REVIEW OF LITERATURE
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Development was the foremost concern of all classical political theorists from Petty and Hume, via Smith and Ricardo, to Mill and Marx (Frank, 1996). It is a multidimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social systems. The massive amount of literature on economic development suggests diverse formulae to attain the universally accepted objective of how to develop. Economic historians have supplied data to help analyze the issue of whether the agricultural or the industrial sector should be relied upon as the driving force in development. It is apparent that development over the long run is not likely to occur if it is tied to either an agricultural or an industrial foundation. Global development has never been uniform. It has centered in one or a few places and these places and peoples enjoyed privileged positions in the socio-economic ladder relative to their counter parts. The places or regions, which were at a comparatively disadvantaged position, were categorized as less developed or third world countries. It is imperative that the nations of the third world must play a very significant role in the reconstruction of the world system.

Plantation is a commonly used terminology in the writings on third world economic development and under development, mainly
because plantation agriculture engrosses most of the arable land in such countries. A perusal of the literature on plantation reveals that plantations have occupied an equivocal position in the economic development plans and strategies of less developed countries. Plantation agriculture has been subjected to wide range of adverse criticism. But it can be seen that most of the criticisms are leveled not against plantations as such but against its enclave nature and alien ownership. Plantation agriculture was alleged as a colonially inspired, traditionally export oriented, monocultural activity, which produces wealth for its metropolitan owners. This has arisen because plantations were set up to produce export crops for the metropolis by people and capital, which came from the metropolis. But such an extreme definition cannot be applied to present day plantations. Therefore, attempts were made to reassess the character of the plantation, to redefine its functions and to assess its potential value to host countries and to the world economy.

Since the study touches a number of inter related topics, the present chapter is structured in three sections. In the first section, we situate the problem by examining the role played by plantation agriculture in regional development. The second section focuses attention on the part played by internal migration in the growth of plantations in Kerala. The extent of regional inequalities in development is reviewed in the final section.
Plantations and Regional Development

Douglass North (1970) argues that a successful agricultural export trade can and has induced urbanization, improvements in the factor market and a more effective allocation of investment funds. However, the pattern of regional development will depend upon the nature of agricultural crop exported. If the export commodity is a plantation crop in which there are significant returns to scale, then there will tend to result an extremely unequal distribution of income with the bulk of the population devoting most of their income to food stuffs and simple necessaries. At the other end of the income scale, the plantation owners will tend to spend most of their income upon luxury consumption goods, which will be imported. With the more equitable distribution of incomes, there will tend to develop trading centres to provide a wide variety of goods and services, in contrast to the plantation economy which will merely develop a few urban areas devoted to the export of the staple commodity and the distribution of imports.

Baldwin's (1956) Work analyses the development potential of two hypothetical regions- one region specializing in the cultivation of a plantation- type crop and the other region, which produces a non- plantation type crop. The author contends that the obstacles to the vigorous expansion of the plantation economy into a
developed, higher per capita income economy are much greater than with the non-plantation economy.

Courtenay (1980) analyses the impact of plantations on the economic development of Malaysia. He asserts that the plantation sector has played a major role in Malaysian economy since 1870s. He considers local ownership of plantations as neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for them to play a substantial role in economic development. Apart from their contribution to GNP, plantations have major significance in regional development, both as employers and as markets for local goods and services. Many small country towns have developed on the basis of their surrounding plantations.

Dos Santos (1996) asserts that the theme of underdevelopment has had an enduring hold on Latin America. Backwardness was the result of the specialization of Latin American economies that concentrated on the exportation of primary products. Under development was seen as an economic, social, political and cultural condition made up of negative processes such as 'enclave', 'monoculture', internal colonialism and economic dualism. A country can hope to advance only if it breaks out of this vicious circle. Plantations were shown to be the generator of socio-economic inequality and a block to the development of the peasantry and creation of a domestic market. The role played by the export
sector was considered as the main obstacle to economic development.

Peiris (1996) analyses the spatial dimensions of colonial economic change in Sri Lanka in a geographical perspective. The author asserts that agrarian policies pursued by the British in Sri Lanka were, both directly and indirectly, aimed at the promotion of plantation enterprise. Persistent efforts were made to maintain a steady flow of land to the plantation sector. At the same time, a large chunk of government revenue was channeled into the development of infrastructure required by the plantations. The expansion of plantation agriculture is considered both cause as well as the result of transport development. The nodal points of the road and rail network attracted tertiary economic activities such as government administration, services in health care, education and commerce and trade.

Shanumugaratnam (1981) while analyzing the impact of the colonial plantation system of production on the native economy of Sri Lanka concludes that the imposition of the plantation system disrupted the mode of production based on use value without however in any way facilitating the emergence of more progressive forms of capitalist production. The imposition of the plantation system introduced a bimodal society. On one side there was the emergence of new classes based on landed property, on export-
oriented cash crops and on the ancillaries of the plantation sector including the exports trade. On the other side was a progressive deterioration of the native agrarian economy leading to a disintegration of the peasantry characterized by increasingly exploitative forms of feudalistic tenancy, disinvestments and landlessness. The highly organized commercialized plantation sector- the so-called 'modern sector'- did not serve as a 'development pole' or 'growth centre' which generated its 'centrifugal' and 'centripetal' mechanisms leading to 'agglomeration' and 'trickling down' or spread effects to induce development on a wide scale.

Karunatilake (1971) traces the close links that the plantation sector had on the urban economy of Sri Lanka. He asserts that the developed sector of the economy, the plantation was closely linked to the urban economy. The development of roads, railways, post and telegraph system was associated with the need to ensure better communications with the plantation economy.

Vasant Gandhi (1996) maintains that agriculture plays a substantial role in the economic development and growth in India. Agriculture has been found to have among the strongest linkages and multiplier effects with employment and incomes. The product contribution of agriculture still remains of substantial importance given the high share of food in consumer expenditure. Further,
agriculture contributes substantially to domestic demand and export earnings of the country, which reflects the importance of agriculture in India's future economic growth and development.

Majumdar (1970) recognizes the intra-sectoral dualism, which exists within the agricultural sector and indicates certain important policy implications for agricultural growth. He divides Indian agriculture into two broad sub-sectors, the subsistence sub-sector that produces food grains to meet the family's consumption expenditure and the commercial sub-sector, which produces non-food grains or cash crops for sale in the market. The author observes that in order to attain the objective of maximization of overall rate of agricultural growth, it is desirable to concentrate investment in the commercial sub-sector. Larger marketable surpluses and higher accumulation are rendered possible from the commercial rather than from the subsistence sub-sector. The profits from the commercial sub-sector will be ploughed back into the agricultural sector and this becomes a case of 'growth breeding growth'.

In an attempt to study development, urbanization and rural-urban relationship in a plantation dominated economy, Asim Chaudhuri (1988) examines the possible contributions that the tea plantation industry might have made to the overall development of the economy of Jalpaiguri district in North Bengal. The author asserts that large investments made in plantations have failed to
stimulate agricultural modernization, industrialization and urbanization in the area. The surplus generated in the plantations were withdrawn by the foreign owners and used for the benefit of their mother country. Surplus from the plantations owned by Indians were used for investment in the metropolitan city of Calcutta. In short, no benefit filtered down to the hinterlands of the lucrative plantations.

Ranjit Das Gupta (1992) traces the socio-economic setting of the growth of plantation enterprise in Jalpaiguri district of Bengal. The introduction and growth of the tea plantation enterprise in the district took place with the active assistance of the colonial state. The author argues that the phenomenal growth of tea plantation enterprise which took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was essentially in the nature of creation and consolidation of an enclave economy which failed to generate any broad-based and dynamic transformation process. Since the plantation system was a superimposed one, it has very tenuous links with the hinterland and extremely limited spread effects. A great deal of the income generated flowed out, and the growth of the industry did not lead to the setting up of any manufacturing industry. Considering the features of the growth of the town, it is established that no urbanization process has taken place in the district due to plantation development.
Bhowmik (1980) attempts to give a sociological definition of the plantation system based on the findings of a field investigation conducted among the tea plantation workers in Jalpaiguri district of North Bengal. He considers coercion, low wages and immigrant labour as the three important component of the plantation system. These ensured the planters high profits. At the same time they prevented the growth of a labour market and the workers were deprived of a market wage.

Ravi Raman (1988) considers cultivation of commercial crops such as tea and coffee on a plantation basis by the Europeans as a prominent factor, which integrated the Indian economy into world capitalist system. The expansion of area under plantations led to commercialization of land and proletarization of labour.

Ravi Raman (1997) explores the immiserisation of labour as the other side of capital accumulation and the workers increasing resistance to exploitation taking tea plantations in Southern India during the period C.1850-1950 as a case in point. According to the author, the insidious advance of metropolitan capital into the plantations of southern India has resulted in the peripheralisation of the region. The chief concern of the capitalist plantation system was to accentuate the process of proletarianisation and to mobilize the most vulnerable sections keeping them captive for expanded reproduction. As planters flourished through various modes of
imperialist exploitation and the plantation surplus was systematically repatriated, so was the process of immiserisation accentuated.

Ram Mohan (1996) seeks to lay bare the important elements in the making of development in the peripheral society of Travancore during the time period 1800-1845. The author describes the important changes witnessed in the economy of Tiruvitamkur during the latter part of the 19th c. as an outcome of the process of intense commercialization concomitant to the integration of the region into the world market. As plantation products assumed greater importance in the world market, agriculture began to be oriented with emphasis on plantations. The plantation sector, the highly cash rich segment of agriculture was almost entirely under the control of metropolitan capital till the period of first world war. The pre-capitalist social character of workforce helped to maintain low wage levels in the various realms of production. The large profits siphoned out by the firms formed a drain on the state’s economy. The study concludes that the hegemony of the metropolitan capital over trade and production restricted the space for development of Travancore capitalists except as functionaries to the former.

Paul Baak (1992), while analyzing plantations development in its political context, examines its characteristics and its implications for the state treasury and for employment within the state. The author argues that the planters, and their planter
associations together with the British resident and the colonial government formed a strong political lobby, which was putting forward its demands to favour plantation development in Travancore. He asserts that development of plantations did not improve the situation of the state treasury. The state revenues from and expenditures for the plantation sector were positively correlated and outweighed by one another. Further, the plantations provided employment not to the original inhabitants of Travancore. However, the policy stimulated the creation of employment in other sectors of the economy. Employment in the public works department was created, agricultural undertakings along the roads, which connected the plantation districts with the outer world, were started, internal transport grew, and economic activities in the harbours of Travancore increased. The author concludes that when compared to the advantages to the Madras government by way of employment and to European trade and planting companies, the advantages of the development of plantations for Travancore and Travancoreans were only marginal.

Tharian George and Tharakak (1985) trace the development of tea plantations in Kerala. It was the widespread coffee leaf disease of 1870s, which led to the abandonment of coffee and introduction of tea in the state. Majority of the tea plantation labourers were immigrants and had to work at low wages. The planters enjoyed full protection from the government. The land
reforms together with the rapid commercialization of agriculture helped in the extension of area under cash crops in Travancore.

Thomas Shea (1959) explores the reasons for the economic backwardness in traditional societies, by taking the case study of Malabar. Immobility of the caste structure, absence of systematic government, the pattern of land tenures, the traditional occupational distribution of the elite and the structure of family property laws are the important barriers to growth identified. These barriers were mutually reinforcing in their retarding effects and obstructed the efficient utilization of agricultural resources in Malabar.

Prakash (1988) while giving an alternative explanation for the agricultural backwardness of Malabar during the colonial period emphasizes two factors - the unfavourable and extractive policies pursued by the colonial power in the spheres of agriculture, industry, infrastructure, trade and commerce, and the caste system and the social practices arising out of the system that prevailed in Malabar.

Sreekumar (1993) considers colonialism as the major factor responsible for the emergence as well as the differential evolution of urban process in Kerala. The influx of British capital in plantations and the consequent rise is trading centres led to the emergence of urban centres in Kerala. The agro-processing industries, which developed in Kerala, led to the proliferation of small towns based on commercial agriculture.
Ramachandran (1998) considers the distinction between the three regions- Travancore, Cochin and Malabar as important in the history of Kerala’s social, economic and political development. In respect of agrarian relations, education and health, modern administrative reforms, transport and communications, and in respect of the commercialisation of agriculture and the growth of trade and commerce, Travancore and Cochin pushed far ahead of Malabar. The difference between Malabar and Travancore was between regions where the janmi system was almost total and another where a circumscribed janmi system existed with a growing and more dynamic sector that was dominated by new forms of capitalist landlordism.

Jeemol Unni (1981), makes an attempt to analyze the reasons for the shift in cropping pattern away from rice and in favour of coconut. The rationale for this shift is found in the fact that the relative profitability of coconut cultivation is much higher than that of rice cultivation. The reason for the marked difference in profitability of the two crops is located in the greater labour and fertilizer costs involved in rice cultivation and the fluctuating paddy prices. On the other hand, the consistent rise in coconut prices and smaller quantum of labour and fertilizer use in coconut cultivation increased the profitability of the latter.
Kannan and Pushpangadan (1988) observes that agricultural sector in Kerala showed a declining trend in production, acreage and yield during the period 1962-63 to 1985-86. In the case of food grains, the decline in the growth of output was mainly due to decline in the area since the yield has remained more or less constant during the period. The study concludes that the high growth rate in the tertiary sector witnessed during the period was largely unrelated to the primary and secondary sectors and has been largely based on the flow of income from outside the economy.

Sivanandan (1985) considers inefficient use of irrigation, insufficiency of inputs like fertilizer and credit and lack of long-term investment in improving the productivity of land to be the main reasons for the loss of dynamism in the crop production sector of Kerala.

Mridul Fapen (1999) while examining some of the possible determinants of rural non-agricultural employment in Kerala, identifies both ‘agricultural-rural’ and ‘urban rural’ linkages as dominant factors in the economic diversification of the rural economy in Kerala.

Santhakumar and Narayanan (1996) attributes the revival in agricultural growth witnessed in the mid eighties to the shift in cropping pattern favouring higher-valued crops. The price factors
and profitability determined by the national and international market, the changes in land holding pattern and the agro-climatic factors have been influential in determining the present cropping pattern of the state.

Sunil Mani (1992) analyses the role, constraints and labour conditions prevailing in the plantation sector of Kerala. The importance of plantation crops in Kerala’s agricultural economy are measured in terms of such indicators as share of plantation crops in total net cultivated area in the state, contribution of plantation crops to the state domestic product, contribution to foreign exchange earnings, contribution to state’s tax revenue and employment potential of plantation crops. The constraints facing the plantation sector in Kerala are analysed in the spheres of respective production and marketing fronts. The major problems identified were the inter-regional variation in productivity, rise in cost of production, fluctuations in market prices and falling profitability. The labour and their living conditions in plantations have also been examined.

Uma Devi (1984) analyses certain historical and quantitative aspects connected with the specialization of plantation production and economic development of the region of Kerala. The first part of the study is historical in nature and deals only with the Travancore region of Kerala during the period 1860-1947, while the second part uses quantitative techniques and looks at the impact of plantations on
Kerala as a whole in the period after 1947. Considering both the aspects of study, an important finding is that from the point of view of the society as a whole, the impact of plantations on the economy has not been very whole some. The empirical results show that the wage and employment multiplier of the plantation sector is low. Finally, it was found that the benefits of the fruits of growth through plantations came to be distributed unequally between the various castes and religious groups. Increasing social tensions and disharmony, which followed, stood in the way of economic development of Travancore.

Tharian George with Toms Joseph (1992) while assessing the linkage of rubber-based industrialization in Kerala, observes that although there are evidences which suggest that the growth of socio-economic institutions such as schools, hospitals, banks and roads in the remote rubber growing areas of the state is closely related to the fortunes of the planting community, the concentration of natural rubber processing industry and primary marketing has not resulted in any substantial forward or backward linkages.

Joseph (1990) considers cash crop sector as the leading sector in the economy of Kerala. The expansion of the economy including that of the tertiary sector became conspicuous with the spurt in the prices of cash crops. Historically, the opening up of plantations ushered in the era of development in Travancore. Trade,
transport, banking, finance, real estate, education, public service, housing personal and cultural services are some of the tertiary activities which are directly dependent on cash crop cultivation. The dependence of the tertiary sector on cash crops continued even after state formation. The author concludes that gulf remittances, a major exogenous determinant of development in recent years, could only supplement what the cash crop sector has been doing all these years in sustaining and nurturing the tertiary sector in Kerala.

Tharian George together with Haridasan and Sreekumar (1988) attribute the dynamic growth of rubber plantations in India to the incentives provided by the government at the levels of cultivation, production and marketing of rubber. In Kerala, an important factor, which led to the extension of rubber cultivation, was the implementation of land reforms.

Based on an empirical investigation among rubber planters, Roselind George (1996) attempts to analyse the consumption, saving and investment pattern in the rubber plantation sector of Kerala economy. The analysis showed that rubber plantation sector is providing considerable surplus to those who are engaged in the sector and they were able to set apart a portion of their income as savings. The mode of disposition of savings showed that 75 % of the savings was disposed in physical assets and the rest in financial assets.
Mridul Eapen (1994) considers the pattern of agricultural development with its preponderance of commercial crops to be a major determinant of rural diversification in Kerala. The growth of commercial crops resulted in relatively high levels of rural non-agricultural employment like agro-processing, trade and commerce, transport and other services. The study asserts that it was a process of commercialization, which explained a relatively high level of rural non-agricultural employment rather than rapid industrialization or urbanization.

Mridul Eapen (2001) establishes the fact that any development strategy has to acknowledge the dominant influence of the agricultural rural sector in large agrarian economies and should not regard industrialization as an exogenous process. There is need to view the agricultural sector as a generator of productive employment opportunities by offering a vast potential market for industrial goods, both consumer and producer goods.

An attempt was made by Thomas Issac and Tharakan (1986) to enquire into the historical roots of industrial backwardness in Kerala. The study emphasizes the role played by the Travancorean government in initiating a process of rapid industrial development during the pre-independence period.

Tharakan (1984) argues that the explanation for the wide spread literacy and education in Travancore is to be found in the
favourable social and economic forces operating in that society. Commercialisation of the economy changes in the social structure and the peculiar settlement pattern were identified as the explanatory factors for the educational development of the region.

Panikar and Soman (1984) identifies the link between agricultural and health status. The rate and pattern of agricultural development affects health status directly by its impact on food supplies and nutrition levels and indirectly through the income and employment effects. The progressive policies followed by the princely states in the fields of land relations, education, and public distribution of food grains contributed directly or indirectly to the improvement in the health status.

While tracing health transition in Kerala, Kabir and Krishnan (1992) integrates health with development. The absence of social intermediation and the slow progress of education in Malabar basically resulted in slow and gradual improvements in health. On the other hand, the presence of social intermediation promoted by education led to the success of health programmes in Travancore. Consequently, the pace of the health transition was quite different in Travancore and Malabar.

Ibrahim (1976) examines the factors, which accounted for the differences in the transport facilities as between the three erstwhile
regions of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. Population growth, urbanization, agricultural development, industrial development and growth in the volume of trade are considered as the explanatory variables for the differential performance in transport development in the three regions.

Oommen (1976) traces the evolution and expansion of commercial banking in the Travancore- Cochin region prior to the period of planning and offers some explanatory hypothesis about the nature and pattern of this growth. The genesis of modern banking in the late 19th and early 20th century is associated with the expansion of export trade in pepper and other plantation products.

Jayprakash Raghaviah (1986) made an attempt to assess the spread effects of the industrial activities of the Basel Mission in Malabar. The economic impact of the mission industries was in the areas of transfer of technology, creation of a skilled labour force and diversification of the economy. The social impact was in the area of effecting social mobility and obliterating caste consciousness. But the impact was very limited in Malabar. The industrial activity of the Basel mission did not lead to subsequent waves of industrial activity in the region.

**Peasant Migration from Travancore to Malabar**

An attempt was made to analyze the economic causes of migration of farmers from Travancore to Malabar, by Tharakan
The depression in the prices of farm produce in the context of growing commercialization of the agrarian economy and rapidly increasing population and pressure of land are considered to be the main economic cause of migration of small farmers from Travancore to Malabar. In the case of big farmers who had already opened up plantations in Travancore there seems to have been the pull of the availability in comparatively plenty of cultivable land in Malabar. This provided inherent prospects for the investment of profits made in plantations in Travancore and for expansion of holdings.

Tharakan (1984) observes that while population pressure on land in Travancore was evidently a cause of migration of farmers to Malabar that alone could not have triggered the migration at the time it took place and in the way it developed. The main attraction for the migrants was the easy availability of cultivable land in Malabar due to the absence of adequate dynamism in the agrarian system of that region.

Joseph (1988) identifies the factors, which prompted the peasants of Travancore to migrate to Malabar and examines the impact of the migration phenomenon on the development of the state economy. To analyze the overall progress of migrant centres, a sample survey has been conducted, which revealed that all the sample villages have made remarkable progress since the inflow of migrants. The study concludes that migration from Travancore to
Malabar contributed significantly to the overall economic and cultural development of Malabar.

John Joseph (1991) analyses the socio-economic impact of the migration of peasants from Travancore to Malabar. The author considers development of commercial agriculture as an important factor, which facilitated the peasant migration. On the basis of the study of the socio-economic development of a migration settlement region in Malabar, the author establishes that peasant migration has contributed to the economic development of Malabar as a whole.

Lakshmanan (1991), analyses the economic impact of peasant migration to Malabar on the basis of a case study. One of the direct effects of migration was an increase in population. The increase in demand for cash crops led to the extension of capitalist form of agriculture. The growth of cash crop cultivation and growth of income created the process of urbanization in the region. The subsistence economy of Wayanad was gradually transferred to a market economy.

Joseph (2001) attributes the extension of cultivation, which took place in Kerala from the fifties to the seventies to the migration from Travancore to Malabar. The peasant migration can be considered as a major determinant in the process of development of the state economy. The expansion of tertiary sector which Kerala has been displaying since independence, has to be construed as a
reflection of the nexus between cash crops and the sub sectors of the tertiary sector comprising trade, transport and banking.

**Regional Inequalities in Development**

It is generally maintained that inter-regional imbalances are inherent in the process of growth. The regional dualism existing at different levels of development have long been recognized by economists. On the basis of a cross section-time series analysis Williamson (1965) has established that there is a systematic relation between national development levels and regional inequality. Rising regional income disparities and increasing regional dualism is typical of early development stages, while regional convergence is typical of the more mature stages of national growth and development. Another important finding of the study is that the poor countries are characterized by large and growing regional disparities and the rich countries are generally characterized by small and diminishing gaps.

According to Hemalatha Rao (1984), historical factors are largely responsible for the existing regional disparities in underdeveloped countries. Regional disparities, once established, get accentuated and lead to unequal growth. The unequal rates of growth will tend to perpetuate themselves due to the economies of concentration. The developed regions by releasing centrifugal or centripetal forces may induce dynamism or drain the growth potential of the surrounding areas.
Ajit Kumar Singh (1999), while analyzing inter state disparities in per capita SDP in India traces the roots of present regional disparities to the enclave type of development of the manufacturing and service activities that took place during the colonial rule. The study found infrastructural development to exercise a very strong influence on the level of economic development of regions.

Narendra Shukla and Sandeep Dhagat (1999), attempts to analyse the trends in inter-state disparities, construct composite indices of economic development and identify the backward, highly backward, developed and highly developed states with respect to agricultural, infrastructural and overall development. The study reveals the existence of inter-regional differences in level of infrastructural facilities in India.

Nair (1982), analyses in detail the manner of change in inter-state disparities in the levels of living in India between the fifties and the eighties. The analysis has succeeded in giving a detailed picture of the manner in which the different states have changed over time.

Kanagadurai and Jagadish Chandra (1994), makes use of canonical correlation analysis to find out the relations between development parameters and infrastructural variables in Rajasthan. The study concludes that regional development can be represented by means of two distinct sets of variables as regional development parameters and infrastructural facilities.
Gulati (1977), utilizes the technique of multiple factor analysis in the study on inter-district disparities in India. In another study, Gulati (1996) constructs indices of different crucial aspects of development for 354 districts of India, based on 14 developmental indicators using factor analysis. Decentralisation of the development planning from the centre and state to district, block and village levels was emphasized as an effective way of achieving reduction in regional inequalities and alleviation of poverty.

Ghanashyama Mahanty (1999), uses the method of Principal Component Analyses for evaluating inter-district disparities in levels of development in Andhra Pradesh. For a suitable characterization of development dynamics across different districts the same analysis is carried out at three points of time.

A number of studies on Kerala have given indications of acute regional disparities existing in the state prior to the formation of Kerala state. The Kerala state as constituted in 1956 is an amalgam of the three provinces prevailing during the British regime- Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. Among these three regions Travancore- Cochin states were relatively well developed while Malabar lagged behind.

Harindranathan, (1993) examines the reasons for the relative backwardness of Malabar. The composite index of development
constructed for the two points of time 1956 and 1991 showed that the regional disparity in levels of development between Malabar and Travancore-Cochin remained unchanged during the post 1956 period. The author identifies governmental policies to have been largely responsible for the perpetuation of regional inequalities.

Kerala’s regional development even after state formation does not present a uniform picture. In what follows, a review of the studies relating to regional inequalities in Kerala is given in order to examine the manner in which inter-district disparities have changed in the state over the years. Radhakrishnan (1979), examines the extent to which economic activities are distributed equally among regions. Co-efficient of variation is used as the measure of the extent of spread of the development over space. By taking the revenue district as base and considering 26 indicators of development, the author concludes that regional disparities in economic development of Kerala have tended to decline during the period 1960-61 to 1970-71.

Nair (1981) has made an attempt to study the nature and extent of regional disparities in Kerala and how these disparities have changed overtime. Rank correlation co-efficient, co-efficient of variation and district relatives were used to examine the disparities. The study indicates a considerable increase in regional disparities in per capita income in Kerala for the post 1970 period.
Patricia Louis (1987) observes that the lower level of the household savings, both rural and urban is in the districts of the Malabar region than in the districts of Travancore-Cochin region.

Thomas George (1988) examines the problem of regional disparities in Kerala’s economic development by using twenty-five indicators of development for the period 1975 to 1985. The study finds that Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Kozhikode, Kannur, Ernakulam and Thrissur are the districts, which show signs of better prospects in development. These regions have historical reasons for attaining higher levels of growth and development. Co-efficient of Regional Imbalance, Composite Index of growth, Quotient of Income Disparity, and Composite Index of Development are the measures used for the analysis of imbalances within the state.

Nair et al (1998), examines the development status of each district in major sectors by using the methods of ranking, indexing and principal component analysis. The study concludes that there is disparity in the levels of development of the districts and the erstwhile Malabar region continues to be relatively less developed. All the developed districts are located in the erstwhile Travancore-Cochin area. The study highlights the fact that inter-district differentials in development status exist in Kerala and that the development strategy followed in the past has not significantly reduced the differentials.
It can be perceived from the preceding review that growth of plantations was one of the major explanatory factors in creating intra-regional inequalities in development in Kerala, before state formation. Plantation agriculture provided the sustenance for the socio-economic development of the Travancore region. Plantations acted both as a push and a pull factor in the migration of peasants from Travancore to Malabar, which took place in the state during the time period 1920 to 1970. Ever since mid 1970s, a significant shift in the cropping pattern favouring non-food crops especially plantation crops is visible all throughout the state. Rubber is now engrossing a major part of the arable land in most of the districts, which is the premier plantation crop in the state. Apart from the high private commercial profitability of the crop, rubber offers a vast potential for non-agricultural development in the regions of location. Therefore, there is the need to assess the inter-relationship between plantation sector development and regional development in Kerala.
References


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