

district
hand book
KASARAGOD



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

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DISTRICT HAND BOOKS OF KERALA



KASARAGOD

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

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kasaragod

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PREFACE

This is part of a scheme of bringing out District Handbooks of Kerala by the Public Relations Department. An attempt is made here to collect and present as much information as possible. It has been designed to satisfy the needs of the average reader; as well the tourist who may look for a handy volume containing essential information about the district..

We hope that the book will serve this purpose. Suggestions for improvements are most welcome.

Trivandrum,
August, 1987.

T. N. JAYADEVAN,
Director of Public Relations.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Historical Background ..	1
Topography and Climate ..	2
The People ..	4
Cultural Background ..	4
Places of Worship ..	5
Developmental Activities ..	7
Places of Interest ..	11

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Page</i>
Theyyam ..	14
Bekkal Fort ..	15
Fish Landing Area ..	15
Kasaragod Government College ..	16
CPCRI, Kasaragod ..	16
Mallikarjuna Temple, Kasaragod ..	17
Kasaragod Church ..	17
Govinda Pai's House ..	18
Ananth Padmanabha Temple, Kumbala ..	18
Light House, Kasaragod ..	19
Malik Dinar Mosque, Thalankara ..	20
District map showing Panchayats ..	

It is with the intention of bestowing maximum attention on the development of backward areas that Kasaragod district was formed on May 24, 1984. With the formation of the new district comprising the erstwhile Kasaragod and Hosdurg taluks it is now possible to make strenuous efforts for the development of this coastal area.

The new district has an area of 1961.3 sq. kilometres and a coastal belt of 77 kms. According to the 1981 census, the population in the district is 8,72,741 of which 4,32,025 are males and 4,40,716 females. Literacy is 55.08 per cent. While male literacy is 64.66 per cent, female literacy is only 48.80 per cent. The S. C., S. T. population is 65,461 and 24,565 respectively. 1981 census reveals that 72 per cent of the population is Malayalees. The rest are Kannada, Tulu, Marathi and Hindustani speaking people.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The name Kasaragod is said to be derived from the Kannada word "Kasirakood" meaning Nuxvomico forests (Kajirakuttom). Lying on the west coast of the nation Kasaragod was famous from time immemorial. Many Arab travellers who came to Kerala between 9th and 14th century A. D. visited Kasaragod because it was then an important trade centre. They called this area with a pet name viz: 'Harkwillia', Mr. Barbose, the Portuguese traveller who visited Kumbala near Kasaragod in 1514 had recorded that rice was exported to Mali Island whence coir was imported. Dr. Francis Buchanan who was the family doctor of Lord Wellesly visited Kasaragod in 1800. In his travelogue he included information on the political and communal set-up in places like "Athipramba", Kavvai, Nileswar, Bekkal, Chandragiri and Manjeswar.

Kasaragod was part of Kumbala kingdom in which there were 64 Tulu and Malayalam villages. When Vijayanagar empire attacked Kasaragod, the king of Kolathiri constituted a dynasty with Nileswar as headquarters. It is said that the characters appearing in Theyyam represent those who had helped king Kolathiri to fight against the attack of Vijayanagar empire. During the decline of

that empire in the 14th century, the administration of this area was vested with the Ikkeri Naikans. They continued to be the rulers till the final fall of the Vijayanagar empire in 16th century. Then Vengappa Naik declared independence to Ikkeri. In 1645 Sivappa Naik took the reins and transferred the capital to Bednoor. Thus they came to be known as Bednoor Naiks. Chandragiri fort and Bekkal fort are considered to be parts of a chain of forts constructed by Sivappa Naik for the defence of the kingdom.

In 1763 Hyder Ali of Mysore conquered Bednoor and his intention was to capture the entire Kerala. But when his attempt to conquer Tellicherry fort was foiled, Hyder Ali returned to Mysore and died in 1782. His son Tippu Sultan continued the attack and conquered Malabar. According to the Sreerangapattam treaty of 1792, Tippu surrendered Malabar except 'Tulunadu' (Canara) to the British. The British got Canara only after the death of Tippu Sultan in 1799. Kasaragod was part of Bekal taluk in the south Kannada district of Bombay presidency. Kasaragod taluk came into being when Bekkal taluk was included in the Madras presidency on April 16, 1982. Though Mr. Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar moved a resolution in 1913 on the floor of Madras Governor's Council demanding the merger of Kasaragod Taluk with the Malabar district, it had to be withdrawn because of the stiff opposition of the members from Karnataka. In 1927 a political convention held at Calicut passed a resolution stressing the above demand. In the same year an organisation entitled Malayali Seva Sangham was constituted. Thanks to the efforts made by many eminent persons like Sri K. P. Kesava Menon, Kasaragod became part of Kerala following the reorganisation of states and formation of Kerala on November 1, 1956.

TOPOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Kasaragod district lies between 11° — $18'$ and 12° — $48'$ northern latitudes and between 74° — $52'$ and 75° — $26'$ eastern latitudes. The district is marked off from the adjoining areas outside the State by the Western Ghats which run parallel to sea and constitute an almost continuous mountain wall on the eastern side. The Ghats dominates the topography. The coastline 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 at first in ranges of low red laterite hills interspersed with paddy fields and coconut gardens.

The district is bounded in the east by the Western Ghats, in the west by Arabian sea, in the north by Canara district of Karnataka and in the South by the Cannanore district.

Based on physical features, the district falls into three natural divisions—the lowland bordering the sea, the midland consisting of the undulating country east of the the low lands and the forest-clad highland on the extreme east. The diversity of the physical features results in a corresponding diversity of climate. In the plains the climate is generally hot. Though the mean maximum temperature is only around 90° F, it 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.

The south-west monsoon starts towards the end of May or the beginning of June heralded by thunder-storms and holds away till September when the rain fades out. October brings in the north-east monsoon. Dry weather sets in by the end of December. January and February are the driest and coolest months of the year. March, April and May are generally very hot. The district has an average annual rainfall of 3500 mm.

Kasaragod district has a forest area of 8602 hectares falling under Wynad Forest Division. It stretches in two ranges—Kasaragod and Kanhangad. The forest produces are shegaibark, Sheakoy, Cardamom, Canes, fibres, etc. Sambar, the fastest deer, is seen in some area. Pigs are a nuisance to the cultivators of hilly areas.

Rivers

There are 12 rivers in the district. The longest is Chandragiri (105 kms) originating from the Pattimala in Koorg and embraces the sea at Thalangara. The name Chandragiri derived from the source of the river 'Chandragupta Vasti' where the great Mourya emperor Chandragupta is believed to have spent his last days as a Saint. The second longest river is Kariankod (65 kms) across which a dam is being built at Kakkadavu. Shiriya (62 km.), Uppala (40 km.), Mogral (34 km.), Chithari (25 km.), Nileswar (25 km.), Kavrayi (22 km.), Manjeswar (17 km.), Kumbala (11 km.), Bekkal (11 km.) and Kalanad (8 km.) are the other rivers. These rivers provide ample scope for developing irrigation facilities.

MINERALS

In a survey held in the northern parts of Kasaragod magnetite, a low grade iron ore was found. Soap stones are abundant in the north as also shell deposits in the south. Bauxite is found near Nileswar. There are china clay deposits also. Laterite stones and granites are also found in many places.

THE PEOPLE

The people here have, as in the case of their counterparts in other parts of the state, a distinctiveness in personal appearance marked by fairness of complexion and regularity of features, clean habits and simple life. Though at present the percentage of literacy is low when compared to that of most other districts, the passion of the people here for education and learning is coming up.

The major religious groups of the district are Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Brahmins, Nairs, Ambalavasies, Thiyyas and Kammalas are the major divisions of the Hindu community. Thiyyas of the district are known as Belichappad in the northern parts of the district. The sub-divisions of Nair community are Nambiar, Menon, Kurup etc. Kammalas are artisans like Thattan (Goldsmith), Perumkollan (blacksmith) and Asaris (Carpenters). Brahmins are termed like Punichitaya, Kukkillaya, Kunikullaya, Ballullaya, Kadambudithaya, Kakunnaya, etc.

Christians settle mainly in the eastern hilly areas. They are the early settlers from the southern parts of Kerala. The first group of Christian settlers came to Rajapuram in 1943. The main Christian settlements are Thomapuram, Palavayal, Vellarikundu, Cherupuzha, Bandadka, Pulingom, Kozhichal, Karibedkom, Malom, Belal, Konhiradkom, Kadumeni, Malakkallu, Panathady and Chemeni where the hilly terrains were converted into rich plantations.

The Muslims are very pious and they follow rigid religious practices. The Purdha system is observed more strictly here by Muslim women than in any parts of the State.

Cherumas, Mavilas, Parayas etc., are the Scheduled Castes. They are mainly agricultural labourers. The Scheduled Tribes consist of Koragar of Kasaragod taluk, Marattis of Hosdurg and Kasaragod taluks and Adiyans or Eravas.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Kerala, cut off, as it is from the rest of India by the Western Ghats, has a culture with certain distinct characteristics. The

cosmopolitan outlook and character of the people in the district is due to the contact with the trade missions who used to visit this place years back. The Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians live side by side with each other, each influencing and being influenced by the culture of the other. Communal harmony and religious tolerance are the noteworthy characteristics of the people. Though the people speak different languages, there is no barrier against cultural unity. Mosques, temples and churches stand side by side as symbols of communal cohesion.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Mallikarjuna Temple

Situated in the heart of Kasaragod town, Mallikarjuna temple is one of the oldest among the temples in the district, dedicated to lord Siva. The "vedi" utsava of the temple is famous.

Madhur Temple

Madhur Sidhi Vinayaka temple is attracting pilgrims even from outside Kerala. The deity is Mahaganapathy.

Anantha Padmanabha Temple

This is a lake temple situated near Kumbala. Annual festival is in the second fortnight of April.

Palakkunnu Bhagavathy

This temple is near Kottikulam Railway Station. Annual festival in March attracts hundreds of devotees. Mannampath Kavu at Nileswar, Sashta temple at Chandragiri, Thrayambakeswara Temple at Trikkannad, Muchilot Bhagavathy temple at Cheruvathur are among others.

Malik Dinar Mosque

Malik Dinar Mosque at Thalankara is believed to be one among ten mosques built in India following the advent of Islam in the country. It was built by Malik Mohammed Dinar who came to India to propagate Islam in 221st Hijara Era. This Mosque was renovated many times since the death of Malik Dinar. He was put to eternal rest near this mosque which became a pilgrim centre. Thousands of people gather on the occasion of Uroos, the annual festival of the mosque.

Nellikunnu Mosque

Nellikunnu Uroos celebrated in Nellikunnu mosque is famous. It attracts people in thousands. The 'Nercha' celebration during the second half of November lasts for one week.

There are many other mosques in the district which are famous for annual festivals.

Christian Churches

There are two Christian Churches which celebrated centenary in the district. They are at Bela and Kasaragod. The St. Thomas Church in Chittarikkal is another famous one. A number of small and big churches are there in the eastern parts of the district.

MEN OF LETTERS

The Kuttamath Kunniyar family in Cheruvathoor had given birth to many poets. The great poet among them was popularly known as Mahakavi Kuttamath. Late Sri P. Kunhiraman Nair, another famous poet of Kerala, hailed from Bellikoth near Kanhangad. A memorial is being constructed there. Late Sri T. Ubaid, the cultural leader of Kasaragod, was born at Thalankara. Proficient in Malayalam and Kannada, T. Ubaid translated many Malayalam literary pieces into Kannada and vice-versa. He was also a researcher in Mopla songs. Rashtrakavi late Govinda Pai of Manjeswar was Kerala's contribution to Kannada language and literature. Poet, art-critic and literature researcher, Govinda Pai had been an active participant in the struggle for independence. Sri Parthisuba, the great exponent of Yakshagana, was believed to have lived at Kumbala near Kasaragod. Sri T. S. Thirumumbu who recently passed away was not only a revolutionary poet but a leader of agrarian movement as well.

Folk arts like Theyyam and Thirayattom and Yakshagana are flourishing in Kasaragod district. Recently Yakshagana is performed in Malayalam as well.

NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Kasaragod played a prominent role in the national movement for the freedom of the country. Mohammed Sherul Sahib and Kandige Krishna Bhat were the frontline leaders of the independence movement. Umesh Rao, K. M. Krishnan Nambiar, Shreesankarji, Naranthatta Raman Nair, A. C. Kannan Nair, T. Gopalan Nair and Meloth Narayanan Nambiar were prominent freedom fighters.

The agrarian struggles to end the exploitation and oppression by the landlords and chieftains were part of the National movement. The Kadakom Sathyagraha was started following the arrest of Gandhiji in 1932. The Palayi harvest agitation (1941), Cheemeni estate struggle (1942), Kayyur agrarian riot (1944), Eleri estate agitation (1946), Karinthalam paddy seizure revolt (1948) and many other struggles waged by the peasants' organisations accelerated the tempo of the freedom movement. Besides the agitation of the peasants, the various struggles unleashed for the uplift of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes also supported and enlivened the national movement.

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Agriculture

Agriculture forms the mainstay of the population of the district. The soils in the three natural divisions generally fall under three types. In the high land region it is laterite. In the midland the soil is a red ferruginous loom of lateritic origin with an admixture of clay and sand. The coastal strip is sandy. Diversity of crops and heterogeneity in cultivation are the key notes of agriculture in the district.

Paddy is cultivated in a total area of 47,275 hectares under three crops, viz: Virippu (16,025 hectares), Mundakan (10,250 hectares) and Puncha (21,004 hectares). Average annual production is estimated at 4,76,13,350 kgs.

An extent of 27,025 hectares is under coconut cultivation with an annual production of 15.39 crores of nuts. Cashew is grown in 23,500 hectares and the yield is 54,99,000 kgs. per annum. In 99,500 hectares arecanut is cultivated, the yield from which is estimated to be 1.72 crores of nuts. Pepper is grown in 92,100 hectares and production is 18,71,880 kgs. About 12,21,800 kgs. rubber is produced from the plantations covering an area of 2,050 hectares. Tobacco cultivation is a speciality of the district. In 550 hectares of land in Pallikkara, Kottikulam and Kanhangad belt in the sea coast tobacco is cultivated. Annual production is estimated at 10,12,550 kgs. Tapioca, Sweet Potato, Sesamum, Groundnut, Pulses etc., are the other crops in the district.

Training and visit programme is implemented in the district under one Agriculture Division. One sub-division and 14 agricultural developmental units are functioning to train and assist the

farmers in adopting modern scientific methods. There are two state seed farms at Kasaragod and Pulloor and one coconut farm at Nileswar. A SADU unit is also in operation to carry out coconut, and pepper rehabilitation programmes. In order to promote cashew cultivation a World Bank-aided project is being implemented. Research and extension programmes are done by the Agriculture Research Station at Pilikode near Nileswar.

C. P. C. R. I.

Central Plantation Crops Research Institute is an establishment having national importance. With headquarters at Kudlu, five kilometres north of Kasaragod, the CPCRI has regional stations at Kayamkulam, Vittal and Calicut. Research Centres are at Peechi, Palode, Hirehally, Appangala, Mohithnagar and Kehikuchi. There are seed farms at kidu and Sathigode, one field station at Trichur and a World Coconut Germplasm Centre at Sipighat. The objectives of the institute are to serve as national forum for improving genetic potential of plantation crops, to conduct basic and applied research on various aspects of these crops, to co-ordinate research works being done by other institutions and agencies in the country, to serve as an Information Centre on all matters pertaining to these crops, to produce genetically superior planting materials and to carry out all India co-ordinated cropping improvement projects on coconut, arecanut, spices and cashew nut. CPCRI was established in 1970 by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Research is carried out on various branches of Agriculture Science such as garden making, soil chemistry, plant production, micro biology, plant diseases, cattle rearing, fish culture etc.

T x D, Mangala arecanut, new species in cardamom, turmeric and cashew, mixed crop and multi-crop system etc., are some of the contributions of the CPCRI for the development of agriculture. The most remarkable venture is tissue culture in coconut. Research on various diseases of coconut, arecanut, cashew, pepper and field crops has given better yields.

Industries

With the ever-increasing population, consequent pressure on land and the chronic unemployment situation, rapid industrialisation is the only recourse to tide over the difficulties. Kasaragod district has vast potentials for establishment of large and medium industries, but the district is at present industrially very backward. The

people here are now forced to be contented with some small industries like saw mills, tile and clay factories, china clay units and rice and oil mills. In view of the industrial backwardness of the district, the State Government has requested the Centre to declare this area as a no-industry district.

There are 552 registered small scale industries in the district which provide employment to about 6900 people. One industrial estate with nine units functions at Kasaragod. Five mini estates are also in operation at Changala, Kanhangad, Nileswar, Pilikode, and Thrikaripur, producing engineering goods, rubber products, plastic goods, aluminium wares, steel furniture, building materials, mosaic tiles, etc. About 25,000 people are engaged in beedi industry. Beedi co-operative societies have been organised in various parts of the district. There are seven beedi co-operatives which provide employment to 10,000 people. Handloom industry flourishes in some areas.

Astral Watches in Kasaragod town is a Government-aided company which assembles H.M.T. watches. It is proposed to establish a spinning mill at Udma in the public sector. Construction of Calicum Carbide Unit at Vorkady is nearing completion. Another unit for manufacture of fire bricks from saw dust and coconut pith is under construction at Uppla. Establishment of a Television Assembling Unit is in the offing.

Fisheries

Kasaragod district has a sea coast of 80 kms. extending from Thrikaripur to Bengra-Manjeswar. There are 31 fish-landing centres. A modern fish-landing centre with fish-landing, cleaning and transporting facilities functions at Nileswar. Establishment of fish landing centres at Cheruvathoor, Kasaragod, Padne and Hosdurg is under way. One ice plant in public sector and a few in private sector are in operation. A light tower has been set up at Manjeswar.

There are 5,874 fishermen families living in 16 fishing villages namely:—Bengra Mangeswar, Shiriya, Koipay, Kavugoly, Kasaba, Kizhur, Kottikulam, Pallikkara, Ajanur, Hosdurg kadapuram, Thaikadapuram, Poonjavikadapuram, Padanna kadapuram, Kadangod, Valiyaparamba and Thrikkaripur Kadapuram. Fishermen population come to around 11,200. There are three fisheries dispensaries at Thai Kadapuram, Valiyaparamba and Mavila Kadapuram.

Health Services

The district has four hospitals, seven primary health centres and 31 dispensaries with a total bed strength of above 600. The major hospitals are the District Hospital at Kanhangad and the one at Kasaragod with bed strength of 189 and 163 respectively. A T. B. clinic and a Filaria Control Project unit are functioning at Kasaragod. Some Ayurvedic and Homoeopathic hospitals are also functioning. Recently one Ayurvedic District Hospital has been sanctioned at Kasaragod. Private hospitals are also in operation.

Educational Facilities

There are 94 high schools, 152 upper primary schools, and 260 lower primary schools in the district. One special school for the blind has been established at Kasaragod. Two training schools are also functioning. The four colleges in this district are the Government college at Kasaragod and Elerithattu and Govinda Pai Memorial Government College at Manjeswar and Nehru Arts And Science College at Kanhangad.

In the field of technical education there is one Polytechnic at Kanhangad, one industrial training institute at Kasaragod and one technical high school at Cheruvathur. The industrial training centre at Nileswar functions under Harijan Welfare Department.

Community Development

There are four Development Blocks in the district. Developmental activities are co-ordinated by the District Rural Development Agency. Programmes like IRDP, NREP, RLEGP, Trysem, group housing etc., are implemented by the DRDA through the Community Development Blocks.

Welfare of S. C./S. T.

Educational facilities and concessions are allowed to the children hailing from the families of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Efforts are afoot to reach power and potable water in their colonies. There is one cosmopolitan hostel at Kasaragod. Five Welfare hostels for boys have been established at Kasaragod, Badiadka, Karadka, Nileswar and Poothamkallu. Two Welfare hostels for girls are also functioning at Kasaragod and Nileswar. In order to provide professional training one ITC at Nileswar, one PCTC at Cheruvathur and one MWTC at Belam have also been set up. Two Tribal Extension Offices are in operation at Kasaragod and Malakkallu.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Bekkal Fort

Bekkal Fort is 26 kms. South of Kasaragod town. The fort projecting on to the sea is a spectacular sight, with panoramic view around. The fort is a monument of modern war strategy mastered over the old rulers, namely Ikkeri Naikkans. There is a proposal for development of the area around the fort into a tourist resort with modern facilities.

Ananthapura

It is a beautiful place where the famous lake temple of Anantha Padmanabha is situated. The temple in the middle of the lake is quite charming. The temple crocodile is another sight of interest there. Ananthapura is 13 kms. away from Kasaragod.

Ranipuram

Situated in the eastern highlands Ranipuram is a place like Ootty. The natural beauty of this spot is enchanting.

Kasaragod

The headquarters of the district, Kasaragod town has got a number of temples, mosques and churches. The beach at Kasaragod refreshes your eyes and mind. A light house is built near the beach with a capacity of beaming over to 20 nautical kilometers.

Manjeswar

Northmost town of Kerala, Manjeswar is about 30 km. from Kasaragod. The house of Rashtrakavi Govinda Pai is at Manjeswar. A proposal is there to make this house a memorial to the great poet. One of the oldest "Bastis" of Jains is near Manjeswar.

Kanhangad

This is a prominent town and business centre of the district. Kanhangad was believed to be established by a Chieftain of Kolathiri, Kanhan in earlier times, hence the name Kanhangad. There is a fort in the town.

Nileswar ✓

Nileswar is famous for its market for agricultural produces. The Agricultural Research Station is in Pilikode near Nileswar. About 40 km. away from Kasaragod Nileswar is a terminus to the

eastern settlement areas like Vellarikundu, Beemanady, Panathur etc.

Ednir Mutt

Ednir Mutt is 10 kms. away from Kasaragod. It attracts a number of Hindu devotees.

DISTRICT AT A GLANCE

Area of the District	: 1963.3 Sq. Km.
Population-Total	: 872741 (1981 Census)
Males	: 432025
Females	: 440716
Literacy -Total	: 55.08%
Male	: 64.66%
Female	: 46.8%
Scheduled Castes	: 65461
Scheduled Tribes	: 24565
Revenue Divisions	: 1
Taluks	: 2
Blocks	: 4
Panchayats	: 37
Municipalities	: 2
Villages	: 62 - 73 + 75
Revenue Firkas	: 5

BLOCK AND PANCHAYATS

Manjeswar Block:

Manjeswar
Vorkadi
Badiyadka
Bellur
Enmakdaje
Kumbadaje
Kumbala
Madhur
Mangalpady
Meenja
Paivelige
Puthige.

Kasaragod Block:

Bedadka
 Chemnad
 Chengala
 Dalapady
 Karadka
 Mukiyar
 Mogral Puthur

Kanhangad Block:

Ajanur
 Belur
 Madikkai
 Balal
 Pallikkara
 Panathady
 Pullurperiya
 Udma.

Nileswar Block:

Cheemeni
 Cheruvathur
 East Eleri
 Kinanur-Karinthalam
 Nileswar
 Padne
 Pilikode
 Thrikkaripur
 West Eleri
 Valiya Paramba.

Municipalities:

Kasaragod
 Kanhangad.

Revenue Firkas:

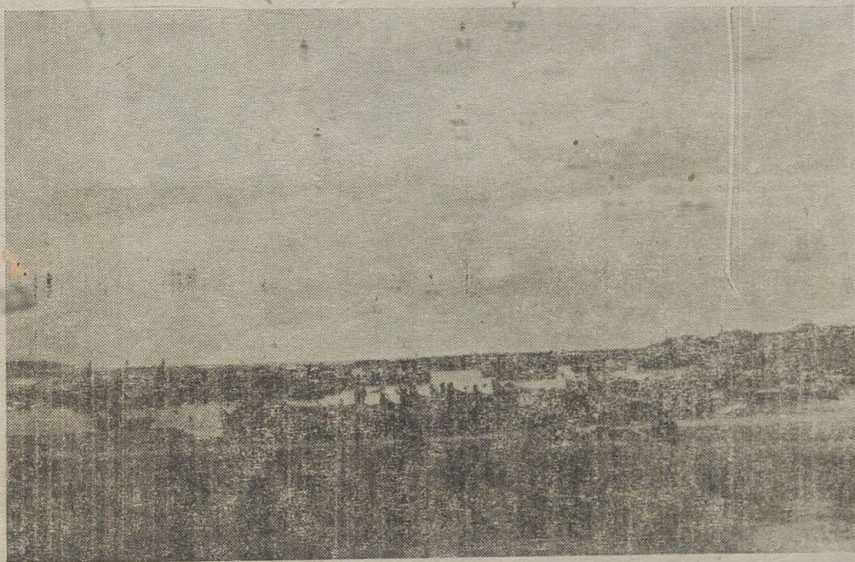
Kasaragod
 Kumbala
 Manjeswar
 Hosdurg
 Nileswar.



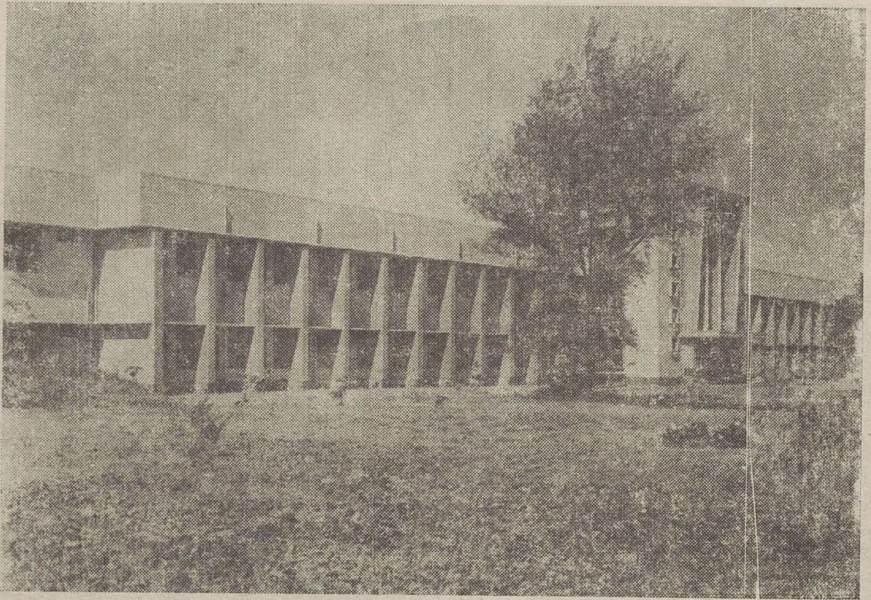
Theyyam



Bekkal Fort



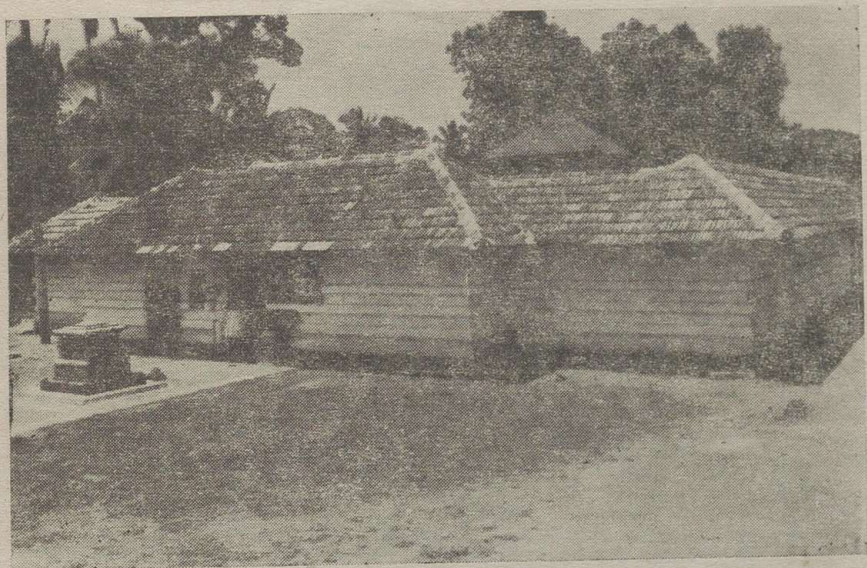
Fish Landing Area, Kasaragod



Kasaragod Government College



*Central Plantation Crops Research Institute,
Kasaragod*



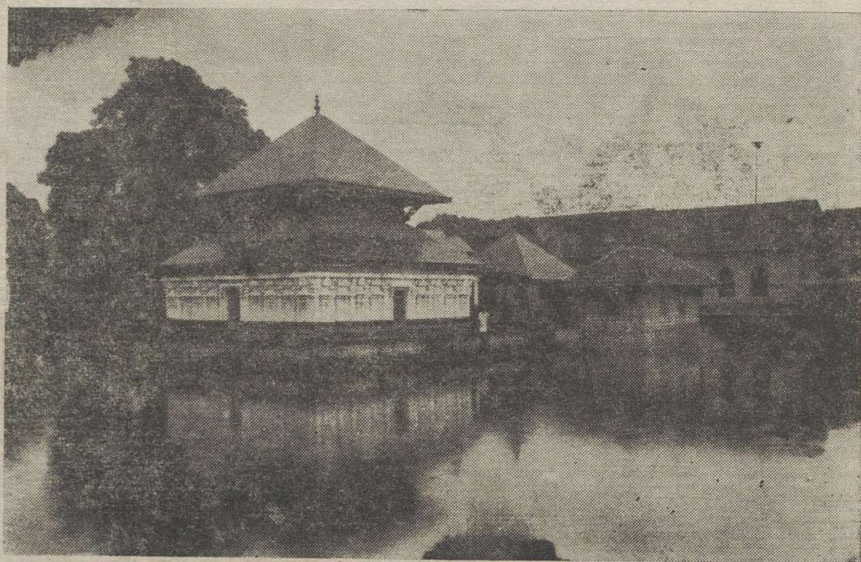
Mallikarjuna Temple, Kasaragod



Kasaragod Church



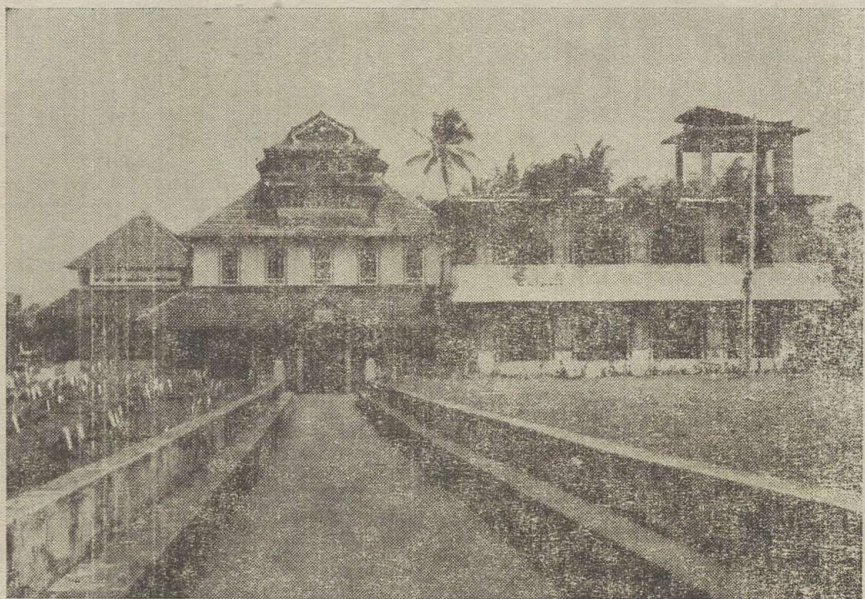
Rashtra kavi Govinda Pai's House



Anantha Padmanabha Lake Temple, Kumbala



Light House, Kasaragod



Malik Dinar Mosque, Thalankara



