

**MIGRATION AND LAND USE : A CASE STUDY OF ALAKODE PANCHAYATH IN KANNUR  
DISTRICT,KERALA**

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**Abstract**

*The paper is an attempt to identify the changes in the land use scenario and the trends of migration that has taken place in Alakode Panchayath in Thalipparamba Taluk in Kannur district from 1971 to 2011. Alakode Grama-Panchayath occupies an area of 119.40sq km, with a population of 34878 persons in 2011 census. The study area is located in the northern part of Thalipparamba Taluk and the area extends between 12° 16'15"N to 12° 8'14" North latitude and 75° 22'12"E to 75°32'53"East longitude. The methodology of the present study include preparation of land use/land cover maps of Alakode Grama Panchayath based on the Survey Of India (SOI) toposheet and satellite imageries, the socio economic condition is been captured with a survey and personnel interviews conducted from the different part of the Panchayath. The result of the survey reveals that in the year 1930, the major part of the study area was forest and uncultivated. With the Travancore migration to Malabar, the hill areas of Alakode Panchayath, witnessed a change in the land use, the settlers got engaged in the cultivation of food crops and commercial crops like pepper, ginger, cardamom, rubber, tapioca and cashew. But after 1995 the scenario has totally changed, as there is a decrease in the agricultural product and fall in price of the agricultural crops, this has badly affected the life of the settlers, since the social life of settlers indented for a change especially for better education, health and other conveyances they move towards plains or to the nearest town from up hills. Hence there is nothing wrong in our farmers leaving the hills to find better opportunities.*

**Key Words:** Land Use, Migration, Alakode, Satellite Imgerly and Interview.

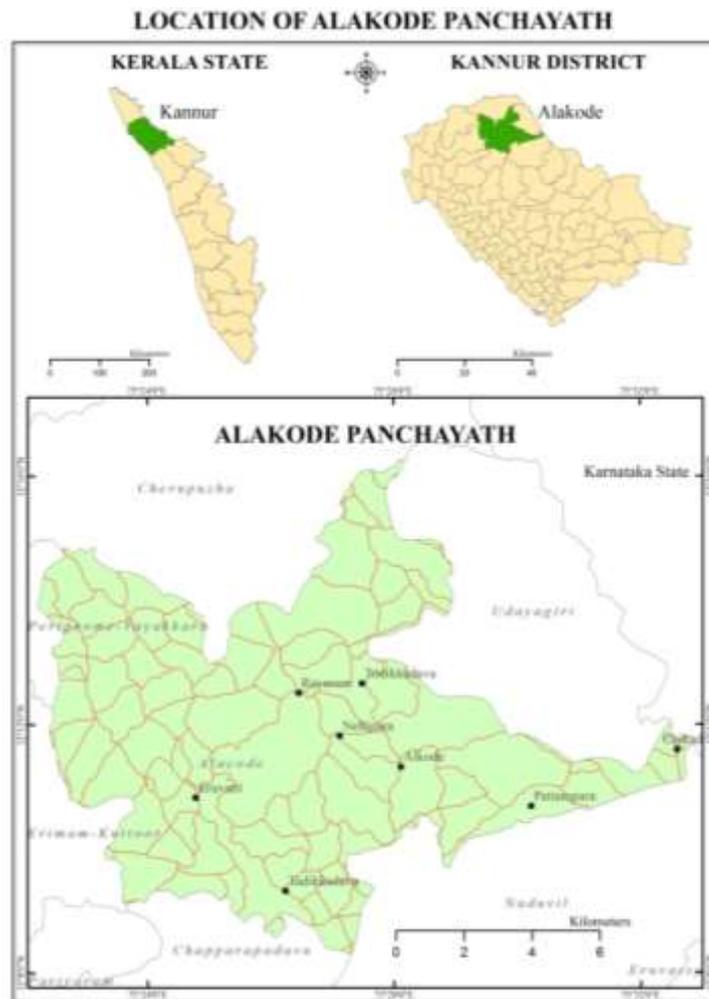
## **1. Introduction**

The history of mankind has been closely related with natural resources. Land is one of the important component on which physical, economic and social development depends. Land provides food and variety of minerals and therefore it needs proper use of land. Land resource has very often been left in the past entirely of primitive methods. This has led to proper use of land resulting basic resource which has gradually deteriorated. With the growing pressure of population on limited land resources, man has to use optimum usage of every piece of land. This necessitates the determination for the optimum usage of every piece of land hence there is consequent need of system of land utilization (Stamp, 1960). Migration, a process of changing the usual place of residence, started with the beginning of the humankind is a very prominent field of research in the academic world. Focus is made on the assumption that people move from the place of origin to destination in search of means of subsistence and for the betterment of life, and for the further development of their socio-economic capability. No doubt, one of the most significant aspects of recent demographic changes in the developing countries is the rapid growth of urbanization due to unprecedented rural to urban migration.

Migration is a factor in economic development and man power planning. Migration of people from one place to another for temporary or permanent settlement due to social, economic, political or other reasons is a familiar phenomenon. Large areas of uncultivated forest in the hilly regions of Malabar and migration from Travancore to these areas brought about various changes in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the people of this region.

The paper is an attempt to identify the changes in the land use scenario and the trends of migration that has taken place in Alakode Panchayath in Thalipparamba Taluk in the context of socio economic and geographical framework.

**2. Study Area** Alakode Panchayath comes in Talipparamba block in Kannur district. There are 21 wards in Alakode Panchayath. Udayagiri Panchayath borders in the east, Eramam kuttoor Panchayath in the west, Peringome vayakkara Panchayath in north and Naduvil and Chapparappadavu in the south. Alakode Panchayath is located very close to the hill range of Karnataka state. Alakode occupies an area of 119.40 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of 34878 persons according to 2011 census. The main workers participation is 11464 and cultivators 431 persons in 2011 census. The study area is located in the northern part of Thalipparamba Taluk and extends between 12° 16'15"N to 12° 8'14" N latitude and 75° 22'12"E to 75°32'53"E longitude (Fig 1.1). Paithalmala trekking through Manjappullu entrance and newly established Palakkayam Thattu are the main tourist attractions in this region.



**Fig. 1.1** Study Area Location

### 3.1 Objectives

- To find the change in land use in Alakode Panchayath from 1971 to 2011
- To find the reasons and retrieve of migration.

### **3.2 Database and Methodology**

This study envisages a multi prolonged methodology. Land Use / Land Cove (LULC) for the period 1971 were derived from 1:50,000 SOI toposheet and 2011 LULC retrieved from Bhuvan, IRS-P6 data. The changing LULC patterns for the last four decades is being investigated. In this context, primary data has been collected from the field through interview. 50 questionnaires were used and the collected data has been correlated with LULC and analyse the impact of migration over LULC for the last four decades.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Impact of Travancore Migration in Alakode**

Field survey reveals the exact scenario of study area. The existing land use pattern in Alakode Panchayath analysed through scheduled survey. At present the Panchayath is dominated by mixed crops and rubber. The survey reveals that the land use has change to this present context. About 70 percent of people from this Panchayath belongs to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation migrants. In 1950s Mr. P R Ramavarmaraja from Poonjar Royal family along with a group of his trusted people migrated to the wilderness of Alakode. Under the guidance of Sri. Ramavarmaraja and his people gradually turned the forest into the cultivated land, with their sweat and blood and over a period of time Alakode developed as a small town with all infrastructure. In due course of time, people started migrating to Alakode from Travancore and improve Alakode as a notable town in Kannur, after the Travancore to Malabar migration Alakode experienced various land use changes due to several reasons, they are as follows:

- Around 1970s the migrants started cultivating plantation crops which they brought from their native place.
- In the following decade the coconut and arecanut cultivators of Alakode faced major threat of crop diseases which resulted in drastic decreases in yield.
- In the 1990s i.e. after crop diseases affected the majority of the cultivators a large portion started cultivating rubber for economic benefits.
- High land paddy cultivation which occupying 20.63 percent of land use in 1975 perished by the end of 2015 due to labour deficiency and low profit.

### **4.2 EXODUS OF HIGHLAND POPULATION**

The highlands of Alakode were the home to the natives from a very long time. They lived there in harmony with the forest and its wilderness. The arrival of Travancore migration in the 1950's changed the scenario. While most of the migrants stayed in the valleys to build livelihood, a Portion of the migrant population when uphill in search of a place to cultivate and settle down. The migrants had no plans of sharing the land with the natives hence they were scared them, the settlers then started to build their livelihood uphill. Agriculture was the primary occupation for the uphill population. They toiled day and night in the forest land, in spite of water scarcity, crop diseases and constant attack and

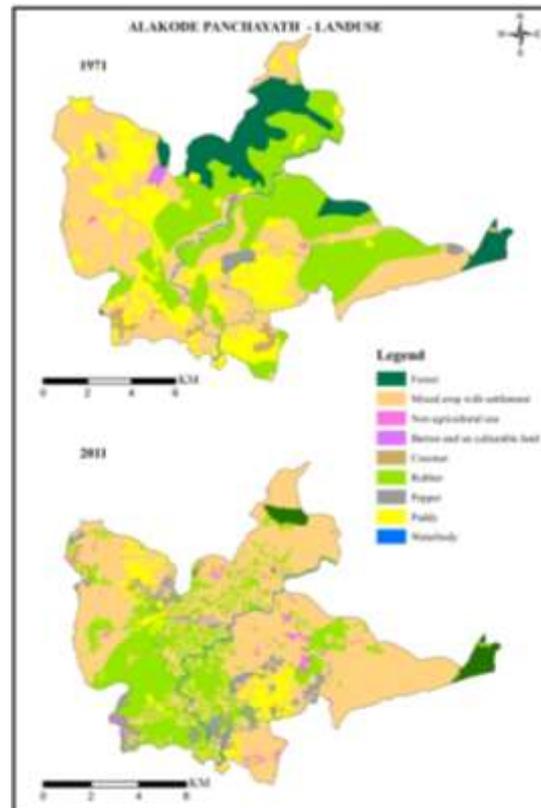
crop destruction from the wild animals, but recently a large portion of the uphill cultivators seems to retreat from the hills and settles down near to the township. They seem to sell acres of land in the highland to buy small landholdings in low land areas near to the town. The number of abandoned houses in the highland has rapidly increased and the migrants in the highland are retreating day by day. The exodus of the highland population is not only because of their desire to be part of a more developed of the township where they can utilize a number of services they couldn't before. It is also due to the growing difficulties they have to face in the highlands. They face the threat of crop diseases affecting most of their major crops like areca nut, coconut, banana, but also the constant attack from the wild animals that damaged their crops as well as threatening their lives. The lack of water resources and the depleting groundwater table also have forced them to leave the highlands. Moreover, the chance of having a better livelihood in the nearby townships where they can utilize services like medical, education and better shelters also forces them to sell their lands and settle downhill.

#### **4.3 LAND USE IN 1971**

During the year 1971 people mainly cultivated food crops, later commercial crops and mixed crops dominated, like areca nut and coconut which accounts for 35.46% to the area of Chittadi, Therthally, Thimiry, Merigiri, Moonamkunnu, Arangam, Ottathai and Nellikkunnu (Fig.1.2). As the migrant population from Travancore who are well known in the cultivation of rubber, come from the rubber tracts of Kottayam and Idukki, so they started cultivated rubber, which accounts for 30.32% area in total. The rubber concentrated in Parappa, Neduvode, Rayarome, Kuttaparamba, Alakode, Ottathai and Nellikkunnu, during this period paddy was the traditional crop in the hilly land of Alakode. The people practiced highland paddy as the food crop about 19.26 % of land in the areas of Nariyanpara, Kottayad, Nellikkunnu, Koli and Chittadi. Pepper was cultivated in the areas of Nellippara, Rayarome and Nellikkunnu, which accounted for 1.08% , Forest covers about 13.38% in the bordering areas of Karnataka in Manjappullu region.

#### **4.4 LANDUSE IN 2011**

The land use map of Alakode Panchayath (Fig.1.2) depicts the scenario that has totally changed. The area under mixed crops dominated more than half of the Panchayath (58.13%). except the central part of the Panchayath where mixed crops dominated the areas of Chittadi, Koodapram, Cherupara, Thimiri, Parappa, Koolambi, Kavumkudi and Nellikkunnu. Rubber plantation faced a fall in price during this period, because of its falling price the area is now restricted to only 25.87% in this region. In Nellikkunnu and Ottathai the area rubber is shifted to commercial crops. Pepper cultivating has risen to about 55.5%, the areas in Arangam and some parts of Nellikkunnu, Thimiri, Cherupara and Koodapram. Forest area occupies about 2.31% which shows increasing trend from 1971. Highland paddy cultivation occupies about 5.48% of the total study area. Area under pepper cultivation increases to 5.55% in this period.



**Fig: 1.2**

#### **4.5 Land Use / Land Cover Change (1971-2011)**

LULC is a general term for human modification of earth's surface. In the study of Alakode, rural areas accounts for 34878 persons, among them most of people is engaged in agricultural activities. Over a period of four decades, the major parts of the study area has been transformed. Land use changes that have gained in a major way includes mixed crops which has increased by 22.78% (Table.1.1). The cultivated area of pepper has increased by about 4.47%. In 1971, 19.26% of total area comprised paddy. But in 2011 it is only 5.48%. In Alakode, a major portion of paddy cultivated area transferred to mixed crops. But at present people are not interested in labour intensive crop like paddy as its economical value is comparatively low when compared to other commercial crops. The area under rubber plantation has reduced to 4.46% in the period of last four decades, the main reason being the fall of price of rubber which has badly affect rural life. In the period of 1990s when rubber price was very high peasants purchased vehicles, constructed houses by availing bank loans but from 1995s financial scenario were totally changed due to fall in the prices and economic depression etc. Peasants failed to remit interest promptly and this has lead to revenue recoveries.

**Table 1.1**

Land use change 1971 to 2011

Land Use / Land Cover	Area in Km <sup>2</sup> (1971)	Area in % (1971)	Area in Km <sup>2</sup> (2011)	Area in % (2011)	Change Rate 1971-2011
Forest	13.38	11.23	2.75	2.31	-8.92
Land put in to non agricultural use	0.29	0.24	2.13	1.79	1.54
Barren and un culturable land	0.45	0.38	0	0.00	-0.38
Paddy	22.96	19.26	6.53	5.48	-13.78
Rubber	36.14	30.32	30.83	25.87	-4.46
Pepper	1.29	1.08	6.62	5.55	4.47
Cocunut	1.5	1.26	0	0.00	-1.26
Mixed crop with settlement	42.14	35.36	69.29	58.13	22.78
River	1.04	0.87	1.04	0.87	0.00
TOTAL	119.19	100.	119.19	100	

## 5. CONCLUSION

The objective of the present paper was to analyze the changing land use and reasons for retrieval of migration in Alakode Panchayath. The analysis for four decades has revealed that a large scale of modification, and crop conversion has taken place. This transformation has led to increase in the areas of mixed crops and loss of highland paddy, and decline in the areas of rubber plantation. In recent years the highlands of Alakode people seem to sell acres of land in the highland to buy small landholdings in low land area's near to the town. The exodus of the highland population is not only because of their desire to be part of a more developed township where they can utilize a number of services they couldn't before but also due the growing difficulties they face today.

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