CHAPTER: V

STUDY AREA
CHAPTER V
STUDY AREA

Kasaragod, the northern district of Kerala was formed on 24th May 1984. There are various thoughts regarding the derivation of the name Kasaragod. According to one view it is the combination of two Sanskrit words "Kaasara", which means lake or pond and "Kroda" that, means a place where treasure is kept. Another view expresses that it is the place where Kaasaraka trees (*Strychnos nux vomica* L.) locally known as Kaanjiram (in Malayalam) are in abundance. But it can be seen that, there are large number of rivers, lakes and ponds in the coastal belt of the district. Besides which there is thick flora consisting of numerable varieties of trees, shrubs etc. Particularly plenty of Kaasaraka trees are present in this locality.

5.1 Topography

Kasaragod district lies between 11° 18' and 12° 48' north latitudes and between 74° 52' and 75° 26' east longitudes. The district is marked off from the adjoining areas outside the State by the Western Ghats which run parallel to the sea and constitute an almost continuous mountain wall on the eastern side. The Ghats dominate the topography. The cost line is fringed with low cliffs alternating with stretches of sand. A few miles to the interior, the scene changes and the sand level rises towards the barrier of the Ghats and transforms into low red laterite hills (Plate 3 D) interspersed with paddy fields and coconut cultivating areas. The district is bounded in the east by the Western Ghats, in the west by the Arabian Sea, the north by the Canara district of Karnataka State and in the south by the Kannur district. The total geographical area in the district is about 1992 sq. Km. There are two Taluks (Kasaragod and Hosdurg), two Municipalities (Kasaragod and Kanhangad), four Block Panchayats, 39 Gramapanchayats and 75 revenue villages in Kasaragod district.

5.2 Climate

The diversity of the physical features and topography of Kasaragod district results in a corresponding variation in climate. In the plains, the climate is generally hot. Though the mean maximum temperature is only around 90° F, the heat is oppressive in the moisture laden atmosphere of the plains. Humidity is very high and rises to about 90 per cent during the south-west monsoon. The annual variation of temperature is small; the diurnal range is only about 10° F (Gangadharan *et al.*, 2003).
5.3 Rainy Season

The south-west monsoon starts towards the end of May or the beginning of June, heralded by thunder-storms continues till September. North-east monsoon brings from October. Dry weather sets in by the end of December. January and February are the coolest months. March, April and May are generally very hot. The mean annual rainfall of the district is 3581mm. This is regarded as highest in the state while the state average is 3063mm (Gangadharan et al., 2003). The southwest monsoon starts towards the end of May or the beginning of June. This continues with the thunderstorm and hold till September when the monsoon fades out. The northeast monsoon can be brought by October-November. Out of the total rainfall specifically the months of June, July and August experiences 2/3 of the quantity.

5.4 Languages

Kasaragod is a land of different languages. Tulu, Kannada, Malayalam, Konkani and Tamil are the main languages. Other local languages are also popular among people. The languages without script are also prevalent here.

5.5 The People

The people of this district have, as in the case in other parts of the state, distinctiveness in personal appearance, marked by fairness of complexion, regularity of features, clean habits and a simple life. The major religious groups are Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

5.5 Scheduled Castes

There are different communities of Scheduled caste people inhabit in the district. These are Mogar, Pulayan, Chakliyas, Nalikedaya, Vannan, Malayan and Velan. Major portion of the Scheduled Caste people are very poor and illiterate and they are always affected due to exploitation in all cluster. Most of this people are agricultural labourers. The Scheduled Caste peoples have their own customs and rituals, which they follow religiously.

5.6 Scheduled Tribes

There are five scheduled tribe people present in the district. They are Koraga, Mavilan, Adiyan, Malavettuvan and Malakkudiya.

Koragas are the poorest of the poor among the scheduled tribe living mainly in the Kasaragod district of Kerala and South Canara district of Karnataka State. Unlike other tribal communities they live among the rest of the population without any
geographical or physical isolation. The Koragas are one of the most primitive tribes, living in Kasaragod Taluk only (Map 3). The traditional occupation of these people is basket making. These people are backward financially, educationally and culturally. They also maintain their own culture, customs and rituals. A detailed picture of Koraga community has given in chapter VI.

Mavilan tribal communities are inhabiting in the eastern belt of Kannur and adjoining areas of Kasaragod district. They have their own culture and life style. According to Thurston (1909), the Mavilan tribes are small tribe shikkaris (hunters) and herbalists. They followed makkathayam (inheritance from father to son) system. A detailed picture of Mavilan community has given in chapter VI.

The Malavettuvan, one of the scheduled tribe of Kasaragod district have a population of 17675. They are mainly found in Vellur, Kallar, Panathadi, Karinthadam, Balal, Vellarikundu, West Eleri, Bedagam, Kuttikkol, Velampadi, Kinanur, East Eleri, Chulikkara and Vadimaruthi Panchayath and nearby places of Kannur district. They have their own dialect, which is a mixture of Tamil and Malayalam. Luiz, (1962:160) was of the opinion that the name Malavettuvan is a corruption of Vedan or Vettkaran and connotes that they are hunters and the prefix Malai indicates that they are confined to the mountain. Their culture and life style is unique and they highly mingled with the local inhabitants. Most of them are excellent healers and their indigenous knowledge is also unique.

The Adiyan tribes are found in the North West regions of Kasaragod district. The word Adiyan literally means 'slaves' in Malayalam. Most of them are agricultural laborers. Their population is about 9690. At one time they migrated north to Karnataka, and they speak Kannada, the trade language of that state. Their name means, "Those who serve."

Malakudiya tribe is another tribal community inhabiting in the district. They are commonly called as Kudiya tribe (Melakkudi). Their total population is about 597 in Kasaragod district and their literacy is 38.31%. They are also seen in the Kannur district of Kerala District. The main occupation is agriculture. The rest of the tribe is found in Coorg (Kodaku), the neighbouring district in Karnataka.
Map-I
Map of Kerala showing Kasaragod District

Map-II
Map showing Kasaragod and Hosdurg Taluks

Map - 1
Map of India & Map of Kerala

Map - 2
Map of Kasaragod district

Map - 3
Panchayats of Kasaragod district

1. Majeshwar
2. Vorkady
3. Meenja
4. Mangalpady
5. Paivalike
6. Kumbia
7. Puthige
8. Enmakaje
9. Mogral-Puthur
10. Madhur
11. Badiaduka
12. Kubadaje
13. Belloor
14. Kasaragod
15. Chengala
16. Karadka
17. Chemnad
18. Mullyar
19. Delampady
20. Uduma
21. Pallikara
22. Bedadka
23. Kuttikole
24. Ajanur
25. Pullur-Periya
26. Belur
27. Kellar
28. Pananthady
29. Balal
30. Kanhangad
31. Madikai
32. Kinnaur-Karindalam
33. West Eleri
34. East Eleri
35. Nileswhar
36. Cheemeni
37. Chemuvathur
38. Plicode
39. Padne
40. Thirikariippur
41. Vallyaparamba

Koraga tribe
Mavilan tribe
5.7 Population

According to 2001 Census the total population of the district is 13,02,600. Out of which 6,26,617 are males and 6,75,983 are females. The density per sq. Km is 604. Sex ratio per 1000 males is 1079, is below the State average (Censes Report, 2011).

Table 1- Population details of Kasaragod district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kasaragod District</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,02,600</td>
<td>6,26,617</td>
<td>6,75,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>7,97,424</td>
<td>3,87,324</td>
<td>4,10,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>5,05,176</td>
<td>2,39,293</td>
<td>2,65,883</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Courtesy Census report 2011)

5.8 Geography

Kasaragod district is marked off from the adjoining areas outside the State by the Western Ghats. The Western Ghats run parallel to the sea and constitute an almost continuous mountain wall on the eastern side. The Ghats dominate the topography of the district. The coastline is surrounded with low cliffs alternating with stretches of sand. A few miles to the interior, the scene changes and the sand level rises towards the barrier of the Ghats. This also transforms in to low red lateritic hills, people do not occupy these areas as they face water scarcity during summer (Ahalya Sukumar et al., 2003).

On the basis of its unique physical feature the district is divided into three natural division based on physical features, these can be named as the low land, which borders the sea, the mid land consisting of the undulating hills and the forest, and the clad high land on the extreme east. There are mainly four types of soils present in the district namely, sandy, sandy loam, lateritic and hill or forest soil. The sandy and the sandy loam soils exist as a continuous narrow belt all along the Western coast about 20 Km in width. The land of the district can be categorized in detail as follows. Nearly level lowland plains along the coastal plain, Coastal plain and marine plain, Border valleys bounded by subdued hills, steeply sloppy hill lands, and deep gorges with steep side slopper and very narrow valleys and Upland plateau. These types of landscape make the vegetation and flora of the district unique.
5.9 Agriculture

Agriculture is the main source of income in the district. The forests and hilly areas cover the whole eastern tract. The forests are full of variety of timber with teak and other plantations. The hilly areas are mostly cleared and put to private cultivation. The important crops include rubber, cashew and ginger. In the skeletal plateau areas, cashew trees are cultivated, while in some valley patches; areca nut, pepper and cocoa are grown. In the coastal tract mostly paddy, coconut, areca nut, cashew, tobacco, vegetable and tapioca are cultivated. As compared to the production of the whole Kerala state, the share of the district is as follows: Tobacco - 100%, Areca nut - 26%, Cashew nut - 16%. Kasaragod is the only district cultivating Tobacco in the State.

5.10 Forests of the study area

Kasaragod district is bestowed and surrounded by three forest districts, North by Dakshin Kannada having one national park and two wildlife sanctuaries, in east by side Kodagu district having one national park and two wildlife sanctuaries and on south by Kannur district having one wildlife sanctuary and one elephant corridor. Natural vegetation, except in some coastal regions, consists of different types of forests. But, in spite of generally favourable climatic conditions, vegetation is not uniform. In restricted regions, with their own micro climate or special edaphic features, plant formations assume different characters. Thus, life forms, ranging from psammophytes and mangroves to evergreen forests are seen in this district. Kasaragod district has a forest area of about 117.54 sq. Kms. falling under the Kannur Forest Division. Reserve forest stretches to 86.02 sq. Kms. and vested forest, to 28.49 sq.kms (Gangadharan et al., 2003).

The main forest area, Ranipuram (Plate 3 B) located in Kanhangad forest range consists of various flora and fauna, rich in endemic species of Western Ghats. It merges with the Talacauvery Wildlife Sanctuary. Ranipuram hill station which falls in Panathady reserve forest is an ideal area to notify as a wild life sanctuary or a National park. Shola forest are seen only here in this district. Elephants, leopards, deer, wild dogs, wild boars, macaques, jungle cats, leopard cats slender loris, porcupines, malabar giant squirrels, malabar civet cat, many species of birds, rare butterflies are the important wild animals. The flora is rich in medicinal plants.
STUDY AREA - VEGETATION

A. Hill top at Panathur of Panathady Gramapanchayat
B. Grass land vegetation at Ranipuram
C. Dried forest, a view from Kulathukkad, West Eleri
D. Lateritic vegetation, a view from Ananthapuram, Kumbla
E. Seasonal vegetation, in Summer season
F. Seasonal vegetation in Monsoon season
Malom reserve forest of Kanhangad range is the another important area and it consists of tropical rainforest and many wild animals like as Rhesus monkey, wild pig, flying squirrels, slender loris, porcupine, and birds like peacock, malabar hornbill and grey horn bill are seen. snakes like cobras, python and king cobras are reported. Adoor reserve forest which spreads about 2 km² in Kasaragod district is the home for endangered animals like jungle cat, slender loris, wild pig, porcupine, turtles, peacock, malabar horn bill.