

# READING ACROSS MALABAR MIGRATION: EXPERIENCES FROM MALOM

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## Abstract

'READING ACROSS MALABAR MIGRATION: EXPERIENCES FROM MALOM' is an investigative study on the phenomenon of Malabar Migration a mass movement of peasants from erstwhile Travancore to former Malabar district and Kasaragod taluk of South Canara district of British India. The following study focuses on a place named MALOM which is now in Kasaragod district of Kerala. This unique movement in the history of Kerala was motivated by many push and pull factors, which includes scarcity of land, population pressure, economic crisis, poverty, famine, problems of Second World War etc in Travancore and the availability of large tracts of land at cheap prices at Malabar and so on. The migrants faced severe challenges in the land of Malabar, however completely transforming the highlands of Malabar in significant ways. The history of this unique phenomenon has been explored by a number of scholars but no significant studies have been made on this particular place. There is much relevance in analyzing the significant transformation of Malom in the wake of migration.

**Key points:** Malabar migration, Travancore, push -pull factors, etc.

Migration has been a common social phenomenon among various societies throughout history. The movement of people from one place to another have always accompanied civilization in every stage of its development. Historically, people migrated from one place to another either by force in terms of slavery, persecution, or for reasons of colonialism. Towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century international migration began to be prompted by industrialisation and urbanisation. In the contemporary context of globalization, the migratory phenomenon has acquired great momentum. The forces of demand and supply, needs and gratification, and increased possibility of movement and communication have facilitated the process of migration. Thus migration has undeniably become a prominent reality in the modern world. [1]

As elsewhere in the world, the Indian state of Kerala has also witnessed different kinds of migratory process from time immemorial. Historically, Kerala has been a favourite spot of people from different parts of the globe due to its unique geographical features. People belonging to different communities from different countries migrated and settled here from very early period onwards. The Jews, the Christians, the Arabs, the Greeks, The Romans, the Chinese, Brahmins and other ethnic groups have settled in Kerala on various occasions.

According to Dr. K.V. Joseph, migratory movements of varying patterns have originated during different periods in history. Most of these were prompted by such factors like wars, epidemics, natural calamities, famines and religious pressure and so on.[2] People of Kerala have been migrating to the

advanced western nations and the rich oil producing countries of the Middle East for over many decades. There also movements to different states of India. Many people from other states are also coming to Kerala in search of better opportunities. A study conducted by Galati Institute of Taxation has reported that over twenty five lakhs of labourers residing in Kerala belong to other Indian states. [3] There are also instances of movements of people to different parts of Kerala. One such movement was the migration of peasants in large numbers from southern parts of Kerala into the former Malabar district and Kasaragod taluk in South Canara in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was a significant event in the history of Kerala. This remarkable event is known as '**Malabar Migration**'.

Malabar migration is one of the significant events in the history of Kerala in general and Malabar in particular. The immigrants were mostly from Syrian Christian denomination of central Travancore, but there were people from other communities also. This migratory process which began in the early 1920s, reached its zenith between 1940s and 1950s, and gradually slackened by 1970s and came to an end by 1980s. But still individual migrants search their fortune here.

Many studies had done on various facets of Malabar migration and many have been forthcoming on this topic. The present study is done on a village in Kasaragod District named Malom, having many migrant families. This is the locality where I live which is also very much related to migration. Being part of this migrant locality, I had a great curiosity regarding this mass movement of people to a remote unfamiliar alien land and which was done without any preparation. This migration to a distant rural area had far reaching impact, changing the social economic and cultural fabric of the less developed forest areas of Malabar. This study tries to bring out various aspects of migration to Malom village in Kasaragod district and changes effected on this locality and the life of natives as a result of migration.

My category of sources for the study have been developing a questionnaire that investigated into the various aspects of migration, its causes, role played by the church authorities, its impacts on the socio-economic-cultural life of Malabar and Malom in particular. The locality Malom has been taken as a unit of analysis as it was one of the major centres of Malabar migration. 25% of the population of the locality was taken for the study. Personal interviews with the early migrants of Malom have enriched my studies with oral information and helped to get an accurate of picture of migration to the locality. In addition to this, church records related to the conduct of Baptism, death registry etc. provided information on places of birth, causes of death, number of death of migrants in that particular region. Besides, various secondary sources like books, souvenirs, novels, autobiographies, unpublished PhD thesis have also been used for this study.

I used insights from theories which have been formulated related to migration. Various theories were formulated on the general nature of migration. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Everett S Lee, American scholar, introduced a framework for the analysis of migration. According to this, migration is governed by push-pull process. The unfavourable situation of a place pushes out people to another area where favourable conditions pull them in. War, scarcity of land, unemployment, oppressive laws and taxations, famine are some of the push out factors. High wages, plenty of arable land, better working conditions, peaceful political

situations, and good climate so on pull men to new destination. All these factors play a major role in migration. There are also various models based on urban-rural difference in the economic situation. Thus migration can be looked through different theories and approaches. The present study adopts push-pull theory and the historical structural approach, which seems to be more appropriate.

A lot of studies have been conducted which looked into the process of migration from different perspective. For understanding the concept of Malabar migration in general, I have gone through a number of works. 'Malabar', a manual written by William Logan (1887) gives a detailed picture of geography and people of Malabar district of British India. 'The Exodus from Travancore to Malabar jungles' (1945) a survey report by Sri K G Sivaswamy and others, which is considered to be the first work on migration to Malabar, provides a detailed picture of economic conditions and other problems of migrants of Malabar. P K Michael Tharakan's work 'Migration of farmers from Travancore to Malabar from 1930-1960: An analysis of its economic causes', 'Migration and economic development of Kerala' (1988) by K V Joseph deals with socio-economic dimensions of Malabar migration. Another research work on migration is an unpublished PhD thesis entitled 'Christian migration to Malabar 1930-1980' by Dr P T Sebastian (2002) is a comprehensive work on the topic. 'Modern Kerala' written by Dr K K N Kurup (1988) provides the information on Christian peasantry and social change in the high land of Malabar. 'Swapnabhoomiyil' written by Thomas Pazheparambil (1978) gives a complete historical account of Malabar migration and information on early migrant settlements. 'Kasaragod Charithravum Samoohavum' by Dr C Balan gives information important centres of migration in Kasaragod district. Besides all these research works there are a number of works of literary merit which vividly explains the migrant life. 'Vishakanyaka' by S K Pottakkad, 'Orotha' by Kakkanadan, 'Konippadikal', by Kuravilangad Joseph are a few among them. All these works give a general idea about Malabar migration and its various aspects. But no comprehensive analysis of various settlements of migration has been done, except a few. This was the major thrust behind choosing my own locality as a unit of study which was one among the centres of migration.

### **Malabar Migration: An Overview**

As already discussed Malabar Migration refers to the large scale movement of peasants from the erstwhile Travancore to the erstwhile Malabar district and Kasaragod Taluk of South Canara district of Madras Presidency beginning from 1920s in search of virgin lands for cultivation and for a prosperous life. One important aspect of this migratory process was that the migrants were mostly peasant farmers. They were agrarian people. This movement was not inspired by any religious and political ideologies. Instead, the migratory phenomenon was one mobilised by land-hungry peasants who wanted a better economic life in the virgin lands of Malabar. Along with them, the wave of migration consisted of rich and middle peasants also who were in search of a new horizon. This was not the first instance of migration of people in Travancore. Even earlier in Travancore, there were migrations to the places like Mundakayam, Peermedu, Vandanmedu, Velliamattom, the eastern High ranges of central Kerala. When there was no land for fresh occupancy, this earlier movement came to an end. Then it was turned to Malabar [4]. Contrary to the most

types of migrations which are mostly from underdeveloped regions to developed regions or from rural to urban regions, this unique kind of migration was to an undeveloped forest region. It was a movement from one rural area to another rural area. The availability of large tracts of cheap land in Malabar had been attracting the cultivators since the 1920s and the flow was in its full force between 1945- 1970. [5]

Before analysing the various push and pull factors behind the migration, let us have a look into the geographical background of Malabar. The erstwhile Malabar district lies to the south west coast of Indian subcontinent. Malabar proper is bounded by South Canara district in the north, Coorg, Mysore, Nilgiris and Coimbatore to the east, the princely states of Cochin and Travancore in the south and the Arabian Sea in the west. A large portion of the country to the eastward being mountains and hills overran with forest, the population is dense along the coast and for some distance into the interior. There were no compact villages or towns in Malabar, except along the coast. So there was availability of plenty of arable land along the eastern highlands of Malabar. The climate was also very pleasant. The chief glory of Malabar is the long array of western ghat. These geographical features had played distinctive role in shaping the social, economic and political life of Malabar. [6]

For the proper understanding of Malabar migration, it is essential to analyze the various causes of this process. Migrations have been explained in dual terms of push and pull factors. Most historians explain economic aspects as one of the major clause of Malabar migration. The economic crisis during the period 1914-1919 occurred in different parts of Kerala affected the lives of people. The prices of essential commodities rose and people were badly affected by poverty, hunger and unemployment. This was mainly due to the First World War that happened during this time. The Second World War also had worst effects on the people. Together with this increase in population and its pressure on land also accelerated the migratory process. Another major factor that was responsible for pushing out the people of Travancore was the scarcity of land. All the existing literature on migration to Malabar explains it as a movement of peasant farmers, who were mostly Syrian Christians, in search of suitable land for cultivation. Dr. K.V. Joseph has provided an economic dimension to the phenomenon. According to him, it was the changes in the socio-economic and institutional factors including the land tenure system that led to the emergence of peasant migration from Travancore to Malabar. He states that peasant migration can originate only in a region inhabited by a class of forward looking peasant farmers.[7]. Reforms introduced by the Travancore government gave a fillip to the expansion of cultivation by gaining more and more land. At the same time increase in population led to increased pressure on lands, and people went in search of lands.

One another most important factor was the particular kind of inheritance followed by the Christian community. The patriarchal system of inheritance and equal division of property among the male children reduced the availability of land among the families after one or two generations. This reduction together with the population pressure naturally forced the Syrian Christians to Malabar. [8] Apart from this certain political conditions in Travancore also resulted in migration. Certain oppressive measures of Diwan Sir C P Ramaswami Ayyer against the affluent Christian community like arresting many Christian leaders

also resulted in migration. All these factors are considered as the major push factors that contributed to Malabar migration.

The various pull factors which attracted the migrants to Malabar were the availability of vast tracts of uncultivated land, favourable climatic conditions and fertile soil and so on. The land tenure system of Malabar was favourable for migrants. The ownership of waste land and forest land in Malabar was also vested in the *Jenmies*, who were not interested in capitalist agriculture. Uncultivated waste lands were exempted from payment of taxes. Due to these policies vast tracts of land remain uncultivated in Malabar. These factors also attracted the peasants of Travancore who were in search of fresh land.

The enterprising farmers who migrated to the new land of Malabar chiefly originated from the North-east taluks of Travancore like Meenachil, Thodupuzha, Muvattupuzha, Kottayam, Vaikom, and Changanaserry. Having heard about the availability of uncultivated land in Malabar from the Mappila labourers who worked in the plantations of Travancore, the first wave of migrants stated their journey to Malabar. [9] Migration towards Malabar started from about 1926. At first the upper class people came towards Malabar to start plantation industries. The earliest migrants to the land of Malabar are considered to be Jacob Thomas Karippaparambil and Joseph Maliyekkal who came to Mannarkkad in Palakkad district in 1926. [10] In the first stage of migration people went to Calicut, Vadakara, Kannur, Thalassery, and later to Thaliparamba, Payyanur, Neeleshwaram, Kanhangad. In Kasaragod district, the first migrant colony was established in Rajapuram in 1942. [11] Later many migrated to the interiors of Kasaragod like Rajapuram, Chittarikkal, Palavayal, Vellarikkund, Malom so on.

Most of the pioneers of the migrants had to face sever challenges to their life and property in the new land. The migrants who had reached the main centres of Malabar had to walk long distances through the dense forests inhabited by wild beasts to reach their destination or to the suitable place where they could start a living. Many died of diseases like Malaria and of attack from wild animals. Many people lost everything and some of them returned to Malabar. However, migration brought complete transformation in the highlands of Malabar by introducing changing in the demography, society, economy and the cultural life of Malabar. The migrants new cultivation patterns, introduced new food crops like tapioca and cash crops like rubber in the eastern highlands of Malabar, expansion of cultivation, commercialization of agriculture and so on. Large tracts of uncultivated cheaply available land were transformed into productive fields. The migrants brought to Malabar their unique culture, faith practices and their distinct slang of Malayalam. Thus the migration equally changed the life of migrants and the natives of Malabar.

### **Experiencing the Migration to Malom in Kasaragod District**

As a part of the large scale movement of people from Travancore, migrants reached the hilly, highland areas of Malabar district. A wave of migrants also reached the Kasaragod district. It was then a



taluk under the South Canara district of Madras Presidency. The migrants settled in various regions of the taluk and established their colonies in these areas. One such centre of migration was Malom in the Kasaragod district.

One of the centers of migration, we can look into the historical background of Kasaragod and Malom, migration to Kasaragod and Malom, and the socio-economic condition of Malom during the stages of migration or in the pre-migration period, life of migrants and natives and the impact of migration on Malom.

The Kasaragod taluk was organized as a district of the state of Kerala on 24 May 1984. It is bounded by Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka state in the north, Coorg district in the east, Kannur district to its south and Arabian Sea to its west. Before 1947, Kasaragod was a taluk lying to the south of South Canara district of Madras Presidency. With the linguistic reorganization of Indian states and the subsequent formation of the Kerala state in 1956, it became the northern most part of Kerala state. [12] The district has a long history covering over many centuries. It was ruled by many rulers and was a part of many dynasties before the coming of British. By the treaty of Srirangapatnam in 1792, Malabar came under British. But Canara was not handed over to British by Tipu. With the death of Tipu in May 1799, Canara (Karnataka) was ceded to English company. Thus Kasaragod became a part of the British colonial authority. The feudal kings of Neeleshwar and Kumbala were degraded to the status of mere landlords. Under the leadership of the landlords, the peasants and local people frequented revolts against the excessive revenue demands of the company. But company made these lords to their side by providing them absolute right over the peasants and right to collect *pattom* as they liked. Thus the company established and consolidated their rule with the help of these rulers and landlords.

### **Socio –economic condition of Malom in the pre-migration period**

Malom is small village in the Balal Panchayath of Kasaragod district. It is a beautiful village nestling in the lap of Coorg hills of the Western Ghats. It is bounded by Karnataka state in the east, East Eleri, West Eleri and Kinanoor Karindalam Panchayath in the south, Kodom – Belur Panchayath to its west and Panathady Panchayath to its north[13]

Malom is a hillside village lying to the south-east of Kasaragod district, bordering the state of Karnataka, lying on the both shores of river Chaitravahini. The name ‘Malom’ is believed to have originated from ‘Mahalokam’. As per the 2001 census, Malom have a population of 14,727 people. Malom is known for its rich cultural heritage, being referred in the history of many temples and *tarawads* in Kasaragod district. This place had a rich historical tradition. Srikrishna temple at Paramba, Kottancherry Devasthanam, and MalomKulom are the structural remains of an antique period in history. [14]

The Malom village was a part of Kasaragod taluk of the South Canara district till 1956. The high mountain system of the Western Ghats, the forests covering it and the rivers starting from these mountains have influenced in shaping the social and economic life of Malom from very early period onwards.

A century ago, the region was covered with thick and dense forests. These forests were inhabited by the tribal groups like *Mavilar*, *Vettuvar* and *Malakkudiyans*. Their main occupation was cultivation i.e., Punam Cultivation. It is the form of cultivation after clearing the forests and burning it. They cultivated either in their own land or in the land of *jenmies*. They were also engaged in making baskets and vessels from the stems of bamboo and also in hunting animals and fishing. They got paddy as their wages. They were addicted to the use of drugs. They performed the ritual art of Theyyam within their own community and among the landlords.

In course of time, these forests were taken over by the big *jenmi* families and tarawads. The most prominent Nair tarawad which ruled this area was the Balikkadakkon Tarawad. Later several *jenmi* families like Kodoth Nair family in Malom, Klayikkode Cheruvittara family, Trikkarippur, Udumbanthala Muslim family and Cherippadi family bought the land after its disintegration. Many Nair families from Bara and Podavadukkam, near Kasaragod, had also migrated to Malom. Many muslim families also migrated to this area. These early migrants to Malom were the first to bring the rays of light to this uninhabited place.

Malom had an agriculture based economy from the very beginning itself. *Janmis* and tribal groups working under them helped to form an agrarian economy here. These tribal groups like *Mavilars* and *Vettuvars* were the *adimas* of the *jenmies*. These *adimas* were divided between *jenmies*. They lived in the places given by the *jenmies* in very poor condition. They did punam cultivation. Paddy, 'chama', 'muthari' and 'tuvara' were the cultivated crops. Pepper was also grown. The tribal people were responsible for the cultivation of these crops. They looked after the crops day and night from the attack of wild animals. The tenants gave two-tenth portion as *pattom* i.e., the right of the *jenmi* to collect the yield of two years out of the total ten years. Apart from this, some other levies and rent were given as *pattom* at regular intervals. Paddy and rice were given as wages. They got wages in cash only once in a week to buy salt, fish and chilly. This kind of cultivation and subsistence prevailed in Malom.

Before the coming of the migrants, there were no facilities for education and the natives depended on the Rajah's High School at Neeleshwar. There were no hospitals in Malom. Adivasis had the traditional knowledge of witch craft and medicinal herbs. So people depended on these groups for the purposes of treatment. Before the coming of migrants, there were '*kooppu*' roads connecting the various places. These roads were used for the movement of Lorries carrying forest timber. Malom had a great tradition in folk and ritual arts and other cultural activities. These cultural activities were developed around the temples and sacred groves. Various theyyams and dance forms were practiced by the early natives of Malom. Under these social, economic and cultural conditions, the first group of migrants reached Malom in the 1950s.

### **Migration to Kasaragod and Malom**

As a part of the large scale migration to the highlands of Malabar, people also reached the hill land areas of Kasaragod district. Migration to Kasaragod began in 1940s. In 1941, Sri Thomas Kottukappally bought an estate in Cheemeni from Thazhekkattu Mana and appointed Sri Thomas Thayyil to supervise the

plantation process. Under his initiative, many migrants bought land at Eleri and Chittarikkal region in Kasaragod district. From 1950s, a lot of people migrated to Kasaragod. They reached Neeleshwar by train and travelled about twenty four kilometers to Mukkada. From there they travelled about sixteen kilometers through the forest to reach Chittarikkal and other areas surrounding it.

Migration to Malom from Travancore started in 1954. The first to reach Malom was Sri Kuttikkattukunnel Thomas.[15] Following him, Sri Mannamkari Thomas, Puthur Jacob and Kariyankal Pappan came with their family and settled here between 1954- 1956, Migration to Malom became more extensive after 1957. About twenty families reached here between 1957 and 1958 and settled in nearby places like Vallikkadavu and Paramba. These migrants were mostly from Pala, Thodupuzha and Kanjirappalli. A group of migrants also came from Kodancherry, Peravoor and Kulathuvayal, Migration to Malom increased further after 1960.

The main push factors that forced the migrants from Travancore to Malom were the famine and poverty and other hardships caused by the Second World War. The lack of cultivable land was also a main force. They were in search of virgin land for expansion of cultivation and thus for a better, prosperous life.

### **Life of Migrants in Malom**

The migrants were mostly Christian peasants who came in search of fresh land for cultivation. Malom was inhabited by many Hindu jenmi families and Muslim families and tribal groups. No Christians lived at Malom before the coming of migrants. So there was some sort of anxieties for the migrants and also among the natives regarding the nature of the new migrant community from Travancore. But this tension gradually swept away from the minds of natives when they realized that the migrants were poor farmers who came in search of virgin land for a better life.

The new settlers from Travancore were helped by many good minded natives in Malom. Sri Karimbil Kunhikkoman was a prominent planter and jenmi of Malom. He was willing to provide all kind of support to the migrants. He gave his bulldozer to the migrants to help them in opening new roads. He acted as a mediator in between the migrants and natives to solve the disputes. He gave money to the needy migrants at cheap interests. He used the money which he got by selling his land to start small scale industries. Sri. C.Kunhikannan Nair, the Malom Pattelar, a landlord, who extended his help and support to migrants from Travancore.

The migrants to Malom followed the same pattern of cultivation that they practiced in Travancore. They cultivated all the available crops in the same period i.e. cultivating more than one crop at a time. In the initial phase, they cultivated lemon grass which gave enough profit within a short duration. Besides this, pepper, ginger, turmeric and plantain were grown. Food crops like tapioca, paddy, mango tree, jack tree were also grown. When they became self sufficient in food crops they turned to cash crops. Rubber, coconut, areca nut were planted and thus strengthened the economic base. The migrants also introduced new agricultural tools to like spade which was new to Malom.[16] The migrants developed a life of cooperation



and mutual assistance in the new land. They helped mutually in the construction of houses, harvesting of paddy and other crops, engaging in cultivation activities in each other's fields and other similar works.

When compared to the miseries faced by the migrants in other parts of Malabar, the migrants to Malom and Chittarikkal area faced no severe problems. In the initial phase of settlement, there was no adequate transportation facility. Many people reached Malom by walking through the dense forests from Cherupuzha, which was twelve kilometers from Malom. There was less frequent attack from wild animals in this area, except wild pig. But what disturbed the migrants was the attack of domestic animals of the natives. The cattle and other animals of the natives moved here and there recklessly and destroyed the crops cultivated by the migrants. [17]

The early migrants had to travel long distances to Neeleshwar, Kanhangad and Payyannur for trade and for the purpose of treatment. There were no transportation facilities to reach these coastal areas in the early phase. The early migrants also had to travel long distances just like any other places of migrants to meet their spiritual needs. Thomapuram (Chittarikkal) was the nearest centre, where a church was established from 1949 onwards. Because of the long distance they had to travel through the forest, the migrants requested Fr. Joseph Mulavarikkal, the priest of Chittarikkal, for a new church at Malom. Since then, there took place frequent deliberation regarding the construction of a new church building. For this purpose seven acres of land were donated by ten migrant families, besides the eight acre land donated by Kodothu Madhaviamma. A new church was constructed at Malom in 1965 which was blessed by Mar Sebastian Valloppilli. [18]

### **Migration and Development of Malom**

The advent of migrants to Malom completely transformed its social, economic and cultural life. The impact of migration on various spheres of Malom is widely felt in the betterment of education facilities, transport, health, agriculture and cultural sphere.

The coming of migrants greatly influenced the agriculture pattern of Malom. They introduced new strategies and new tools for cultivation. The introduction of tapioca by the migrants led to its widespread use by the natives. The reclamation of waste land and subsequent expansion of cultivation was a major change. The wide scale cultivation of cash crops increased the income of the migrants and the natives. The agricultural labourers, who were mostly natives, got enough wages and better treatment under the migrants.

[19] The migrants were in forefront for organizing a cooperative bank and gradually a Gramin Bank in Malom which helped their cultivation by providing financial support to the farmers.

The social and cultural development of Malom and the nearby areas was made possible by the activities of the Malom Development Committee. Under Jacob Kariyambilli, the committee put pressure on the authorities for the development of Vellarikkundu-Malom- Konnaikkad road (14kms) under P.W.D. This committee also took the initiative for the introduction of electricity in Malom. [20]

With the establishment of a church in Malom, all the subsequent development of Malom was centered around or under the leadership of the church and its priest. The life of Christians was depended on the various sacraments of the church. They gave much importance to the sacraments and spirituality. Because of this importance they established churches in their settlements as their first duty. Various priests, who were the vicars of St. George Church Malom, had led a significant role in the development of Malom. These priests established schools, hospitals, various buildings, took leadership in constructing roads and bridges. Thus the role of various priests in the development of Malom is indescribable.

The advent of migrants led to the bringing of rays of knowledge and education to Malom. The migrants took the initiative in improving the educational conditions of Malom. In 1953, a school was started at Vallikkadavu, near Malom, which upgraded to a high school in 1974. In 1978, St. Savio Nursery School and an L.P. School were started by the church. These early institutions were beacons of light and knowledge.

The advent of migrants introduced many changes in the field of health care by starting a Medical Centre at Malom. Gradually, K.K.M. hospital and a Government Ayurveda Dispensary were also opened at Malom [21]. The transportation facilities of Malom were improved by the bus service to Konnakkad, passing through Malom, in 1960s. Starting from first bus BMS, today a large number of buses pass through Malom connecting it with Kottayam, Bengaluru, Neeleshwar and Kanhangad. The Construction of bridges across the Chaitravahini River made the travel to Cherupuzha and Chittarikkal much easier than before. Many new roads were opened connecting nearby migration centres-Malom with Puncha, Konnakkad, Vallikkadavu, Elerithattu, Cherupuzha and Payyannur.

The opening of a new library and club by Fr. John Vadakkumoola in 1964 brought revolutionary changes to Malom. In 1958, a Volleyball court was established. There were frequent volleyball matches in this court since then. These institutions have become a centre of cultural, literary and artistic development of Malom through and these years.

Malom is known for the peaceful co-existence of different religious groups. The early natives of Malom welcomed the migrants, who were mostly Christians. Since then, the natives and the migrants worked together for the growth of Malom. The help provided by Sri Karimbil Kunhikkoman and other natives for the construction of church was also unforgettable. The various cultural activities during the time of annual *thirunal* of church were attended by people from other religious groups. Christians also attended various ceremonies and cultural programmes of other religious groups. A muslim theyyam 'MukriPokker' along with other theyyams are practiced in Malom Kulom temple. Today, people of different religious groups live peacefully in this small town.

The most important change is the development of Malom as a trading centre of eastern highlands; some of the early traders of Malom were Kuttikkattukunnel Thomas, Koran Nair and Palakki Khadhar. Beginning with these early traders, today a large number of petty traders subsist by trading in Malom town.

Today everything can be bought and sold in the market of Malom. The surrounding places like Konnakkad, Vallikkadavu, and Pungamchal have also developed as trading Centres. Now Malom has grown as one of the rich commercial centres of Malabar – a major hillside town of Kasargod. The role played by the Travancorean migrants, priests and the church in the progress and development of Malom is undeniable one.

The study focuses on one of the centres of migration, Malom in Kasaragod district. Migration to Malom, which began in 1954, was also the result of famine created by the Second World War and was in search of virgin land to expand cultivation. Unlike other centres of Malabar, Malom had a majority of Hindu population and a few Muslim families. This situation had alarmed both the natives as they did not know the exact character of Christian migrants and the migrants as they feared the responses of the natives. The migrants were less frequent to attack of wild animals and infectious diseases unlike the other centres of migration. The mutual understanding between the migrants and the natives led to a peaceful, harmonious life in Malom.

Like any migratory centre, the migrants gave first preference to their spiritual needs and made every arrangement to start a church at Malom. After this, all subsequent developments of Malom under the migrants were centered on this church. Each and every development of Malom was linked to that church and the various priests who served there. The construction of pocket roads, opening of hospitals, library and clubs were all under his effort. Many natives had also helped in the development process by granting land and suitable means for it. The transformation of Malom as a developing sub-urban in the last few decades was the result of the hard work and cooperation of the migrants and the natives. This fact has been substantiated by many of the natives of Malom. They agree that migration has contributed to the all round development – social, economic and cultural – of Malom.

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16. Interview with A. Kunhikkoran Nair, a native of Malom, on 2 February 2019, 3 p.m.
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