting government sanction. Even adequate number of qualified teachers was not easily available. Nevertheless the far-sighted migrants, opened in almost all the colonies first primary schools, and then, in course of time, upgraded them to high schools. The migrants themselves had to contribute small sums of money to defray the expenditure towards the salary of teachers because grant-in-aid from Government was not forthcoming [8].

The unity which the church provided served the migrants well also in their material endeavours. As a matter of fact, each church under the school of a parish priest provided them the much needed leadership. At a time when none of governmental or non-governmental agencies was prepared to render any help to the migrants, it was the priests of this diocese, who supervised the construction of roads and schools. Some of them used to trek on foot long distances through thick forests to cater to the spiritual and material needs of their flock. Some of them even supplied the much needed quinine during the Second World War period. Also the purchase of land on behalf of a good number of pioneering migrants was arranged by them. In short, the priest acted as friend, philosopher and guide to the migrants.

One visible and important cause for migration to Malabar was the Second World War which resulted in shortage of food stuffs. Scarcity of rice was a common phenomenon in Travancore area at that time. Shortage of cultivable land in Central Travancore, due to increasing pressure on cultivable land, intensified the situation. Many of them wished to go to Malabar area in search of cultivable lands easily available for cheap price [9].

Peasant migration can originate only in a region inhabited by a class of forward looking farmers. The emergence of such a class of peasants would be the outcome of a number of changes. Several administrative reforms were introduced in Travancore that positively affected the growth of such classes. Change in attitudes would be reflected in the desire of the people to have qualitative improvements in food, housing and clothing. However, the educated persons who fail to secure employment commensurate with their educational qualifications may opt to move out in search of paid employment. A typical example is to be found in the migration of educated Travancoreans in search of employment to other parts of India and to foreign lands from the time of World War I [10].

The plantation industry started by Europeans in Travancore largely consumed the vast areas of land. By 1930's about two lakh acres of land were assigned for plantation industry of Europeans and a few natives. Again in 1931 Travancore Government made yet another attempt to assign another one and a half lakh acre of land for the same purpose. This move by the government invited widespread agitation in Travancore, because the poor peasants of the state were badly in need of cultivable land. This prompted the peasants to move to Malabar [11].

Increase in income is likely to lead to two types of developments in a subsistence economy: (1) the farmers may be tempted to increase their consumption of goods, particularly of imported goods; (2) the cultivators may invest their savings in new areas and types of agriculture and in new lines of economic activity, namely industry and trade. A third type of development that would always follow improvements in the

levels of income and savings of farmers is migration. It was the development of commercial agriculture which facilitated the growth of migration from Travancore to Malabar. The economically less powerful among them would find it worthwhile to sell off their lands and move to a region where land values were lower. Migration will continue so long as there exists difference between land values in the areas of origin and the land values in the regions of destination plus transport cost. The development of commercial agriculture needed all these and it facilitated the migration from Travancore to Malabar.

The increasing level of giving importance to commercial crops resulted in the increasing rate of import of food materials. In the middle of the 19th century import of food items was nominal whereas in 20th century, it formed 30 to 50 percent of total import to Kerala. Thus, as a result of colonial rule Kerala became a food deficit state [12].

The non-availability of arable paddy field for the extension of paddy cultivation and the failure of the government in the conventional development of new paddy field resulted in the continuation of import of food materials. The attractive prices of commercial crops, at the same time enabled the farmers to continue plantation agriculture in Travancore. Another important factor which influenced the economy and history of Travancore was the rise and growth of Joint Stock Banks. The number of such financial institutions were six in 1916-17 and 195 in 1928-29. Most of these institutions were in the High land Talks of Travancore. The investors of these Banks were rich farmers and loan beneficiaries also were farmers who intended to invest more money in the plantations.

Migration became thus a fairly widespread phenomenon in Travancore towards the end of the twenties. The Economic condition of the agricultural classes as a whole remained satisfactory. The prices of commercial crops like coconuts, arecanuts, pepper, ginger etc. remained at such high levels that owners of the gardens enjoyed a boon. The growers of food crops were at disadvantage in respect of money earning compared to growers of commercial crops.

Since income from export of cash crops were on the increase, cultivators began to pay more attention to the raising of commercial crops, particularly in the midland regions of Travancore. The following table indicate the progressive increase in the export earnings of the main cash crops during the first quarter of the 20th century. With the fall of Burma and Malaya in the Second World War, the need of rubber for war purpose increased and the Government of India began to encourage rubber plantations. The investors in such plantations (estates) began to induce their neighbours in Travancore to colonise in the jungle part of distant Malabar. The existence of earlier settlers no doubt helped the new settlers in understanding the topography of the area and the extent of available land for cultivations. But the migration of lakhs of people could hardly be explained due to enterprises for making money [13].

Migration would not take place in a subsistence economy because of the non-availability of savings in the form of money. So long as subsistence farming prevails, the chances of accumulation of capital even on a limited scale are minimal. This is the generic term used for all such crops. Although crops like tea, coffee and Rubber are treated as hill produce according to Travancore State Manual See The usage among the inhabitants is to consider pepper, arecanut, cashewnut, ginger, lemongrass oil, turmeric etc. as hill produce in Kerala. Development of roads and vehicular transport in Travancore enabled the peasants to accumulate more capital from the agrarian sector. It all happened because in former days, transportation of cash crops for marketing was very difficult owing to the non-availability of vehicular transport. But with construction of roads through the interior regions of Travancore, it was very easy for farmers to dispose of their products, at a high price. Thus the Travancore peasants were equipped with enough capital to invest for the extension of the agrarian sector [14].

Emigration and immigration will not significantly influence the future size of population in any of the South Asian Countries. After the World War I most developed countries in the world established national policies restricting immigration from abroad. The, South Asian population problem can't be alleviated through emigration from the region. There are today no prospects of a revival of the movements from India and China in to Ceylon and Malaya that continued until the World War II [15].

Migration from India was possible mainly because the subsistence economy failed to meet the limited wants of the people due to frequent occurrences of natural calamities like droughts and floods. In this connection the plight of the inhabitants of Gangetic plain, one of the emigrating regions in North India as described by an authority was as follows: [16]

"The castes which live by unskilled labour are in a wretched condition-ill-fed, ill-clothed, with no resources to with stand a failure of the rains and the scarcity more or less severe which attends such a calamity."

Agricultural labourers refused to migrate unless they were on the verge of starvation caused probably by natural calamities. The State of Travancore was one of the most populous Indian States. It was fourth in density of population among the Indian States and Provinces. Political developments of Travancore affecting the Christian community provided a further, fillip to migration to Malabar. The Syrian Christian community, which constituted the bulk of migrants to Malabar, participated actively in the political movements in Travancore that developed in the wake of the national upsurge in India [17].

The early settlers also encouraged their friends and relatives in their home villages in Travancore to migrate to Malabar. The early migrants presented an attractive picture of Malabar and highlighted the prospective gains as substantial. Rich farmers who had enough surplus capital wanted to expand their estates to Malabar area. They purchased thousands of acres of land in Malabar. Certain portions of the land were cultivated by themselves as estates and the rest of the land were sold to small scale farmers from Travancore who were prepared to migrate. Land was considered to be the most important kind of wealth in Travancore. The economic depression of the 1920's began with the general slump noticeable in the year 1926. This depression seriously felt in various development activities followed by the World War I become pronounced since 1929 and became catastrophic in the following [18].

Fall of price of rubber badly affected cultivators, planters and agricultural workers. Many rubber estates were temporarily closed and so many workers lost their job. In Thodupuzha, due to the closure of a rubber estate about 3000 workers became jobless. In order to help the rubber cultivator's the Government of Travancore reduced the land tax of rubber cultivations from Rupees 21/- to Rs. 1.36/-. The landless agricultural workers of Travancore accompanied their neighbours and the rich farmers (or whom they were working with) to Malabar. In Malabar they became agricultural labourers on one side and small land holders on the other. In certain parts of Travancore, including Ramapuram there was a weekly labour market to recruit agricultural workers to eastern parts of Travancore and to Malabar [19].

The Travancore farmers were tempted to move to the hill ranges of Malabar thanks to these reasons. Since 1930's the peasant farmers of Travancore migrated in large numbers to Malabar, bought up wastelands and converted them into plantations. The outbreak of World War II also led to the migration, by introducing a new set of 'push' and 'pull' factors. Acute shortage of food supply and the general economic distress in Travancore during World War II 'pushed' the Travancoreans from their base. With the fall of Burma, a good source of food supply to India was cut off. The price of rice shot up and black marketing was practiced on a large scale. To meet poverty Government of Travancore introduced complete rationing and appropriated paddy as tax from the peasants.

In early 20th century, in Travancore, a plot as large as five acres from which the peasant had to draw the sustenance of all the souls dependent upon him. It was certainly difficult to draw enough surplus from it. Moreover, the geography of Travancore was not suitable for large scale extension of paddy cultivation. At the time when the World War II broke out, cultivation of tapioca (which was the substitute to rice) was on the decline; on the other hand, significant increase was being registered in this area under cultivation of cash crops such as rubber, cashewnut, pepper and coconut, especially in the taluks of Meenachil, Thodupuzha and Kanhirappally where paddy lands were relatively scarce [20].

It can be seen as a major variation in the class composition of agricultural population between Travancore and Malabar, while owner cultivators constituted the majority of the agriculture population in Travancore, tenant farmers and agricultural labourers together formed the bulk of the agricultural population in Malabar. In Travancore, things were quite different from that of Malabar. The system of sharing of the agricultural income was more equitable in Travancore. The owner cultivators who formed the biggest class among the people depending on agriculture in this region cultivated the land directly. 75% of these land was actually under direct jurisdiction of Travancore State since the middle of the 19th century.

The land revenue of Travancore was quite moderate for the standards than prevailing. Naturally, peasants were in a position to improve their living standards and to accumulate bits of savings arising on good harvests and increase in the price of agricultural products. Apart from this, in Travancore land relationship was more liberal and equitable. Since waste land and forest land were under government control, it was easy for an ordinary man to get consent for buying more land under cultivation, without the interference of any intermediary. The policy of Travancore government also was favourable for the extension of cultivation. The inevitable outcome was the emergence of an increasing number of self-cultivating peasant farmers in Travancore.

With the abnormal increase in the prices of almost all commodities including, timber in the post-World War II period it has been almost a practice with all private owners to cut trees indiscriminately with the sole object of making money. The Government of Madras interfered in this alarming situation-(massive destruction of forest wealth) and passed Madras Preservation of Private Forest Act (1949).

By the middle of 1930s, poverty and famine largely affected the life of the people of Malabar. Under the leadership of Sri. A.K. Gopalan, a 'Pattini Jatha' (famine march) started from Kannur to Madras to call the attention of the authorities to this situation in Malabar. The fall in the price of coconut, pepper etc. in Malabar very badly affected not only the ordinary people but also the landlords since it was not possible for them to remit the land tax promptly. Subsequently, they faced eviction and revenue recovery threat from the side of Madras Government. Under this situation they started the sale of timber of their forests and even from forest lands to intermediaries and peasant settlers of Malabar. Comparatively low wages in Malabar for agricultural workers may be another pull factor of migration to Malabar. In Travancore remuneration for 8 hour agricultural work was 6 Anna where as in Malabar it was only 4 Anna [21].

In Malabar rural economy remained stagnant even after substantial changes took place in the crop patterns and techniques of cultivation. Increasing burden of rent indebtedness, alienation from the land, eviction etc. resulted in the rapid impoverishment of the Malabar peasantry. The people had to transfer their land for saving themselves from legal actions from the government. Though in Malabar, land had to be obtained on lease from the feudal chiefs, land was available in abundance and at cheaper prices and the local landlords were inclined to welcome farmers from Travancore.

In Malabar the ownerships of waste lands and forest lands was also vested with the Jemmies, where as it was under the ownership of the Sirkar (government) Travancore. Even though Malabar as a region contained plenty of cultivable waste lands, farmers of that region did not somehow have, either the will or the ability to move to the uncultivated areas to reclaim them. On the other hand, peasant farmers from Travancore migrated with enthusiasm to the jungle lands of Malabar situated at a distance of about 300-500 kilometres from their native villages.

Many social non-conformists or people who were marginal to their own communities in Travancore also joined the migration bandwagon. People with criminal backgrounds and others who were bankrupt or were dishonoured in their home villages were among the migrants to Malabar. Family feuds and disharmony within the families and with neighbours further helped the cause of migration from Travancore. All these factors combined to cause a mass movement of tremendous magnitude made migration to Malabar a major event of modern Indian history [22].

Migration to Malabar turned out to be a mass movement, as migration of half a million people took place without any design, organisation or leadership. And this makes it unique in the annals of migration. A number of families left their parental villages in Travancore for reasons of their own and settled in the mountainous parts of Malabar. The majority of these settlers were small farmers, who went on to make Malabar their permanent abode.

Migration of the farming population from Travancore to Malabar began in the late 1920s. Malabar being a part of Madras Presidency of British India, was almost like a 'foreign country' for the people who migrated to it from the princely state of Travancore. Travancore and Malabar were separated by Cochin, another princely state. A trip to Malabar from Travancore in those days was a difficult one, owing to lack of transport and communication facilities. The coastal railway line, from Cochin to Mangalore, through Calicut, Mahe and Tellicherry, was the only means of transportation available to the early migrants. And trekking into the interiors from the coastal towns of Malabar formed a glittering chapter of determination, sacrifice, bravery and enterprise. Early batch of pioneering migrants, or more correctly entrants into Malabar were farmers who came mainly from the middle and lower strata of the farming communities of Travancore. A significant majority of these early migrants came from the taluks of Meenachil, Thodupuzha and Muvattupuzha, in the foot hills of the high ranges. Most of the migrants were Catholics, belonging to various denominations.

There was a saying in Travancore that joining the army, death by hanging and migrating to Malabar make no difference. This, of course, made the difference in the early stages of migration. Even after they had been reduced to abject poverty owing to the First and Second World Wars and pressure on cultivable land, many a farmer legislated to Malabar as he was really afraid of the consequences. Lack of transportation facility also slowed down the migration process. But Man cannot forgo his needs. He will strive for it even if he was to risk his life. So the Travancoreans finally had to make a move to Malabar, though not willingly.

To migrate to Malabar created a sense of sadness, separation from friends and relatives is an agonizing affair. As the family members were not sure whether they would meet the migrants again, they bid their kith and kin adieu with a broken heart. To those at home Malabar was venomous maiden and they had a feeling that their dear and near marching towards the valley of death [23].

During 1940's and 1950's, the movement of group of families towards Malabar hillocks was a common scene at Shornur Railway Station. From these railway stations they used buses or boats to arrive at the nearby towns. From there they reached their settlements through the forest on foot. This was the common nature of the journey from Travancore to Malabar.

Early migration of peasants from Travancore to Malabar is an inspiring saga of human endeavour. Early settlers had to face many hardships. Cholera, and other infectious diseases, attack of wild animals, exploitation by jemmies and rich immigrants, heavy taxes and eviction threats were the worst among the hardships that awaited them in the strange hillocks of Malabar. Many a migrant had to start from scratch. Famine and diseases wiped out hundreds of lives. The hospital records at Tellicherry and Mananthavadi bear testimony to this. Orphanages at Marikkunnu at Calicut, Kolayad, Peravoor and other areas were filled with the children of Travancorean migrants. Under these circumstances many returned to Travancore, and several others became agricultural labourers. The condition of the children of the settlers was equally distressing. In their struggle for existence many of the migrants lost their life. On the whole the life of the migrant settlers was characterized by death and disaster. No strangers or outsiders would ever understand the migrants, familiarity with death. The end of life was an end to hope.

Migration from Travancore to Malabar had brought about a sea change in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the people of this region. The migrants, though a different type of people from a different region with a deterrent background, found no difficulty in penetrating into the Malabar society and they soon became indivisible part of that society. It should be noted that the migrants were also instrumental to many revolutionary and longstanding changes in all spheres of life that had changed the very face of Malabar.

There are coastal areas, lowlands, middle and high lands in Malabar. Of these only the first three were occupied by the local inhabitants in the pre-migration period. The settlers from Travancore invaded the highlands, risking their lives and health. Wild animals and epidemics like malaria and cholera posed greatest threat to the migrant farmers. But the brave and hardworking farmers were not ready to be cowed down [25].

With the increase in migration, tapioca cultivation spread all over Malabar. As a result, by 1975 Cannanore district alone produced 1,60,000 tonnes of tapioca from 7,000 hectares out of which 400 tonnes were sold outside the State of Kerala. The settlers made a seemingly justifiable claim that it was their tapioca that saved Malabar from an imminent famine in early 1940's.

Apart from introducing new crops and extending cultivation of old crops, the settlers also opened up vast forest areas for cultivation as has already been noted with the advent of big farmers from Travancore, plantation agriculture in Malabar which till then was confined to the British efforts in Wyanad, spread out into other parts of Malabar. In the early years of migration, land was available for so low a price as ¼ rupees per acre. Another impact of the migration is that the decrease in the forest area of Malabar. In many places thick forests were transformed and this had a very crucial impact. The following table shows the decrease of forest land in Malabar District [26].

The farmers migrated from Travancore to Malabar with little capital for investment and manpower for cultivation. The migration helped in the increase of the total income from agriculture in Kerala. In 1960's -161 the total income from agriculture was 230.91 crores but it increased to 311 crores by 1975-76. This kind of increase happened only after the migration of farming population to Malabar. So it can be assumed from the above that migration to Malabar helped the increase of income from agriculture in Kerala.

As is well known traditionally agriculture occupied a predominant place in the economy of India. Land provided live hood of subsistence level to about 75 percent of India's population even in the 1930's. But in 1930's the agrarian structure or the level of rural technology was not conducive to real agricultural growth in India. But since 1950's after independence India has undergone technology changes in the context of its political system and ideology of development.

Migration of peasant farmers from Travancore to Malabar paved the way for the flow of labour and capital for the reclamation of land and extension of cultivation in Malabar. Such activities contributed significantly to capital formation in agriculture. During the pre-migration period, Malabar region was characterised mainly by subsistence farming - despite the fact that it had a long tradition of cultivation of cash crops like pepper, coconut and arecanut. One of the direct impacts of the migration of Malabar was the emergence of new trading and commercial centres. Almost all the settlement areas became centres of trade, most of them dealing with the "Hill products" or commercial crops like rubber, pepper and ginger. These centres acted as a basis for the cultural growth in Malabar area, especially in the hilly areas, educational, charitable and commercial institutions like Co-operative banks, Commercial banks, Nationalised Banks, Land mortgage banks, Gramin banks etc. developed in these areas. Thus migration played a significant role in the urbanisation of the interiors of Malabar. Some migrants achieved fame as the best in their field, Karshaka sree, Kerakesari Karshakothamo were instituted for this purpose.

The focal effort of Agriculture should be the market rather than the house hold was altogether strange to the peasant. They were now entrepreneurs, tied to the kaleidoscopic fortunes of a market economy. Thus the large scale immigration of people from Travancore is an important factor that has contributed to the increase of population in the northern parts of Kerala during the last few decades. Prior to the Second World War the process of urbanization was accentuated by highly industrialized regions.

Thus migration to Malabar is a migration of superior agricultural technology, capital investment, which deeply influenced the Malabar society. The peasants of Travancore, who later migrated to Malabar were hard working people. During the course of the migration, migrants faced many difficulties, because they had to cross the boundaries of Travancore and Cochin before entering in to Malabar. In the check posts they had undergone humiliating treatments from the authorities. So this situation created an atmosphere of need for unification of Kerala.

Many of the educated people from the settlers got better employment, in India and abroad. Thus migration of Travancore peasantry to Malabar positively influenced the education development of Malabar. To sum up the discussions on cultural impacts of migration, in the first stage of the migration, it can be seen that they showed unity co-operation and mutual love. In the second stage, there were dedicated leadership to uplift the migrated society and the society also recognized their leadership. In the third stage people reached the level of economic self-sufficiency which led to selfishness, lack of unity, fight for leadership etc. Unable to cope with the corrupt and power hungry men, who were too keen to fill their pockets in the name of development, an able and dedicated group kept away from the so called developmental activities which, they knew, were not for the benefit or betterment of the society but for the selfish and corrupt leaders. The call of the time is for the emergence of selfless people to lead the society.

Migration of farmers to Malabar negatively affected the climate and environment of Malabar as a whole. Now-a-days the migrants of Malabar are concentrating in the preservation of nature, thereby providing chance for their coming generation to enjoy the hits of their early hazards and hard work.

Migration to Malabar resulted in the incessant deforestation that led to the ecological imbalances. It has further deepened the environmental crisis which have Migration to Malabar resulted in the incessant deforestation that led to the ecological imbalances. It has further deepened the environmental crisis which has already affected the area due to the unholy alliance between the forest officials and timber contractors.

The migration of Travancorean settlers to Malabar, adversely affected the life of the tribals of Malabar. Whatever be the arguments for and against migration, tribal alienation is real fact. The adivasis, who were the real owners of the land earlier became refugees in their own land. The tribals often have an inferior social status and they are ruthlessly exploited by their employers (migrant farmers and by money lenders

and local merchants. The local money lenders and merchants take full advantage of the tribal's ignorance, sense of trust and their general habit of honouring a debt. As migration become more common, the contact of tribals with the migrant has increased in a wide spectrum. The land hungry migrants came here of course in many cases they encroached their land, but at the same time they paid wages in cash. They opened up transport and communication, school and libraries not only for their children, but also for the adivasi students. The upliftment of tribals of Malabar is one of the important impacts of migration. There are a number of instances of inter marriages between migrants and local adivasis (usually not arranged but love marriage or marriage with compulsion from the community due to certain other reasons). However certain recent developments, affecting the relationship between the different sections of the population are not very healthy. The relationship between settlers and original inhabitants were smooth and wholesome in the early periods. Frictions developed in later period and although it is narrow and almost imperceptible at present a cleavage has been definitely formed between the new settlers and old inhabitants. It is of utmost importance for the harmonious social development of the village that the two sections understand each other better and live as good neighbours instead of harbouring envy and enmity against each other. Thus migration of farmers from Travancore to Malabar resulted in the transformation of Malabar society in every aspect. It had its own influence over social, economic, political and cultural life of the people of Malabar.

Conclusion

Besides importing into Malabar their distinct culture and habits, the migration contributed largely to the educational and cultural developments of Malabar. The impact of the migration on the economy of Kerala in general and of Malabar in particular needs special mention. Large scale production of commercial crops like rubber, ginger, pepper, arecanut and coconut, advanced methods of cultivation and the introduction of new agricultural crops are some of the aspects to be highlighted. Special mention should be made of the introduction of tapioca, a food crop, which was generally unknown in Malabar. Tapioca, introduced by the immigrants was so widely cultivated. Moreover, it has been justifiably claimed that it was tapioca that saved Malabar from starvation during the famine of early 1940s. Thus migration to Malabar involved a revolution of great magnitude and formed an important phase in the social, economic and cultural history of Kerala.

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