The study titled ‘Migration from Travancore to Malabar: A Historical Analysis of Kuttiady Region’ is intended to examine the overall profile of migration from Travancore to Malabar especially to Kuttiady Region and its socio economic impact and return migration trends. Migration is an important phenomenon that contributed to the process of urbanisation industrialisation, population distribution, economic developments, cultural differences and social integration. Contemporary migrations around the world involve short term sojourns where as earlier generations of migrants left their home lands to settle down permanently in the destination of their choice. Kerala state has witnessed several streams of migration. The two important streams of migration that the 20th century Kerala witnessed are 1) migration of farmers from Travancore to the highlands of Malabar and 2) migration of semiskilled and unskilled labourers to the Gulf and Arabian countries. Existing literature indicate that both these migration streams have initiated profound socio-economic changes in Kerala Society.

The migration of the peasant farmers from Travancore to Malabar is a unique Phenomenon in the modern history of Kerala. The three midland taluks of Travancore Meenachil, Thodupuzha and Muvattupuzha were the major source of immigration which had large Christian population. Between 1930 and 1940 four significant
settlements of farmers from Travancore developed in Malabar. They were in Kuttiady in the present Kozhikode district, in Mananthavadi in the old Wayanad taluk, and in Peravoor and Kulathuvayal in the old Kottayam taluk. Migration from Travancore to Kuttiady, the first settlement area in Malabar became significant in the light of the socio-economic, cultural progress that they made in Kuttiady. They were successful in their venture to develop Kuttiady as an urban centre.

Families left their paternal 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 migrants not only relieved the pressure of population in Travancore but also helped the penetration into the interior hilly ranges and valley's of Malabar especially Kuttiady. The early migrants faced many problems in the form of contagious diseases and attack from wild animals. Most of them lost their lives in forest land. But later generation grew rapidly on that soil in which their forefathers toiled.

The presence and the influence of the Travancore migrants altogether changed the cultural, social, educational, religious political and economic conditions of the existing society and produced a mixed culture in which migrants hold the lead. Along the routes of the migration settlements were started, Roads and bridges followed them. Markets, Towns and trading centres grew, in the Kavilumpara, Maruthonkara, Thottilpalam area, where there was hardly any inhabitant in the early part of the century. Large scale production of commercial crops like rubber, ginger, pepper, arecanut and coconut, advanced method of cultivation and the introduction of new agricultural crops revolutionised the economy of Kuttiady. The introduction of
tapioca had a far reaching consequence. Tapioca was widely cultivated and it was tapioca that saved Malabar from, starvation during the famine of early 1940's. The migrants to Kuttiady never exploit the tribals. On the other hand the paniyas of these area was provided with better employment and educational opportunities.

Migration even paved way for the formation of Kerala as a single cultural unit. In the absence of migration the spread of education in the migrated area would have remained a dream. Migrants initiated an educational revolution both in Malayalam and English language. Transport facilities in different parts of Malabar, especially in remote areas improved due to the efforts of migrants. Trade between remote areas and cities also improved. But now even after establishing their strong holds in Malabar many of them are forced to leave Malabar due to the attack of wild animals, destruction of agriculture, due to natural calamities and various diseases like budrot, yellowing, Mahali, quick wilt etc. Some of them even migrate to the urban centres as their financial condition became sound. Migration of people of Tranvancore to the hill lands of Kuttiady paved the path for a social and cultural renaissance in the jungle lands of Kuttiady. Thus Kuttiady migration was an important event in the history of Malabar.

The field survey and the personal interviews conducted among the migrants reveal that a substantial change took place in the social economic and educational sphere of the peasant farmers of Kuttiady. The peasant migration from Travancore resulted in the formation of a new material culture in the Kuttiady area. It had shaken the traditional system and relations of production under the control of local lords. Migration was the moving force behind the overall development of Kuttiady.