

**Literariness Journal**

A Peer-Reviewed Quarterly  
Journal of Literature and Cultural  
Studies

P-ISSN: 3108-1614  
E-ISSN: 3108-172X

LiterarinessJournal.org

**Vol. 1, Issue. 3 June 2026**

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**A Literariness.org Project**

**Cultural Enrichment and Integration: Exploring the Knanaya Community's Contribution to Kasaragod's Diversity**

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**Abstract:** Culture is determined by an interplay of factors that shape the beliefs, values, traditions and practices of a particular group of people. These determinants encompass language, geographical surroundings, historical narratives, artistic expressions, literary works, culinary practices, the way of living etc. Kasaragod, the northern most district of Kerala, serves as an epitome of cultural diversity. However, scholarly examinations regarding Kasargod's cultural diversity have often overlooked the cultural contributions of certain migrant communities that have settled within its borders. One such migrant community is the Knanaya Christian community, a faction of the St. Thomas Christians of Kerala, which pioneered organised migrations to north Malabar. Two of these migrations led to the establishment of Knanaya settlements in present-day Kasaragod district, specifically in Rajapuram and Ranipuram. Characterised by endogamy, this community steadfastly endeavours to preserve its cultural heritage in a multicultural society and ensures that it is celebrated, protected and passed on to future generations. This paper intends to explore the folk culture inherent to this community and delineates how it contributes substantially to the rich cultural diversity of Kasaragod. Moreover, it also highlights how this folk culture serves as a platform for the harmonious integration of different cultures even while adhering to its roots, thus resulting in transculturation.

**Keywords:** *Knanaya Christian Community, Migration, Culture, Ethnicity, Transculturation*

## Introduction

Any geographical land and the people residing there will have a history. Sometimes it is written and established, however, sometimes it is just in oral form. History of a place is the story of the people living in that place. Exploring the history of a land opens a vista to the culture, traditions, values and beliefs of the land. Being a part of the multicultural Indian nation, Kasaragod, the northern most district of Kerala state adheres to this multicultural nature of the nation. This state “is bordered by the South Canara district of Karnataka to the northeast, the Kudagu district of Karnataka to the southeast, the Kannur district of Kerala in the south, and the Arabian Sea to the west” (Meethale Purayil, 231).

The district is unique in having linguistic pluralism. It “is a conglomeration of languages such as Malayalam, Kannada, Tulu, Konkani, Marathi and some pockets speak Beary, an offshoot of Malayalam. These languages come under the Dravidian family of languages” (Sini, 166). It is also famous for the historical forts and geographical visual experiences. Marking the border of Karnataka district, this land showcases the fusion of Malayalam-Kannada culture. A land with a rich repository of traditional wisdom and practices, it has gained fame for Yakshaganam, Bhommiyattam, Kolkali, Poorakkali, and Theyyam. People belonging to different religions and caste reside here harmoniously. “Religions have a significant role in shaping the peculiar cultural background at Kasaragod. Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Jainism are the most prominent religious groups that dominate in this region” (232). “The hilly regions of Kasaragod District were the main settlement areas for Christian immigrants” (233).

## Methodology

This paper intends to explore one such Christian immigration to the district — the Knanaya Christian migration — and examines the impact of the migration upon the culture and ethnicity of this community as well as its contributions to the cultural diversity of Kasaragod district in Kerala. This is an ethnographic study and the methodology adopted for the research is fieldwork and direct observation. The study has been conducted in the Knanaya migrant regions of Rajapuram in Kallar panchayath of Kasaragod district. The result of this research is obtained by residing within the migrant region, participating in the community activities and talking with several members in the community. Personal interviews were conducted with elderly members of the Knanaya migrants as well as the natives. Several texts about the history and culture of the Knanaya community as well as Knanaya Malabar Migration are also consulted for the study.

## **Knanaya Christian Community in Kerala**

When we delve deep into the history of Kasaragod, it is inevitable that we shed light on the different people who came and settled in this place constituting the demography of this region. One such migrant group who settled here as a result of an organised migration from Travancore to present-day Kasaragod district is the Knanaya Christian community. This community holds a significant place within the St. Thomas Christian community of Kerala, India. Its origin traces back to a remarkable migration from Mesopotamia, modern-day Iraq to Cranganore in 345 AD. This migration was led by Thomas of Cana, a merchant who had trade relationship with India, and Bishop Joseph of Uruha with the permission of Catholicos of Selucia-Ctesiphon to revive Christianity established by St. Thomas, the disciple of Jesus Christ, in Kerala. The migrant group consisted of almost 400 people from 72 families belonging to 7 clans including men, women and children (Thachet, xxi).

This Syrian migrant group was received with high privileges by the ruler Cheraman Perumal. The 72 privileges with which the ruler honoured the migrants were inscribed on a copper plate. Land to build 72 houses was also given by the ruler to the migrants in the Southern part of Cranganore, present-day Kodungalloor. Traditional name of the immigrant community is *Thekkumbhagar* or *Southist*. This name was used to distinguish them from the already existing Christian community which was called *Vadakkumbhagar* or *Northist*. (Kochadampallil, 33). This community has its own unique customs and traditions and practises endogamy. “They believe that their ancestors practiced endogamy, so they are also zealous in continuing this tradition” (Thodathil, 126). Thus, it exists as a separate group until now among the Syrian Christians. Since the migrants brought Syriac language, they were also called as *Suriyanikkar*. Followed by the historic Udhayamperoor Synod and Oath of Koonankurishu, the Knanites separated into two factions; The Knanaya Catholics and The Knanaya Jacobites (59). While the former remained with Rome and the Pope, the later followed the Antiochian Orthodox faith. Though the ecclesiastical allegiance is different, they share and preserve their culture and heritage.

## **Knanaya Migration to Malabar**

“Christianity began progressing in Kasaragod district when the Portuguese arrived towards the end of the 15th century CE” (Meethale Purayil, 233).

The Malabar Kudiyettam (Migration) of the peasant farmers from Travancore to Malabar is a unique phenomenon in the modern history of Kerala. Migration of peasant farmers which started on a small scale towards the end of the 1920’s assumed massive

proportions by the end of the World War II. Families left their homes in Travancore for reasons of their own and settled in the mountainous region of Malabar (Joseph, 1178).

“However, migration from Travancore to the regions of Kasaragod only gained strength in the 1940s. The Syrian Christians comprised the majority of the population...Several churches in Hosdurg Taluk came under the Kottayam Diocese” (Meethale Purayil, 233). The Kottayam Diocese was established in 1929 solely for the Knanaya Catholic Christians or Southists.

The only organised Christian migrations to Malabar were those conducted by Knanaya Catholic Community. Three set of migrations were conducted. The first two were in 1943, to Rajapuram in the present-day Kasaragod and Alex Nagar in present-day Kannur districts respectively.

There were several causes that triggered the migration to Malabar. It was the time of World War II. The ripples of the war increased the rate as well as scarcity of consumer goods. The then Diwan of Travancore Sir. C P Ramaswamy Ayyar had anti-Christian attitudes. Travancore witnessed increase in population and scarcity of resources. Large areas of lands were available at low cost in Malabar at that time. The Platinum Jubilee Souvenir of the Diocese of Kottayam states that it was Prof. V. J. Joseph Kandoth, the then President of Knanaya Catholic Mahajana Sabha who put forward the idea of an organised migration of the Knanites to Malabar to overcome the issues faced by the community (97).

The first batch of migrants consisted of 72 families resembling the Persian Migration in 345 AD. It was conducted under the leadership of Fr. Mathew Cherusseril and Prof. V. J Joseph Kandoth who infact was the visionary behind this act. The then Bishop of Kottayam diocese, Mar. Alexander Choolapparambil offered all his support and blessings to this migration. The first chapter titled “Malabar Migration”, of the section titled “Movements within the Diocese”, in the *Platinum Jubilee Souvenir of Kottayam Diocese* offers a detailed history of the migration. It shows that the Kottayam diocese bought 1800 acres of land about 18 miles towards East from Kanhangad town from the king of Nileswar. The idea of migration was intimated to the community members and applications were invited from the interested ones officially. Economically backward families who were ready to work hard on land were given preference. Each family was given 12.5 acres of land at a rate of 100 rupees (99).

The act of choosing 72 families can be understood as a symbolic reverence exhibited by the community to the historic migration of AD 345. The 72 families were chosen from Knanaya Catholic parishes of Paingalam, Uzhavoor, Amanakara, Chunkom, Karinkunnam, Koodallor, Punnathura, Mannoor, Kattachira, Kidangoor, Piravom, Manjoor, Makudalayam and Arunootimangalam (99). This

first organised migration which was to Rajapuram, is examined here with reference to their impact on the migration zone.

### **Contributions of Knanaya Migration to Kasaragod's Cultural Diversity**

Moving from a place where one lived for several years of life to a new place of residence can create several impacts on the overall being of an individual. It affects the language fluency as well as interpersonal relations. Every major move change both the human and non-human components of our environment which are densely intertwined. When we leave a place, we lose bonds with not only friends and relatives, but also with a familiar no-human environment (Akhtar 3). This obviously results in 'trauma of geographical dislocation' (3). The Knanaya migrants in Malabar, though experienced this trauma initially, the intensity of trauma was less due to the fact that they came as a group. This movement as a 'group' helped them to save themselves from alienation, which is an impact of migration.

In the attempt to adapt to the new environment, several give and take happens resulting in cultural blending. Such exchanges have happened in the Knanaya migrant regions too. The Knanaya migration to Kasaragod district has made several contributions to Tuluwad (Kasaragod). Major contributions were in the domains of culture, agriculture, education and language.

### **Culture: Knanaya Migrants as a Folk Group**

This community can be characterized as a folk group, possessing its own unique folklore that encompasses a distinct set of rituals and practices. The community's cultural identity is woven through these customs, with *Purathanappattukal* (Ancient Songs), a collection of folk songs, serving as a significant source of emotional connection among its members. These folksongs are joyously sung during various community gatherings, and notably, they play a central role in wedding rituals. One particularly intriguing aspect of the Knanaya community is its adherence to an endogamous tradition, wherein members exclusively marry within their own community. This practice has not only preserved a deep sense of belonging but has also contributed to the development of a closely-knit social structure among its members.

The wedding rituals of the Knanaya community form an integral part of its rich folkloristic traditions, offering a fascinating area for exploration. Various ceremonies are associated with the Knanaya wedding eve, taking place in both the bride's and groom's homes, as well as after the wedding ceremony. In the groom's house on the wedding eve, *Chanthamcharthu* and *Ichappadukodukkal* are performed, while in the bride's home on the day before the marriage, *Myanchiyideel* and *Ichappadukodukkal* take place. *Chanthamcharthu* is a grooming ritual for the groom conducted by

barbers. The barber seeks permission from the audience three times before trimming the groom's hair and beard. This ritual also involves applying oil and sending the groom for a bath. *Myanchiyideel*, on the other hand, is a pre-wedding ritual where the bride's paternal grandmother or a designated person applies mehndi on the bride's hands and feet. Symbolically, this act cleanses the bride of sins associated with Eve in the Biblical story. The accompanying folksong narrates the process: '*Kaiyyale kayum parichoru karanam, kaipudam thannil pothiyunnu mylanchi, kalal nadannu kanithinna karanam, kalpudam thannil pothiyunnu mylanchi*'. *Ichappadukodukkal* is a ritual performed in both the bride's and groom's homes on the wedding eve by their paternal uncles. During this ceremony, *Venpalchoru*, a Knanaya cuisine, along with jaggery, is offered three times to the bride and groom, symbolizing wishes for a prosperous future.

On the wedding day, a series of rituals are observed, including the tying of the knot (*thalikkettu*), the presentation of the ceremonial wedding dress (*mantrakoti aniyikal*), the exchange of rings (*mothiram aniyikal*), *nadavili*, the ceremonial blessing (*kachathazhukal*) performed by the bride's maternal uncles, the offering of milk and fruit (*palum pazhavum nalkal*), the ritual of *vazhupidikkal* performed by the bride's mother, *maalayidal* where the mothers of the bride and groom present gifts to each other's children, and the formal invitation to the feast (groom's uncle extends an invitation to the bride's family by offering water for handwashing to the bride's uncle).

The Knanaya community has funeral traditions, such as *maranakidakkayile vazhvu*, which refers to the final blessing given by the father at his death to his children and grandchildren. Additionally, there is the practice of *thazhukal*, involving the embrace of the relatives of the deceased. Another tradition is *naloth*, where the relatives of the deceased symbolize their unity even after the person's death by drinking from a single tender coconut.

The community also marks its uniqueness in culinary traditions. *Pidi*, a unique delicacy originating from the Knanaya community, holds a significant place in their culinary traditions. Small rice balls made from kneading roasted rice flour with hot water is cooked in coconut milk to make this dish. *Pidi* has now become a customary feature at family, parish and community gatherings of Knanites within Kerala and outside, thus, symbolizing their shared ethnicity. Snacks like *Cheppappam*, *Kuzhalappam*, *Achappam*, *Ariyunda*, *Ayanichuruttu* are made by the Knanites and are used as part of certain rituals. Traditionally people of Kerala use plantain leaf as plate for *Sadhya* on festive occasions. However, the Knanites fold the tip of this plantain leaf where the meal is served. They consider this gesture as a symbol of the privileges given to them by the ruler Chermanaan Perumal. The inclusion of *paani* during the feast is regarded as a distinctive aspect of Knanite tradition. *Venpalchoru* (a dish made with rice and coconut milk without adding jaggery or sugar) is used to give *Ichappadu* on the

wedding eve. When this same dish is made using Jaggery, it is termed as *Sharkarapalchor*. This dish along with *Neyyappam* and banana fruit are made as offerings during posthumous rituals of Knanites like *Manthra*, *Nalpathiyonnu*, *Irupathettu* and *Anduchatham*. It is a dish made as offering on feast days of saints in most churches now in Kerala.

The Knanaya community plays a significant role in fostering *Margamkali*, a Christian dance form that contributes to Kerala's rich cultural dance tradition. Originating as a male dance with 12 members, symbolizing the 12 disciples of Jesus, *Margamkali* involves dancing around a lit brass lamp. The performance is divided into 14 sections, with the songs narrating the life, missionary work, and death of St. Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus Christ who came to India for evangelization. The attire for *Margamkali* is the traditional costume of Knanaya Christian women, known as *Chatta Mundu*. To further promote artistic expressions like *Margamkali*, *Parichamuttkali*, *Chavittunadakam*, the Knanaya community has established a cultural centre named Hadhusa. This cultural hub serves as a platform for preserving and showcasing various artistic forms within the community.

The Knanaya migrants hold their heredity and observe these rituals and traditions even in the new land. Unlike the Knanites in central Kerala, in the migrant region we can see a tradition of the bride and groom applying sandal paste on each other's forehead. The platter of the paste is circulated among the wedding guests who apply it on their forehead. This can be a ritual adapted from the Hindu marriage traditions in Kasaragod district. The dance form *Margamkali* is played on the wedding eve of the Knanaya Christians as well as other Catholic Christians in Kasaragod. A new trend seen across Kerala during marriage is the observation of 'Haldi' before marriage. This is a ritual where the bride as well as the other participants in the event wears yellow dress and applies turmeric on the face of the bride. The Knanites too have started to embrace this ritual along with the other customary rituals in their weddings.

Though we cannot find much instances of cultural exchange between Knanaya community and other communities of Kasaragod district, we can see that the cultural prosperity of the Knanaya community contributes to the cultural plurality of Kasaragod district. Even while the community tries to preserve its ethnicity and distinct culture, it stands as an addition to the multicultural nature of Kasaragod district.

## Agriculture

Agriculture of a land plays a noteworthy role in determining the economic stability of the land.

The majority of Christians in Kasaragod were involved in agriculture. They introduced several new agricultural products to the region, such as Tapioca, Pineapple, and Guava, which were previously unknown to the local population. Additionally, they extensively cultivated rubber as a commercial product, providing significant income to the inhabitants of the hilly areas of Kasaragod (Meethale Purayil 233).

Conversation with some of the older members of the migrant families unveiled this major contribution of the migration in present day Kasaragod district. It was evident that this migration made considerable changes in the agricultural nature of the migration zone.

The predominant agricultural practice in this region was Punam Cultivation, with paddy as the primary crop. Interspersed among the fields were millets, red grams and vegetable cultivations. Punam cultivation involved clearing and burning forests, and after one cultivation cycle, the land was allowed to regenerate vegetation. Subsequent cultivation on the same land occurred approximately every twelve years. Regions with abundant water resources featured coconut and arecanut trees, along with pepper plants. Significant portions of land were left fallow.

Southern Travancore had marked its high rank in agriculture in the 1900s when compared to Malabar. Therefore it could reasonably be assumed that the migrants were skilled farmers. They exhibited these skills in their new abode too. The migrants brought with them annual crops like tapioca, cassava, yam, taro, ginger, turmeric and planted them in the uncultivated lands of Malabar, thus, turning the barren lands to agricultural lands. Southern Travancore was comparatively advanced in the scientific way of cultivating crops too. Since the migrants came from this region, they were aware of these methods. Hence, scientific methods of cultivation of coconut, arecanut and pepper were implemented here. Introduction of rubber plantation in the region resulted in high yield of cash crops. This in turn resulted in demand for market so as to sell the products. 'It was the priests who accompanied the migrants who took initiative to export these yields to markets in Travancore', says one of the interviewees who belongs to a Knanaya migrant family in Rajapuram. Hence, they derived economic growth from agriculture.

As a result of the agricultural exchange, at present, all the natives in the migrant region cultivate all these crops in their land. Thus, through agriculture, the migrants contributed to the economic growth of Kasaragod district, which gave way to urbanization of the migrant region. A new

peasant culture was introduced in the migrant regions of Kasaragod district and the Knanaya migrants can be regarded as the pioneers for initiating this change in peasant culture.

## Education

Education is regarded as the most important aspect of the development of an individual as well as a society. History has witnessed the dramatic reformation that education brought to Kerala society which was under the clutches of injustices and inequalities caused by casteism.

The Malabar district, or the northern region of Kerala, was one of the constituents of the Madras presidency. It was under the direct control of the British Raj (Jobson 72). This region saw several changes in the realm of education with the advent of Christian immigration. The Christian community ran educational institutions and hospitals in various areas of Kasaragod district. A notable aspect is that the hilly regions of Kasaragod saw modern advancements primarily due to the arrival of Christians (Meethale Purayil 233).

The State of Travancore was more organised in the field of education than Malabar. The Knanaya migrants in Malabar were foresighted regarding the education of their children. They knew the potential of education since they hailed from a region which had made progress in education. There were several children who were students in the schools in Travancore among the migrants. There were also some teachers who were working in the schools established by the Knanaya community in Travancore among the migrants. Therefore, it was not a difficult task for the migrants to educate their children.

Upon arriving their new land, the migrants initiated the construction of a church, at Echikkol (the initial name of Rajapuram), where they could unite for worship. Following this, they proceeded to establish a school dedicated to educating their children. The combined presence of the church and school mirrored the ideas of visionary figures such as Fr. Kuriakose Elias of Chavara. In May 1944, a school was founded in Echikkol under the administration of the Madras Presidency. This educational institution not only enriched the lives of migrant children but also opened new horizons for the local populace. The 'native population' refers to people belonging to different castes of the Hindu religion and Muslim religion as well as Catholic Christians who do not belong to Knanaya Community (Northists) who resides in this region. Most of these caste groups were also arrived as migrants to this region. However, they established themselves in the region before the arrival of Knanaya migrants. Interactions with the elderly members of the natives discloses that before the establishment of the school in Echikkol, the native children in the region either did not go to school or depended on government schools which were very far from their home.

The Knanaya community has made several contributions to the realm of education in Kasaragod district. The Malabar migration to Kasaragod has resulted in the establishment of one aided Arts and Science College, four aided schools among which two remains now, an English medium school, four nurseries and a special school for the differently abled in the rural area of Kasaragod district. The aided college, which began as a parallel college got its affiliation in 1995. At present, after 30 years of its inception, this college is the only aided college in this region. The two aided schools, one at Ranipuram and the other at Odayamchal were closed due to lack of student admission. Among the two schools that remain, Holy Family HSS Rajapuram is a higher secondary school with around 1462 students at present. The other which is an Upper Primary school established in 1947, is located at Malakkallu in Kallar Panchayath with a student strength of 545.

Considering the fact that these educational institutions serve as the source for educational enhancement and excellence of several students in the hilly areas of Kasaragod district, the contribution of the community towards the intellectual nourishment of the district's populace cannot be disregarded.

### Language

Apart from being a medium of communication, language forms part of the culture of a land. The linguistic effects of migration rely on several factors like space, distance, motivation etc.

Apart from pidginization and creolisation, the most striking purely linguistic effect of migration is the formation of new dialects by the process of koineization. Through koineization, new varieties of a language are brought about as a result of contact between speakers of mutually intelligible varieties of that language. Typically, this occurs in new settlements to which people, for whatever reason, have migrated from different parts of a single language area. (Kerswill, 14).

What has happened in the Knanaya migrant region in Kasaragod is koineisation since the migration happened within the boundary of a single language speaking area, that is Kerala. Though Malayalam is the language of Kerala, it exhibits dialectic variations within different regions in the state. The Malayalam spoken in Northern Kerala exhibit dialectical variations with regard to the Malayalam spoken in Central Kerala. The Malayalam spoken in Kasaragod has the influence of Tulu and Kannada language. Therefore, language was indeed a barrier for the Knanaya migrants initially. The migrants who came from Travancore used a dialect which was entirely different from that used by the natives in the migrant region. Elder members from the Knanaya migrant families say that it was so difficult for them initially to comprehend what the natives spoke.

While analysing the dialectical give and take between the Knanaya migrants in Kasaragod district and the natives who reside in their vicinity, it is evident that though the migrants try voluntarily to preserve their own way of talking the Travancore dialect of Malayalam, a gradual and natural adaptation has happened in the migrant area. For example, the word ‘bejar’ (meaning worry or anxiety) is a word commonly used in Kasaragod dialect of Malayalam. This word is now commonly used by many of the Knanaya migrants. This kind of adoption of native words as well as native slang is visible mainly in the third generation of the migrants. The reason for this koineization or dialect mixing being gradual is that the migration was an organised one and the migrants have settled as a colony in one region within the district.

It is also visible that the natives, who work in the institutions run by the migrants where majority of the employees belong to the Knanaya community, make deliberate attempt to imitate the dialect and slang of the migrants. It is evident from observation that the natives view the migrant’s dialect as superior and migrants express an inferior attitude towards the dialect of the natives. However, there has been significant yet gradual mixing of the dialects which is known as koineization. “The new variety of language that develops as a result of koineization is called a koine...In some cases, the koine is a regional lingua franca which does not replace the already existing dialects” (Nordquist). In the case of the region of study too, it does not replace the existing dialects.

The names ‘Rajapuram’ and ‘Ranipuram’ were given by this migrant community, replacing the original names ‘Echikkol’ and ‘Madathumala’ respectively. Echikkol was derived from ‘Yakshi Kovil’ according to oral myths of the region, which means the residence of ghost. This was changed to ‘Rajapuram’. Here, ‘raja’, meaning king, symbolises Jesus Christ, and ‘puram’, meaning place of residence, signifies the location where Christ is believed to dwell. This brought about a transformation in the perception of the place. Similarly, ‘rani’ meaning queen, is associated with Mary, the mother of Jesus. Thus, Ranipuram is thought to be the place where Mary, the mother of Jesus, resides. This linguistic transformation reflects the migrants’ efforts to express their religious beliefs in a new environment where Christianity had no prior roots.

Analysis of the cultural, economic, social and linguistic interactions of the migrants and natives shows that it results in transculturation, a concept introduced by Fernando Ortiz. “Transculturation is a term whose function is to highlight the way cultures are transformed through their interaction with each other” (Bernasconi, 2). This concept of transculturation, according to Ortiz, is different from the concept of acculturation. “The word acculturation suggested to him a historical process whereby one culture loses out as people who share that culture assimilate to another more dominant culture” (2). Obviously, in this context, the interaction of two cultures does not result in the complete elimination of

any culture to give rise to an entirely new one. Instead, both constituent cultures undergo slight transformations, leading to a shift in their purity.

Examining the agricultural practices of the migrant region, it is visible that the natives started to cultivate the crops introduced by the migrants like rubber, tapioca, ginger etc. Similarly, the migrants began to cultivate the crops native to the new land like coconut, arecanut, cashew nut etc. In case of rituals and practices and food habits too we can find such give and takes contributing to cultural transformations. This phenomenon of transculturation is particularly noticeable in the case of language, where changes have subtly occurred over time, despite the migrants asserting the preservation of their language.

‘Cultural identity refers to identification with, or sense of belonging to, a particular group based on various cultural categories, including nationality, ethnicity, race, gender and religion’ (Raina, 6472). A close analysis of the life of Knanaya migrants in Malabar showcases their sense of belonging to this group based on ethnicity. The older members among the migrants still holdfasts to collective memory of their original homeland. They always express their nostalgia as well as long to visit the original homeland whenever they get an opportunity. They still preserve their ethno-communal consciousness in the new land.

## **Conclusion**

The Knanaya community chose to migrate to Northern Malabar and made their own way there, creating a diaspora in the process. They have diligently maintained their cultural ties to their land of departure despite the relocation, maintaining their collective identity through customs like endogamy. The Knanaya migrants who moved to Kasaragod from Travancore have dutifully preserved the customs and rituals of their tribe, contributing to the cultural richness of Kasaragod. Their introduction of novel crops and inventive farming techniques has also made a substantial contribution to the region’s agricultural development.

The Knanaya migrants have contributed significantly to the urbanization and commercialization of the areas in which they have resided in addition to a new peasant culture. Their influence on the various facets of the local community is demonstrated by their impact on the region’s educational growth. Moreover, the Knanaya population has contributed to the linguistic diversity of the region through the process of koineization, indicating that their presence has positively influenced and diversified the local language in the migrant settlement area. Though this endogamous group try to preserve their ethnic identity, their heritage and culture add to the multicultural as well as pluralistic nature of Kasaragod district.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Knanaya community moved to the present-day Kasaragod district and has ever since actively maintained its cultural identity while making significant contributions to the region's growth in diverse fields, including agriculture, urbanization, trade, education, and language diversity.

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