

**THE BASEL MISSION AND SOCIAL CHANGE –  
MALABAR AND SOUTH CANARA  
A CASE STUDY (1830-1956)**

Thesis submitted to the  
University of Calicut for the award of the Degree of  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**  
IN  
**HISTORY**

By

**FEDRICK SUNIL KUMAR. N. I.**

Under the Guidance of

**Dr. K. GOPALAN KUTTY**  
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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT  
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# DECLARATION

I, Fedrick Sunil Kumar. N. I., do hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**THE BASEL MISSION AND SOCIAL CHANGE – MALABAR AND SOUTH CANARA: A CASE STUDY (1830-1956)**” submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in History**, has not been submitted by me fully or partially for the award of a Degree, Diploma, Title or Recognition before.

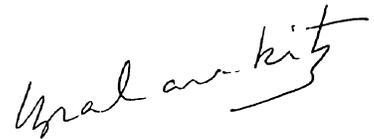
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**FEDRICK SUNIL KUMAR. N.I**

## **CERTIFICATE**

I, Dr. K. Gopalankutty, do hereby certify that the thesis entitled “**THE BASEL MISSION AND SOCIAL CHANGE – MALABAR AND SOUTH CANARA: A CASE STUDY (1830-1956)**” submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in History** is a record of bonafide study and research carried out by Sri. Fedrick Sunil Kumar. N. I. under my supervision and guidance.



**Dr. K. GOPALANKUTTY**  
(Supervising Teacher)

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.E.M.	:	Basel Evangelical Mission
B.G.E.M.S.	:	Basel German Evangelical Missionary Society
B.G.M.	:	Basel German Mission
B.M.R.	:	Basel Mission Report
C.M.S.	:	Church Missionary Society
C.S.I.	:	Church of South India
L.M.S.	;	London Missionary Society
S.I.U.C.	:	South Indian United Church
S.M.S.	:	Scottish Missionary Society
W.M.M.S.	:	Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society

## GLOSSARY

Adhikari		Revenue functionary
Adimai		(Tamil) Slaves
Adiyan		Slave (pl. Adima)
Amsam		Revenue division
Banjar	:	Waste land
Chalgenigars		Tenants-at-will
Chunkam		Custom duty
Desam		Territory
Desadhipatyam		Authority over the desam
Devaswam	:	Temple; religious institution
Dominium	:	Ownership; a term in Roman law that was incorporated into English Common law
Hosagama	:	A new cultivation
Illam	:	Household (of a Nambuthiri Brahmin)
Inam	:	Tax-free land given as a gift
Janmam	:	Used here to mean a hereditary right to the land and its produce, redefined over time under colonial rule to mean a private and hereditary ownership of land
Janmi	:	One possessing hereditary rights over land; landlord
Kanakkar	:	Lessee or mortgagee
Kanam	:	Depending on its usage in north or south Malabar, it could mean a lease, a mortgage or a usufructuary mortgage
Karanavan	:	(pl. Karanavar) elder man of the house, Nayar or Nambuthiri. Derived from the generic term <i>Karanavar</i> , used to refer to an older generation. By the mid-nineteenth century, it was interpreted legally to mean the head of the household.

Karar	:	Contract
Karayma	:	The rights that an owner acquired on purchase of land, which included policing functions and certain other rights over tenants
Kudiyan		Generic term that encompassed three sets of meanings – inhabitant, subject and tenant; roughly translated to mean slaves
Kumki		Waste land situated within 100 yards of cultivated lands
Kuzhikanam		Improvement lease
Magna		Group of revenue villages
Mana		Household of the Nambuthiris
Marumakkathayam		Matriliny
Melcharthu		Overlease granted to a new tenant in order to oust the old
Menon	:	Village accountant
Mulwargdar		Proprietor of a hereditary estate
Munsif	:	Judge
Nadu		Territory
Naduvazhi		Administrative chief
Nanja		Wet paddy cultivation
Nirattiper	:	Freehold right over property
Onnara	:	Underclothing
Panchayat		Village tribunal
Para	:	Measure (of paddy, etc.)
Paramba	:	Dryland estate
Patta	:	Title deed to land
Pattakar	:	Lease holding tenants
Pattam	:	Share of produce belonging to landholding households

Pula sambandham		Ties of pollution
Punam		Dry paddy cultivation
Purapad		Right to rent
Ryot		Cultivator
Ryotwari	:	Cultivating right
Sabha	:	Association
Samanthar	:	Royal caste
Samuthiri	:	Kings who ruled in and around Calicut
Sambandham		Term denoting customary marriage
Shamil		Extra assessment added by Muhamme-dan government in Kanara
Tahsildar	:	Native collector of revenue
Taluks		Districts
Taram	:	Share of the state
Tarf		Subdivision f a Magna
Taniki (of Kambharti)	:	Estates whose revenue are under investigation
Thara	:	Nayar village community
Tharao		Fixed one
Tharavadu	:	Household
Thavazhi	:	Literally 'mother's way' – generally used to refer to branches of the matrilineal household
Vakil		Lawyer
Vazhunnor		Governor
Vellalar	:	Agriculturists
Verumpattakkar	:	Cultivators with certain hereditary and defined rights over produce – by the mid-nineteenth century, the term was used to mean 'simple tenant'

Verumpattam		Cultivating lease
Warg	:	A holding of estate
Yogakshemam		(Community reform), a Nambuthiri caste movement
Zamindar		Landlord
Zamorin	:	British variant of Samuthiri

## Chapter I

# INTRODUCTION

### **A. Introduction**

The Basel German Evangelical Missionary Society (B.G.E.M.S) was the first Protestant Christian Mission in Malabar. The Basel Missionaries were the pioneers in every aspect of modern Malabar. Most of the Missionaries belonged to German nativity. The Basel German Evangelical Missionary Society introduced the modern system of education, published the first journal in Malayalam, established tiles and textile factories; promoted trade and industrial technologies, enriched vernacular language and literature; started schools, churches and hospitals and various types of charitable institutions etc in order to emancipate the people from their socio-religious problems and to build up a Christian Versatile Community in the deeper sense of global ecumenism. In fact it was a new epoch in the history of Malabar.

### **B. Purpose of the Study**

The B.G.E.M.S. undertook educational work in various stations in Malabar in the period between the establishment of the B.G.E.M.S. in Malabar in 1839 and the First World War of 1914. Their immense contribution in the field of education and its impact on the people is palpable even today. Even though evangelism was B.G.E.M.S's primary goal, they gave more importance to primary education and attempted to give primary education to the people of Malabar, especially to the lower

castes. The B.G.E.M.S. encouraged women to learn in schools and to get themselves educated.

Giving education was a general characteristic of the nineteenth century Protestant missions in India. The B.G.E.M.S. too followed the same means to achieve their goal. Since they adopted the policy of admitting children without regard to caste, the mission contributed to the modification in the system of education which was then prevalent and in the process brought about a radical change in the grass root level.

The intention of this study is to reveal the realities and to make a social history of the Protestant mission. This study seeks to examine the picture of Malabar before the advent of B.G.E.M.S., the origin of Basel Evangelical Mission; their contribution to education in Malabar and S. Canara and the total social, economic, cultural and religious change thereby brought by its influence.

### **C. Sources of the Study**

The study is mainly based on church records of the B.G.E.M.S. in South Western India. Of the English reports, 'Basel Mission Reports' from 1843 to 1845, 1854 to 1899, 1906 to 1913 were available. Issues of 'Basel Evangelical Mission Official Gazetters' of few were available for the study. The magazine of Wesley Mission, the 'Harvest Field' is also used as a primary source. This primary source contains reports published by the B.E.M. Missionaries on their work in South Western India.

William Logan's Malabar yet another primary source which has been used to trace the socio-political history of Malabar. Malabar District Gazetteers Volume VI has been used to get figures, statistics and dates. A clear description of the history of the early work of the B.E.M. in North Malabar is got from Joseph Muliyl's "Sukumari", which is said to be one of the first four novels in Malayalam.

To trace the overall socio-economic progress of the people I have depended on secondary sources particularly on Kranti.K. Farias, Murkot Kunhappa, Samuel Hebich, Dr.K.K.N.Kurup, Dr.K.J.John, Jaiprakash Raghaviah and thesis written by Peter Wilson Prabakar (S. Canara) H.S.Wilson to trace the educational and social contributions of the Basel Mission and also to trace the response of the people of S. Canara and Malabar to the new educational trends introduced by the Basel Mission and the overall progress of the society.

#### **D. Scope of the Study**

This study covers a period of about 125 years ie., 1830-1956. The study mainly aims at understanding how the people in South Canara and Malabar developed as a result of the Basel Evangelical Mission's educational work in Malabar. The periodisation has been chosen from 1830 the beginning of B.E.M.Ss work in Malabar and S. Canara to 1914, the year of the First World War when the German missionaries had to leave India because every German was regarded as a Possible Spy and the British felt unsafe to have any dealings with them. The B.E.M.

established many industrial and educational establishments during this period.

My study not only deals with the establishment but also highlights the contribution they gave through education to the people of S. Canara and Malabar and their motives behind it. The contributions of the Basel Mission missionary Dr. Hermann Gundert to Malayalam language and literature was highlighted by Dr. K.K.N.Kurup and Dr. K.J. John in their work entitled *The Legacy of Basel Mission and Hermann Gundert*. Although religious propoganda had been the primary aim of the Mission, its activities inaugurated a new stage in the development of language and literature. The Mission established a litho press at Nettur and another printing press at Mangalore. With the help of litho press the Mission published a monthly, *Rajyasamachar*. The first issue of the journal appeared in 1847 and it continued till December 1850. It is believed that the editor was F.Miller. The journals as more concerned with the news related to Christianity, religious propoganda, conversion, etc. The views expressed in the journal on Hinduism and Islam may not be appreciated by members following those religions. However, the prose style, reporting system, clarity, were unique. Simultaneously another monthly, *Paschimodayam* (Rise of the West) by the same editor was published from October 1847 till August 1851. Jaiprakash Raghaviah explains the series of technical changes that were undertaken included introduction of fly shuttle and dyeing techniques, use of jacquard loom to weave intricate

designs and patterns, use of power in certain operations like winding of thread and introduction of new materials (twill cotton piece goods, hosiery, stockinette materials etc). Moreover, these Basel Mission industries also showed greater capacity to introduce new products in the market. All these products were meant for a fairly narrow market, which by and large did not face stiff competition from either traditional producers or British goods. This “niche market” demanded the capacity to bring out new products, for which Basel Mission Industries had the technical capacity. Despite such improvements, the Mission industries did face some demand constraint. After 1882, the Mission did not start weaving factories. They converted the factory at Cannanore into a power loom one. The other factories increasingly turned into jacquard weaving.

In weaving as well as tile-making as it was done traditionally, the specialization of labour was limited by the extent of market which was mainly local. A greater specialization of labour was involved in the factory process introduced by the Basel Mission. Therefore, Basel Mission’s entry into industrial activity resulted in not only technical upgradation of production process but also in specialization of the labour process. Though according to missionary sources their industries operated in the areas unaffected by competition from traditional weavers, the overall effect on the gross demand for woven goods would have adversely affected the traditional weavers. In the traditional industries of

weaving and tile-making, described the process as entry of capital. Karl Marx has explained the process as:

By decomposition of handicrafts, by specialization of instruments of labour, by formation of detail labourers, and by grouping and combining the latter into a single mechanism, division of labour creates a qualitative gradation and a quantitative proportion in the social process of production, it consequently creates a definite organization of labour in society and thereby develops at the same time new productive forces in the society.

The transformation as it is described by Marx is bound to affect the traditional artisan.

Basel Mission is known to have taken an uncompromising stand against the caste system, from the very beginning of their missionary activities. This was evidently a natural position in the light of their understanding of the Christian teaching on the basic equality of human beings. Socially imposed stratification on the basis of birth was held obnoxious by the missionaries.

The Basel missionaries opposed the caste system as part of their over all opposition to hierarchies. Though they themselves accepted hierarchies of a commercial and industrial society, such inequalities could

be explained as outcomes of human endeavour. Hierarchies created on the basis of value system unalterable by human action, attracted opposition by these missionaries.

The missionaries also found that their predominantly lower caste converts were condemned to life of low social esteem even after adopting Christianity. Though some blatant inequalities of the caste system like untouchability were in some cases removed, even the Christian converts had to lead a life of least social mobility. Therefore, the missionaries went all out to create conditions for the converts to earn economic prosperity and through that social esteem. One of the best means that was available to them was commercial and industrial enterprises. Apart from achieving social, mobility industrial labour had the added advantage of lessening social stratification amongst the converts themselves. The general atmosphere of mission industries where converts from higher castes and lower castes worked side by side helped in the eradication of caste prejudices. Moreover the Basel Missionaries took initiative in arranging marriages between converts formerly belonging to different castes.<sup>1</sup>

The Basel Mission experiment of a casteless group further accentuated the process of social mobility by offering a chance for the Thiya and Billava castes to seek an existence outside their caste based occupations. As for the Cheruma caste in Malabar and its equivalent

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1. This is the impression gathered from discussions with old and knowledgeable Parishioners of the former Basel Mission.

Holey caste in South Canara, they had nothing to lose by conversion. Being a polluted caste, they had to keep certain distance from the upper castes. This difficulty was overcome to some extent by way of conversion.

Improvement of the social status is also closely linked with the creation of a technically oriented labour force. A technically oriented labour force could command a higher reserve price in the sense that its employment would also be sought after by people other than the missionaries which further enhanced the social status of converts. This was possible only in a society which had created sufficient demand for such skills. The second half of nineteenth century was a period in which such demand had spread in both Malabar and South Canara.

The church acted as an agent of change for economic upliftment and progress. The Basel Mission Industrial commission was formed as early as 1846 and given greater importance to weaving and tile industries. From 1858 to 1947 Malabar was under the British Government and it remained as a part of Madras presidency. Till the Madras Act No. I of 1900 (Malabar Compensation of Tenants Improvements) came into effect tenants in Malabar were completely at the mercy of landlords. For it was impossible for a tenant who was evicted, even to secure adequate compensation for the improvements he had made. After 1900, the tenant enjoyed the right to claim compensation. Yet the landlord could evict

him, though for a hundred generations or more the property might have been in the possession of his ancestors. Under these circumstances, the life became miserable for those who incurred the landlords displeasure, especially when practically all land was privately owned as in Malabar. Legal provision for security of tenure and fair rent did not make its appearance in Malabar till 1930.<sup>2</sup>

Through the narrow meshes of the social organisation which enclosed and imprisoned Hindu Society in Malabar the rich as well as the powerful must have found it hard to escape. Yet the depressed classes in Malabar have been a source of so much profit to the wealthy landowners that as a class these aristocrats could never value with equanimity any movement which aimed at their social liberation.

The collector of Malabar and the British Resident of Cochin made unremitting efforts to arrest the lower class people. Thus, whether it was the oppressed class or the aristocratic Brahmin, to all conversion meant a break with their social and economic past. Banished from home and Caste, deprived of any claim that they had to ancestral property, evicted from their lands and denied work by the land lords whom perhaps their forefathers had served for many generations, the early converts found themselves forsaken and helpless. The missionaries were compelled therefore to find a new home and new occupations for the converts. They

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2. *Thirty Fifth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1874*, p. 21.

bought land at convenient centres and established the Basel Mission Industries. Thus the Protestant Christian population of the plains of Malabar tended to emigrate round weaving establishments or tile factories and in mission compounds which provided the converts with quarters as well as cultivable land. Most of the educated people who could not find employment in the factories were absorbed in the educational and evangelistic departments of the mission.<sup>3</sup>

A new home and new occupations did not mark the full measure of the convert's separation from his natural environment. Conversion implied a change in the system of ownership and inheritance. In every case either by conscious choice or silent permission the Marumakkathayam system has given place to the Indian Succession Act. Conversion also brought about a Revolution in the institution of marriage.. Till the Madras Act of 1933 was passed, according to the Marumakkathayam system marriage involved no responsibility towards wife and children.<sup>4</sup> To the Christian convert governed by the Indian Christian Marriage Act, on the other hand, marriage not only forms a sacrament indissoluble before death, but also entails legal responsibility for the welfare of his family. These changes the early converts only anticipated a transition from matrilineal succession, joint family and free marriage to patrilineal succession, individualism and more stable

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3. *The Fifty fifth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South Western India 1894*, p. 48.

4. *Ibid.*

marriage contracts which have been gradually pervading Hindu society in Malabar.

Social life within the Malabar church did not by any means serve to bridge the gulf which conversion had created. The organization of the church had little in common with the Hindu social structure. After the break up of feudalism caste in Malabar has been at its best a loose social organization bound together by common traditions, but without a systematic hierarchy and exercising an uncertain control over the daily lives of its members.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, the organization of the church not only accustomed the converts to a new discipline, but endowed them with new privileges and responsibilities. For, with the passage of time, the members of the church obtained a larger share in its government and were expected to contribute a larger amount for its expenses. The social standards set by the church were moreover calculated to banish from the convert's mind even a recollection of the past. No custom or observance which had the least association with the idea of caste was permitted in the Christian community. Markers of caste identity like hair knots and tufts disappeared, peculiarities of food and dress gave away; and converts began to borrow more and more freely of European dress and European manners. Western music replaced Indian music, western forms of worship replaced Indian forms.

Early missionaries hoped for the day when the Hindu community in Malabar would cease to disown Christian converts as they had done. It

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5. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

was the policy of the mission to do their best, in the meantime to make the church a self reliant and self supporting body. Certainly, the training given by the mission in their factories led to considerable dispersion of industrial knowledge and created a few independent artisans as well as business men in the church. But the progress towards self sufficiency remained slow and was suddenly upset by the world war. With the outbreak of hostilities the Basel Mission industries were taken over by the custodian of enemy property. Funds available for education and evangelism work began to decrease and the economic basis of the church was shaken to its very foundations.

The Naduvazhis were the rulers but were subjected to the authority of the British Government. The government did not allow any missionary activities in India till 1813. In 1813 the Charter Act of the British Parliament permitted British Missionary organizations in India. The 1833 Charter Act allowed non-British missionary organization to do missionary work in India.

The religions context presents the three major religions that existed in Malabar in the first half of the nineteenth century namely Hinduism, Islam and Christianity and a brief explanation is given about each one of these religions.

The socio-economical context was controlled mainly by caste and kinship. In the caste system, the people were-arranged in hierarchical

order which was maintained by two religious ideas, incarnation and pollution. Since the lower castes were forced to observe certain rules and even certain professions according to the caste, it was not the ability of a person but the birth to a caste that would determine his/her profession and social status. Thus before the advent of the Basel Evangelical Mission in Malabar, the high castes held power over the land and had ruling powers. While the low castes were looked down upon and treated as slaves in the society. Therefore the economic context was that high castes were economically sound and the low castes were under privileged. Kinship was portrayed among upper castes through 'Marumakkathayam' – succession by nephews' – through the joint family system.

In the context of the indigenous educational system, several indigenous vernacular schools which were in existence in India before any western attempt begun on education is traced out effectively. These schools were for elementary knowledge of reading and were entirely devoted either to religious studies either of Hinduism or Islam.

Basel Mission done pioneer services rendered by various missionary societies both to the indigenous church as well as to our nation in various fields of life, thought and activity. The majority of missionary societies were independent of both states and state-related churches, and were voluntary movements supported by the like-minded

people who were committed to the cause of communicating the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The Basel Missionary Society which came into existence in 1815 at Basel in Switzerland was such an independent and voluntary movement, which was neither a part of any government nor of a state church. It was primarily a product of the Pietistic revival in southern Germany and the German-speaking Switzerland in particular. Its sole aim was to make known the offer of God's love to one and all, and to invite people to accept that offer. Among other mission fields, it also started sending its missionaries to India since 1834, and continued to be active in India till recently. It mainly worked in Malabar Coast, Coastal Karnataka, Northern Karnataka and Nilgiris. Its plans to extend its work to other parts of India as well as its ongoing work were hampered and jeopardized by the two World Wars. Despite this problem, the work continued and, on the whole was well established.

The churches that were founded by the Basel Mission in the above-mentioned regions in India joined subsequently other traditions to form a united church – the church of South India. These churches are, thus, independent and indigenous churches today, constituting a part of the Church in India. Being the church in India, its *raison d'être* is to live for India as the servant of Christ. In view of this, the unity of the churches is of utmost importance for working together for the total well being of our fellow countrymen. In view of this, the church in India must also

constantly seek to develop new patterns of ministry as well as administrative and organizational forms which will facilitate its mission.

To those of us who have come from the Basel Mission tradition, the life and work of the missionaries of the Basel mission in general, and the pioneer missionaries in particular, are a constant source of inspiration. And at the same time, it is a great challenge to us to emulate their sense of dedication, enthusiasm, steadfastness, perseverance, loving concern for the people, willingness to suffer hardships, trials and privations for the same of the gospel, simple yet profound trust in God and ready obedience to their high calling. It is with deep gratitude that we remember that our churches came into existence in this region as a result of their and self-sacrificing labour.

The Basel Mission showed special concern for quality. It successfully and effectively resisted the temptation of indiscriminately proselytizing the people merely for the sake of big numbers. The inner conversion and the ensuing high moral standard were the *sine qua non* for admission into the church. This is one of the reasons why the Basel Mission did not as a rule encourage mass movement. It was also equally determined not to allow the caste evil to creep into the church, and took special care right from the beginning to effect integration of converts both from the lower and higher castes into one body of Christ. The Basel Mission was even prepared to lose a large number of prospective converts rather than compromising on the caste issue. Its concern for spirituality

becomes evident in its emphasis on the Bible centred piety, congregational singing and family prayer. It took special interest in Christian nurture, and sought to impart a balanced Christian teaching both to the adults and the children. To facilitate this, it produced an impressive mass of literature in the vernaculars. In the converts dignity of labour and truthfulness were inculcated, and they were taught simplicity of life-style, Christian witness through one's life was specially stressed. From the very beginning, top priority was given to theological education with the intention of developing an indigenous ministry, which was primarily evangelistic in orientation. Being itself an inter-denominational organization, the Basel Mission maintained a good ecumenical relationship with other Protestant Church traditions and missionary societies.

While laying special emphasis on the religious and spiritual things, the Basel Mission also took the secular aspects of life seriously. It thus worked intensively in the fields of education, literature, medicine, industry and agriculture and in a number of these fields the Basel Mission was the pioneer. It thus started a number of schools in the nooks and corners of its mission field, and began to produce helpful text-books and other school materials. It is the educational policy of the Basel Mission that is responsible for the high literacy rate among its converts. Its contribution to the Kannada, Malayalam and Tulu literature is laudable and in fact without peer. So also even before the Gandhian revolution, it had opened schools for the uplift of Harijans. It opened dispensaries and

hospitals, including clinics for lepers and tuberculosis patients, and gave special attention to the health problems of the women and children. It also tried to introduce the use of homeopathic medicine which was more easily accessible to the villagers, encouraging the villagers, encouraging the village pastors and teachers to practice it. So also it tried to popularize some of the useful indigenous herbal medicines. The concern of the Basel Mission for the poor and the needy becomes evident in establishing a number of orphanages, and widows' homes on the one hand, and in starting industries in order to provide them with jobs on the other. So also the importance that has been given to the vernaculars is highly commendable, which helped the church to be truly indigenous.

The establishment of various industries, which no doubt was both necessary and helpful, gave a town-orientation to the life of the converts, who began to flock into the nearby towns, leaving their villages. As a result the town churches swelled in number, whereas the village churches dwindled in strength. This had serious negative effect on the evangelization of the villages. Finally, we also need to point out that being under the British Raj in India, the Basel Mission did not positively encourage the native Christians to take part in the freedom movement, nor has it actively participated in it. It suspected the motives of nationalism, and feared that it would mean closing the doors for evangelism, and even trouble for native Christians. It is, thus, against this background that we, the Christians from the Basel Mission

background, should now seek, as a part of the wider Indian Church, to make our positive contribution to both the common ecclesiastical and national life.

The study concentrates on the educational and industrial policy of the nineteenth century protestant missions in general and the educational policy of the B.E.M. nature of their work. The main concentration of this study is given on the position of Gundert, Samuel Hebach, Hermann Moegling, Rev.A.H. Kaundinya, Charles George, A. Plebst, Dr. Eva Lombard, Fr. Muller and their intention behind their socio economic development.

An attempt has been made to trace the Basel Mission's involvement in education, industrial development, medical field in S. Canara and Malabar and the consequent impact in the socio-economic realms.

## Chapter II

### MALABAR SOCIETY IN THE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

The word Malabar is of a semi foreign origin 'Mala' the Dravidian word means a hill or a mountain and 'bar', probably a Persian word (barr) means country.

The Arab navigators from the sixth to the eleventh century used the word 'Mala' for coast and called it Malibar, Manibar and Munibar.<sup>1</sup> And those who had come to the place for pepper and spices later on must have given the full name Malabar.<sup>2</sup>

Malabar may be taken to mean the hill or mountainous country, a name which much suited its physical characteristics. Malabar was bounded in the north by South Canara districts, in the South by the Cochin State, in the west by the Arabian sea and in the East by the Western ghats. Covering an area of 5795 square miles, it was divided into nine taluks Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Kozhikode, Waynad, Ernad, Valluvanad, Ponnani and Palakkd.

Malabar had a population of 3533944 in 1931<sup>3</sup>, out of this Hindus numbered 2303754 (65.18%) the Muslims 1163453 (32.92%) and

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1. William Logan, *Malabar* (Reprint) Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1984, p.1.

2. W.W. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. VI, Rondon: Truebrier & Co., 1881, p. 240.

Christians 65894 (1.8%). The density of population was between 600 and 650 which was one of the highest in the presidency.<sup>4</sup>

## Hills

The chief glory of Malabar is the long array of these ghats, which maintain an average elevation of 5000 feet, but occasionally soar up into peaks upwards of 8000 feet high. From the extreme north of district they run parallel with the coast, at a distance of some 20 miles, as far as Vavulmala or Camel's Hump abreast of Calicut. At Vavulmala they turn sharply eastward, and after bending northwards round the Nilambur valley, recede in land as far as the Vadamalas north of the Palghat Gap. South of the gap they rise again in the Tenmalas or Southern hills. Some four or five thousand feet high, and gradually swell once more into the giant Anamalas. Mukurti (8,380 feet). Nilgris Peak (8,118 feet) Gulikal hill (8,096 feet) and Anginda Peak (7,828 feet) the highest peaks of the Malabar sections of the western ghats, are all on the Nilgiri boundary overlooking the Nilambur valley.

## Passes and the Palakkad Gap

Many passes pierce the wall of the Western Ghats. The Perumbadi Ghats gives access to Coorg, the Periya and Tamarasseri Ghats to the Malabar. Wayanad and Mysore and the Karkkur Ghat to the Nilgiri

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3. *Census of India*. Vol. XIV, Madras, Part II, p. 4.

4. *Ibid.*, Part 1, p. 21.

district. The Palakkad gap is nearly 20 miles wide and about 1100 feet on its broad sill. The Palakkad gap is apparently of tectonic origin. The climate conditions both of Kerala and Tamilnad are effected by this gap. The plains of Coimbatore get the benefit of the South West Monsoon rains and Central Kerala gets the benefit of the North East Monsoon rains mainly because of this mountain pass.<sup>5</sup>

The Mountain Pass was instrumental in promoting a number of harbour towns on the western coast between places like Calicut and Cochin.<sup>6</sup> These harbours could be sustained by a constant supply of agricultural and industrial products from the interior through the gap.

### **The River System**

The ramifications of a network of backwaters near the sea complicate the river system of Malabar, in itself as simple as it is extensive. Apart from the three great tributaries of the Cauvery, which drain the Attapadi valley and nearly the whole of the Wayanad Taluk, all the rivers of the district flow down from the watersheds in the Western Ghats to the Arabian sea, with the single exception of the Ponnani River, the Valapattanam River in Chirakkal Taluk, though not the longest river in Malabar, probably discharged into the sea, the greatest volume of water. The Beypore River or Chaliyar, ninety six miles long famed of old

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5. K. Gopalankutty, *The Palakkad Gap*, Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, University of Calicut, 1974.

6. William Logan, *op. cit* , p. 6.

for its auriferous sands, is the only river of Malabar which draws a great part of its waters from above the crest of the Ghat ranges. The Kadalundi river which is connected with the Beypore river by a creek, flows down through the Ernad and Valluvanad Taluks from the wilds of the Silent Valley, and empties itself into the sea at Kadalundi after a course of some 75 miles.<sup>7</sup> The Ponnani river, the longest of all the rivers that penetrate to the Arabian Sea through the Malabar is of less commercial importance than in either the Valapattanam or the Beypore river.

### **Islands**

The Laccadives, 'the hundred thousand islands' attached to Malabar, lie at a distance varying between 139 and 218 miles off the coast, and consist of a group of four inhabited and ten uninhabited islands. They lie generally north and south in a crescent shape, with usually a shallow lagoon enclosed by a reef on the western and the north western sides.<sup>8</sup>

### **Flora & Fauna**

The Flora of a district, which ascends through every variation of soil and climate from the purely topical zone on the coast to the cold mountaintops of the higher ranges of the western ghats, with a rainfall nowhere less than 50 inches and often more than three hundred, demands

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7. CA. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, Madras: Government Press, 1951, p. 5.

8. *Ibid.*, p.7.

systematic and expert investigation. The famous Hortus Malabaricus, compiled at Cochin more than two hundred years ago by the Dutch Commander Baron Van Rhead and his collaborator the Carmelite Monk Mathews, and published in twelve volumes described under their trivial names of most of the trees and plants of the West coast. Along the coast the graceful coconut palm is of course the characteristic tree, but jack, mango, cashew nut, talipot palm, areca, the casuarinas and others too numerous to mention are common. The coconut itself is supposed to have come from Ceylon, and the seeds of the custard apple, guava, pineapple, papaya, and cashew nut, which is still known to natives as the foreign mango, were introduced into Cochin from Brazil by the Portuguese admiral Pedro Alvariz Cabral in 1500 AD. Flowering trees are conspicuous feature of the Malabar Flora.<sup>9</sup>

### **Social Conditions**

The caste system which prevailed among Hindus in Malabar was characterized by a social hierarchy peculiar to this coast and by extraordinary rigidity. In social precedence of course the Malabar Brahmin known as the Nambutiri takes the foremost place.<sup>10</sup> The influence he wielded however was derived not only from sacerdotal authority, but from the possession of extensive property in land. Among the lower castes the Thiyas and the Cherumas deserve special notice. Before

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9. *Ibid.*, p.119.

10. T.K, Gopala Panikkar, *Malabar and Its Folk* (1900) Reprint, New Delhi: Asian Educational Service, 1981.

political power passed into the hands of the British, when Malabar was governed by feudal chieftains, the Nayars were the militia of the country, liable to be called out for military service at any time, and held land on military tenure.<sup>11</sup> The Thiyas or Izhuvass as they are called in South Malabar formed numerically the strongest section of the Hindu society. They are believed to be descended from emigrants who came from Sri Lanka and introduced coconut cultivation in Malabar. They hold a practical monopoly of tree climbing and toddy drawing from coconut palms. Many families had long left the traditional occupation and distinguished themselves in industry, trade and other walks of life. As a matter of fact in North Malabar Thiyas formed a very prosperous people. The Cherumas were in all probability the inhabitants of the country when the Nayars conquered it.<sup>12</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century they were agrarian slaves, doing farm labour on the rice lands of their masters. In spite of sections 370 and 371 of the Indian Penal Code which came into force in 1882, even as late as 1887 they were known to have been bought and sold and hired out with their full consent. During the period under study they remind free citizens, but in practice they were bound to the land and suffered from many social and economic disabilities.

A glimpse into the idea of pollution entertained by the different castes in Malabar show how harsh and inhuman the caste system has grown on this coast. An orthodox Hindu considered himself to be

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11. Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*. Madras, 1909, p.24.

12. William Logan, *op.cit.*, p.12.

polluted by the touch of a person belonging to an inferior caste. At a certain distance even touch was necessary to convey pollution. A Nayadi coming within 300 ft of a high caste person was imagined to convey atmospheric pollution. The social organization of the different castes in Malabar does not reveal to day the cohesion and authority which were connected with it in olden times. For with the decay of feudalism in the district and the spread of western ideas the social organization received a set-back from whose effect it has not recovered.<sup>13</sup>

In feudal times the chieftains enjoyed both political and social power. The headmen in the different castes, whether elected by the members or appointed by the chieftain, were subject to his authority.<sup>14</sup> When political power passed into the hands of the British Government, social responsibilities were left behind to the chieftains without the power they once possessed to make their decisions effective. Therefore the headmen in many castes ceased to recognize any controlling force except the weight of public opinion, and the headman's authority in turn ceased to be recognized by the members of the caste. Although the headman's services may often be necessary in social and religious functions his supervision over the daily life of the community had thus been reduced to a minimum.

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13. T.K. Gopala Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

14. Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, p.28.

Perhaps the most peculiar feature of social life in Malabar is the system of inheritance and family organisation known as the Marumakkathayam system. Inheritance is traced not through the male, but the female line. The Madras Marumakkathayam Act of 1933 came into force, according to Marumakkathayam usage marriage involved no obligation on the part of the husband towards his wife and children. Neither party to such a marriage, or Sambandham as it was called, became a member of the other family. The children had to be looked after by the mother's family, and had no claim to a share of the father's property or to maintenance. The family property belonged to all members descended from a common ancestress. It could not be divided, but all members were entitled to maintenance there from. The Marumakkathayam Act of 1933 made many drastic changes in this system. It legalized sambandham, made six months notice on either side necessary for divorce, gave wife and children right to claim maintenance as well as a share of the father's property; and above all enacted that virtually every member of a tarwad, excepting a female having children, a children's children in the female line can claim individual partition. The Madras Marumakkathayam Act of 1933 which sanctions the partition of family estates has, of course altered the situation.

Malabar is not without its agrarian problems.<sup>15</sup> Almost all land in the district, including waste land and forest, forms the private property

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15. CA. Innes, *op. cit.*, p.223.

with allodial rights, of a few land lords called Janmies.<sup>16</sup> The Janmi has to pay land revenue assessed at about one third of the net produce of the soil. The larger part of the land however is not cultivated by the janmi. On the other hand he leases out most of it on a variety of tenures, the most important of which are the Kanam tenure and the Verumpattam tenure. The kanam tenure partakes of the nature both of a lease and a mortgage. The tenant deposits an amount with the janmi on which the latter allows a certain interest, and takes a lease, usually for 12 years, of a piece of land. The rent payable by the tenant is fixed by mutual agreement, and from this the interest payable on the kanam amount is deducted.

### **Rent: Legal and Illegal**

Even more exacting than land revenue and taxes was the appropriation of surplus through rent, both legal and illegal, by land lords. In the course of the nineteenth century what was officially laid down as the land lord's share became an insignificant part of which was actually appropriated. The revenue policy and the judicial system of the company aided landlords in devising new methods and instruments to maximize their share of the peasants produce.<sup>17</sup>

The land revenue policy adopted by the company upset traditional land relations, bringing about fundamental changes in the nature of land

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16. P. Kodanda Rao, *Malabar Tenancy Problem*, p. 2.

17. K.N.Panikkar, *Against Lord and State*, New Delhi, p.18.

rights. Traditionally, two major interests in land were embodied in janmam and kanam tenurial rights. The origin of these rights was linked to the control over land established by the Nambudiri Brahmins between the ninth and twelfth centuries, when they took advantage of their position in the sabhas which administered temple property. The evolution of janmam-kanam-maryada, the traditional norms governing the rights and obligations of landlords and tenants, dates back to the adoption of certain rules and regulations by the sabhas. Although these regulations were primarily intended to ensure the collective interests of the members of the sabha and to promote corporate feelings among them, certain norms governing land lord tenant relations incidentally grew out of them. The norms which finally evolved were based on the principle of equal sharing of the net produce between the janmi, the kanakkaran and the cultivator. This was the arrangement that prevailed in the eighteenth century as is evident from the information provided by the janmis themselves to farmer, one of the Joint Commissioner's of Bengal and Bombay in 1792. 'One third of the produce was allowed to the farmer for his maintenance, profit etc, one third for the expenses of Thiyars, Cherumars or their cultivators attached to the soil and one third went as rent to the land lord.'<sup>18</sup>

The principle which informed this customary sharing was that of the independent rights of these three categories in the produce of the soil.

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18. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

It was precisely because of the existence of these independent rights, that janmam or kanam was bought and sold in Malabar without disturbing the other rights. William Logan who had a very intimate knowledge of the revenue affairs of Malabar seems to be right in his conclusion that ‘a Kanakkaran was as much the proprietor of the soil as the janmi himself was in former days. They were, in short, proprietors bound together in interest by admirable laws of custom.’<sup>19</sup>

The Kanakkaran’s independent rights in the soil implied permanency of kanam tenure. It was further reinforced by the control exercised by the tara, the village organisation and the comparative lack of demand for land. Yet a system of renewal of the kanam agreement did exist. It was, however, incidental to the advance, kanappanam, taken by the janmi from the kanakkaran, either as advance of rent, or as security for payment of rent.

The British official perception of the traditional system and the rights and obligations of the janmi and kanakkaran, based on such brahmanical counts as Keralopati, Kerala Mahatmyam or information provided by Brahmin landlords, was entirely different. While Major Walker, who was considered an authority on Malabar tenures and on those opinion British officials heavily depended, wrote in 1801 that ‘the jenmakaran possesses the entire right to the soil and no earthly authority can with justice deprive him of it. Almost the whole of land in Malabar,

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19. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

cultivated and uncultivated, is private property and held by jenmam right which conveys full absolute property in the soil.<sup>20</sup> The janmis were thus recognized as independent owners of land, who 'possessed a property in the soil more absolute than even that of the land lord in Europe. Thus the British administration did not preserve any of the customary rights of tenants and cultivators and left them entirely at the mercy of landlords.

British policy had thus unsettled the traditional relations between various interest in land to the advantage of the janmi. The idea that the janmi is absolute proprietor of the soil, and as such entitled to take as big a share of the produce as he can command is founded on error and has been brought about by engrafting on the customary Malayali Law usages which spring from European ideas of property having a totally distinct origin and history.

The major motive behind the formulation of this policy was the necessity of creating a social base for colonial rule. For the attainment of this objective, the British officials turned to the janmis who, they believed had considerable local influence and prestige. This policy was initiated immediately after the conquest of Malabar by restoring their lands to the janmies who had fled to Travancore during the rule of the Mysore Sultans.

The concentration of land, both janmam and kanam, in the hands of a few forms an important characteristic of the conditions of production in

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20. Major Walker, *Report on the land Tenures of Malabar*, p.307.

Malabar during the colonial period. According to the 1901 census, the number of landlords in the district was 57,040.<sup>21</sup> Most of them were dwarf holders who did not possess more than one acre of land. The cultivating landlords; numbering 27,638 in 1901, belonged mainly to this category. On the other hand the substantial landlords almost exclusively drawn from among the upper caste Hindus, did not cultivate the land themselves but lived on rent collected from their tenants to whom land was leased under a variety of tenurial arrangements.

The important tenurial categories were kanam, kuzhikanam, otti and verumpattam. The kanam tenure, as it came to be recognized during the nineteenth century was a combination of a mortgage and a lease. The tenant paid a lumpsum (kanappanam) to the janmi as well as an annual rent from which the interest due to him on the account of the kanam was deducted.

Kuzhikanam and otti were variations of kanam tenure, with minor differences in the rights and obligations of the land lord and tenant. The kuzhikanam was a tenure mainly granted for the improvement of land which was either unproductive or whose yield was very small. In the case of Otti the advance was sufficient to yield an interest equal to rent and the tenant had the right of presumption if the janmi decided to sell the land. Verumpattam, the most commonly held tenure, was an annual lease which gave very few rights to the tenant. Although customarily entitled

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21. *The Census of India*, Madras Presidency, 1901, part III, p. 231.

to one third of the net produce, in practice the tenant did not receive anything more than the cost of cultivation, thereby making him no better than a labour on subsistence wages.<sup>22</sup>

An important consequence of the non-cultivating janmies owning a lion's share of land was sub-infeudation and, as its sequel, the rise of the kanakkar to social and economic prominence. A substantial section of the kanakkar, mostly upper caste Nairs, do not undertake cultivation, but sub-leased the land on verumpattam or for crop-sharing. The extent of land under such leases was quite extensive. Logan's data also indicated that almost one-third of the west land was cultivated on sub-lease from the kanakkar. These intermediaries were thus simultaneously a rent receiving, rent paying class who appropriated a lion's share of the rent from the cultivators. Two factors contributed to the rise of this class. First, the nature of the marriage alliance between Nair women and Nambudiris janmis, and secondly the educational and employment opportunities offered by the colonial administration.<sup>23</sup>

The Nairs were not traditionally a cultivating caste; their sources of income were mainly civil or military service and land rent. The break up of the feudal political order in the wake of the British conquest made most of them solely dependent upon land rent. The acquisition of land therefore, became an inevitable necessity, a quest in which marriage

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22. K.N. Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p.28.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

alliances with Nambudiris came in very handy. The junior members of Nambudiri families were, by custom, not permitted to marry within their own caste – a device adopted in all probability to prevent the fragmentation of family property. In fact, partaking of the property of Brahmins by the lower castes was believed to be a sin. A compensation was found in the grant of Kanam tenures which the Nambudiris could resort to without jeopardizing their family interests and the Nairs could receive without compromising their religious beliefs. Several Nair families were able to improve their economic status owing to their connection with the Nambudiris by extracting enhanced rent from the kanam land thus acquired. A more important factor was the manner in which the members of the upper castes, particularly the Nairs, were able to make use of the employment opportunities afforded by the British administration.<sup>24</sup>

### **Commercialisation and the formation of households**

An examination of the changing economic relations in medieval Malabar provides an important context for the study of the emergence of the matrilineal tharavadu. The brisk commercial activity of the Malabar coast provided an opportunity for a variety of property rights to coexist.

The power of the emergent tharavadu to withstand the inroads of political superiors was largely a result of the immunity provided by such economic autonomy. By the eighteenth century along side the ordinary

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24. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

sale and purchase of arable lands, there seems to have been an established trend for the sale of lands along with the authority that went with them. The freehold right over the property, acquired through the process of a legal sale. The other was, through the same process, the right to own and exercise political authority over the territories acquired. The local rulers acquired both lands and authority through sales, there also existed landowners that could possess freehold rights over pieces of arable property within the former's territory without needing to pay any tax. This is evident from the land deeds which registered the sale of territories.<sup>25</sup>

Similar sales occurred throughout the eighteenth century, and even into the early nineteenth century, and even into the early nineteenth century. Titles to property, as well as the authority vested in it, changed hands through monetary transactions; the rights being transferred provided purchasers with a complex of resources, all of which enhanced their ritual, political and economic status. Deeds to freehold properties in the early eighteenth century reveal that sales sometimes transferred rights to over markets, as well as the rivers and ferries used for transporting the produce.<sup>26</sup>

At other times, rights to the tharavadu, its territory and temple complex along with ritual and political suzerainty over these, were transferred. The new owners, having paid the current market value,

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25. William Logan, *op. cit.*, pp.32-33.

26. *Ibid.*, p.34.

became at one stroke both lords and landowners. There was an increase in the commercialization of rights, officers and statutes in the wake of the military crisis and administrative disruptions in the eighteenth century. Lands associated not only with the tharavadus but temples, too appear to have been bought and sold, extending both economic and ritual authority to the new owners. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries both properties and right relating to the temple could be alienated and sold. The existence of a such a wide array of private and monetised rights in the context of a thriving mercantile economy had several implications. Till the seventh century coastal trade probably provided the greatest impetus for both the production of cash crops as well as the investment in, and sales of, houses and garden lands.<sup>27</sup>

However, by the mid-eighteenth century the prevalence of organized competition in the former of first the Dutch, and later the English, trading companies created a sense of insecurity amongst the merchants. By 1760, Calicut, the greatest entrepot of the Malabar coast was declining in strength. The tendency for the emergent tharavadus to establish trading and political links with the companies presented the flip side of the picture of commercial decline for local merchants and traders along the coast.<sup>28</sup>

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27. G. Arunima, *There Comes Papa, Colonialism and the Transformation of Matriliney in Kerala—Malabar C 1850-1940*, p. 31.

28. Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade 1740-1800*. Cambridge University Press, 1967, p. 32.

## Agrarian Crisis of 1830-1850

The 1840's in Malabar was a period of acute agrarian strife and political unrest especially in the two southern taluks of Ernad and Walluvanad. The period between 1825 and 1850 in Malabar had been, unlike in the rest of the presidency, a period of agricultural boom, allowing the households to recoup their losses to some extent. An important consequence of this was the redemption of lands leased to tenants by the households leading to evictions of wealthy tenants and ordinary cultivators alike. Besides, another factor in creating economic distress amongst some part of the population in this period was that the collection of revenue by the colonial state continued unabated.<sup>29</sup>

A significant impetus for agrarian violence in Malabar lay in the changing economic context of the 1830's. The depression in the Madras Presidency between 1825 and 1854 had affected adversely not only agricultural prices but also trade in cotton piece goods and the circulation of specie. There was an increasing dependence on imported grain for feeding the rapidly multiplying population facing famine conditions. Srinivasa Raghavaiyengar was the earliest to attempt an analysis of the economic crisis of 1830's and to coin the term "agricultural depression" for this period.<sup>30</sup>

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29. *Ibid.*, p.57.

30. S. Srinivasa Raghavaiyengar, *Memorandum on the progress of the Madras Presidency*. Madras Government Press, 1892, pp.15-16.

His account highlighted the impact of slow trade, lack of expansion of the circulating medium and substitution of each for kind in the payment of revenue. Other factors that characterised the ‘depression’ like the relationship between high revenue demand, production for the market and a very specific kind of commercialization of agriculture, namely cotton and indigo, does not seem to have affected Malabar or exacerbated its “economic malise” Pepper, and latterly coconut, continued to dominate exports from Malabar, the returns from which had increased, respectively, by 52 per cent and 80 per cent between 1828 and 1836.<sup>31</sup>

The encouragement of coffee and teak plantations in Waynad in the 1840’s could have led to a situation of enforced commercialization and agrarian servitude, as seen in the cotton and indigo growing regions. The Waynad plantations, in the early years of their establishment, were treated circumspectly by the colonial state in order to ensure productivity and thus left untaxed. Besides, these also presented a potential source of employment for newly emancipated slaves in the aftermath of the Government’s Abolition Act of 1843. Therefore neither conversion of agricultural land nor the deployment of a work force engaged in subsistence agriculture to cash cropping took place in Malabar in this period. One of the most significant results of this economic boom was the spiraling eviction of the tenantry from 1830 onwards. The right of wealthy, landholding house holds were strengthened in this period.

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31. Sullivan, *Report on the Provinces of Malabar and Canara Districts*, Calicut Collectorate Press, 1916, p. 8.

Conrad wood suggests that the increase in agricultural process in the 1830s allowed the Hindu janmis in the South for the first time in nearly three decades, a chance to repay their kanam debts and reclaim their land.<sup>32</sup>

### **Land and society in Malabar**

Before the British took over in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Malabar was not part of a centralized polity, or of an all embracing political superstructure, as it turned out to be in subsequent years. Instead it comprised of numerous petty principalities as observed by Ibn Batuta in the fourteenth century and by Barbosa about two centuries after him. From the available literature on the history of Kerala land tenures it is possible to discern three distinct interpretations of the caste-based, Brahmin-centred, and upper caste dominated land system in pre-British Malabar. In Kerala as a whole, private property began to evolve even before the Sangam age. Until about the sixth century land was owned by those social groups which are now at the bottom of Hindu society. Its transfer to the Brahmins was one of the consequences of the Aryanisation of the region starting from the seventh century A.D. It was during the eleventh century A.D. that the Brahmin-centred land system evolved when the forces unleashed by the Chola-Chera war and the consequent break up of central authority helped the Brahmins Wangle

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32. Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and Its Genesis*, Jan. 1987. New Delhi: PPH, p. 15.

vast areas of land from the other social groups and became wealthy and powerful Janmis. The fall of the united policy in Kerala under the Kulasekhara empire in the later period of the war and the rise on its ruins of innumerable petty principalities helped the Brahmins extend their sway further, when they made the caste system and the janmi-centred land system more complex land system involved a long series of land transfers.<sup>33</sup>

### **British Land Policy in Malabar**

As soon as the British annexed Malabar, they started leasing lands to the Rajas of numerous principalities, whom they had encouraged against the Mysore Sultan, for lump sums equal to the Mysorean assessment.<sup>34</sup> Naturally the collection of land revenue was done by the deputies of the Rajas. This policy, which left the country at the mercy of the Rajas who, in turn, were supported by the military might of the British, had pernicious effects. Mr. Brown, the British Commercial Resident in Malabar, at that time observed as follows:

To these men, however, the most unfit that could have been selected, was the whole authority of Government over the natives entrusted. Two evils of great magnitude were the consequence of this measure; the extortions and corruptions of the preceding administration

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33. M.G.S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, Calicut, 1994, p.201.

34. This was similar in character to Zamindari settlements, with which the British had already become familiar, except the Quinquennial term provided for in the Malabar leases.

were continued, while the ancient feudal institutions of military services were revived, and all the Nairs thereby attached to the different chieftains, and these again to the Rajas. Nothing could exceed the despotic rapaciousness of these men to oppose which there was no barriers, for it is well known that none of the inhabitants dare complain against a raja, whatever injuries they may have sustained, assassination being a certain follower of complaint. It is not surprising that under such conditions agriculture did not flourish, and that the fields now cultivated (which in some districts bear but a small proportion to those that are waste) should yield but very indifferent crops.<sup>35</sup>

In view of these abuses, a group of Joint Commissioners was appointed, at the end of 1793, to supervise collections by the Rajas as well as to study the region in order to make more convenient arrangements for revenue collection and general administration. In 1800 a decision was taken at a conference of *janmies*—who had meanwhile come back from where they had fled—that 50 per cent of the produce should be left to the cultivator, 20 per cent given to the Government, and 30 per cent to the *janmi* as rent, and that the assessment should be made according to a new survey conducted in that year.<sup>36</sup> As the collection by

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35. Murdoch Brown, quoted in S. Srinivasa Raghvaiyya, *The Memorandum on the progress of the Madras Presidency during the last 40 years of British Administration, 1893*, Appendix, Section 2.

36. C.D. MacLean, *Standing information regarding the official administration of the madras Presidency, 1879*, Administration of Tributary States and Special Agencies.

the Rajas was not successful from the point of view of the company (because arrears got accumulated) the leasing was also abolished; the collection was done at first jointly by the officers of the Rajas and the collectors of the company, but soon the entire responsibility was taken over by the company. The Rajas were granted 20 per cent of the land revenue as *malikana* allowance.<sup>37</sup> In the meanwhile the British were also making attempts to enunciate a new land tenure policy designed to fit in with the characteristics of the region.

It would appear that the British were primarily motivated by two considerations in their land policy in Malabar. Firstly, their aim was to take a large share of the agricultural produce as land revenue. Secondly, while achieving this end, they were also interested in creating and recognizing a few superior right holders on land who would then act as British agents in the region.

Farmer, one of the Joint Commissioners, reported in 1793 that two types of right holders in land were found in the region. "Ist jelm-kaers (janmies) or freeholders who hold their lands either by purchase or by hereditary descent. 2<sup>nd</sup> Kanoom-kaars (kanomdars) or mortgages, to whom an actual delivery of the land appeared to be made, although the money taken up on it was not at all proportioned to the value of the land..."<sup>38</sup>

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37. C.U. Aitchison (compiled). *A Collection of Treaties, engagements and Sanads*, 1930, Section 3, Malabar Coast.

38. Farmer, "Report to the Governor of Bombay Presidency in 1793", Quoted in Innes, *Malabar District Gazetteers*, Vol. 1, p.289.

Thackeray and Mr. Warden, who was collector of Malabar for twelve years from 1804 to 1816 also subscribed to the above idea, that the *jamies* possessed entire rights on the soil.<sup>39</sup> According to Major Walker, “no earthly authority can with justice deprive him of it” though “this right is confined to the property and he possesses neither judicial nor political authority.”<sup>40</sup>

Highest in the land system was what has come to be known as *janmam*, the sanskritised form of the Dravidian phrase *nirattiperu*, that is birthright acquired by coming in contact with nir or water or water contact-birth right. The right conveyed by it was not a free hold or an allodium but an office or dignity with a fixed share of the produce of the soil. The Nambutiris who entered Malabar in large numbers and as an organized body in the seventh and eighth centuries. A.D. and who were received with open arms by the Perumals, managed to obtain commanding influence in the region precisely at the time when the perumals threatened by the Western Chalukyas, sought succour from every Quarter. This and the fact that as a very ancient right in the soil *janmam* was in the sole gift of the Perumal explain how the Nambutiris became large *janmies* even at an early stage of the evolution of the land system in Malabar.<sup>41</sup>

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39. Cf. William Thackeray, *A Report on Revenue Affairs of Malabar and Canara, 1807*, Thomas Warden, *Report on the Revenue System of Malabar, 1813*.

40. Major Walker, *Report on the Land Tenures of Malabar, 1801*.

41. M.G.S. Narayanan, *op. cit.*, p.206.

By Warden's time, the policy of considering the janmies as the sole owners of the whole landed properties of Malabar was accepted by the British administrators unconditionally and steps were taken to implement it. In his Reports, one on land assessment in Malabar and another on the land tenures of Malabar, sent to the President and Members of the Board of Revenue, Warden built up the basis of the British land policy in Malabar. His suggestion with regard to a new regulation providing for the proprietary right of land was as follows:

..... the proprietary right to vest in the persons acknowledged as the present proprietors under the style and title of janmakars (janmies)...the different tenures under which the landed property is dispersed among the present occupants to be respected heretofore, and unlimited and free right to be exercised as heretofore – by proprietors and tenants to transfer landed property from one to another on such conditions of tenures as they may mutually agree upon.<sup>42</sup>

Warden's interpretation of different tenures – kanom as a mortgage and verumpattom as mere tenancy-at-will – did not take into consideration the customary practices in vogue for centuries, and was

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42. T. Warden, *Report on the Land Assessment in Malabar* sent to the President and Members of Board of Revenue, Fort St. George, 1815, Para 47.

clearly faulty. Moreover, he made out a case for the intervention of the courts and the executive machinery on the side of *janmies* who, according to him, were suffering at the hands of the tenants. “The janmakar (janmies) possesses no power to distrain nor does the kanumkar (kanomdar) both depend on the goodwill of the pattomkars (pattomdars) for their rents” and “have only the courts of Adulet to look to, for enforcing the recovery of their rents from unruly tenants.”<sup>43</sup> With regard to revenue assessment, he suggested that it should “be collected from proprietors or tenants as may be judged most secure, but proprietors to possess the right of paying it on their own lands if there be no substantial objection against their stability.”<sup>44</sup>

In it was enunciated a new scheme of distribution of the agricultural produce among the different interests in land; it was described by Warden as an ‘unalterable assessment’. The following were the terms on which the division was made:

First – on wet or rice grounds, after deducting from the gross produce, the seed and exactly the same quantity for expense of cultivation and then allotting one-third of what remains as *kolulabham* (or plough profit) to the *kudiyar*, the residue or *pattam* is to be divided in the proportion of six-tenths to the Sirkar and four-tenths to the janmakar; secondly-on parambu or orchard lands one-third of coconut, supary

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43. *Ibid.*, Para 21.

44. *Ibid.*, Para 47.

(areca) and jack tree produce being deemed sufficient for the kudiyan, the remainder or pattom is to be equally divided between the sirkar and janmakar; and thirdly-on dry grain lands (which are very scantily cultivated in Malabar) the Sirkar's share is to be half of the janmakar's varam (rent) on what is actually cultivated during the year.<sup>45</sup>

The British policy in India was to consider the State as the super landlord; hence they did not accept the allodial right claimed by jannies which ruled out (through the Parasurama story) the recognition of any superior over them. Nevertheless, with regard to this partial recognition of the claims of the jannies, it is true that they had gone a step further than what they had done in the case of the Zamindars of Bengal in accepting even the whole of the wastelands of the region as the private property of the jannies and thus recognizing every inch of land in Malabar as janmam land.

The declaration of the entire lands of Malabar, including waste lands, as janmom property was considered unwise by the later British writers themselves.<sup>46</sup> According to Baden Powell, when the Rajas lost their kingdom and power their claim to be jannies arose, and this claim was later recognized by the British who misunderstood the earlier existing conditions.<sup>47</sup> If the claim that the janmom right was a

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45. Declaration of 1805, quoted in Innes, *Malabar District Gazetteers*, p.316.

46. CA. Innes, *op.cit.*, pp.291, 301.

47. Baden Powell, *Indian Village Community*, London, 1896, p.170.

prerogative of the sovereignty of the Rajas was valid, these rights should have passed on to the company when it assumed that sovereignty. The company of course, accepted this right, but only as the superior landlord whose right was over and above the rights of the old rulers as jannies. Thus some sort of a 'diarchical' landlordship was introduced by the British in Malabar.

### **The structure of agrarian society in Malabar**

The population of Malabar in 1861 is estimated to have been about 1.71 million,<sup>48</sup> of which possibly about two thirds were directly dependent on land.<sup>49</sup> Out of the 1.15 million, comprising the agricultural population, the jannies (i.e. the land owners) numbered only 24,714; 829 of them were classified as principal jannies, 23,635 as minor jannies, and 250 were religious institutions.<sup>50</sup> All the jannies together accounted for less than 2 per cent of the total agricultural population. To these jannies, constituting an insignificant minority of the agricultural population, belonged practically every right and interest connected with land in Malabar. The jannies were the earlier Rajas. Namboothiri Brahmins (whose estates were generally in south Malabar), important Nayar and Nambiar families (owning extensive areas generally in North

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48. W.W. Hunter, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, London, 1881, Malabar, p. 247. The counting of population after 1837 was in 1861.

49. The estimate of two thirds is an approximate estimate, deduced from the 1891 census figures which give 62 per cent as the agricultural population of the district.

50. William Logan, *Malabar Special Commissioner's Report on Malabar Land Tenures*, Vol.2, Chapter 5, p.59.

Malabar), and in some places even Moplahs (though they were much fewer in number).

The rest of the agricultural population was divided almost equally into two groups, tenants and agricultural labourers, each accounting for about 0.55 million. Among the tenants even at the beginning of the century, there was a large section known as customary tenants (to use a modern juristic term) who, to a large extent, enjoyed fixity of tenure, and paid nothing or only very nominal fees. According to the British interpretation of land rights, the chief group among them, known as *kanomdars*, was considered to hold land on certain rights partaking the character of mortgage and lease, though, as a matter of fact, *kanom* originated as a feudal tenure with rights of perpetual occupancy. The British civil courts, misled by their own interpretation of this tenure as having the characteristics of mortgage and lease, denied permanent occupancy. Rights even to these superior tenure holders, many of whom were the de facto proprietors of the lands they cultivated (or held), before the British legal notions demoted them to the position of mere tenants.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, during this period, in law as well as in practice, tenants of all classes in Malabar were virtually tenants at will with only a few in a

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51. C.Collett, the Sub-collector of Malabar, observed in a dispatch in the new land relations was because of civil court's encouraging the suits for unreasonable eviction by habitually allowing a *Janmi* to evict his substantial tenants (mainly *Kanom* tenants) whenever he may fancy it, in violation of those rules which had been expressly and wisely framed to encourage and secure improving tenants. *Opinion regarding application of regulation V of 1822 Correspondence.*

relatively privileged position.<sup>52</sup> This state of affairs continued till 1856 when British civil courts tried to define more precisely the tenancies of the district and graded them in different categories.

A tenant at will, it was possible for the landlords to extract as much rent as they liked from them in various ways. If the tenants were unable to pay whatever was demanded, the landlords had the power to oust them without paying anything in the case of wet-land cultivators, and only a nominal compensation (for the improvements made by them) in the case of cultivators of garden lands. Assessments of land revenue were also high during this period. From the way in which the assessment was collected the major burden of it fell on the actual cultivators. The rates of different types of land in the beginning of the century as calculated by Logan were: Wet lands – about 86 percent of the pattom.<sup>53</sup> Garden lands – about 63 percent of the pattoms.<sup>54</sup> Dry lands – about 37% of the gross produce.

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52. There was a privileged class of tenants, though small in number, comprising of the chief families of the superior castes connected with the *Janmies*. Among the *Moplahs*, and even among the *Thiyas*, there were a few cases of privileged tenants, whose position could be traced to either their better relationship with the landlords or their ability to pay money wherever the landlord demanded it.

53. Pattom on wet lands was equal to the net produce which was obtained by deducting from the gross produce, a sum twice the seed requirement, to cover cultivation expenditure, and one third of the rest as cultivator's profit.

54. Pattom of garden lands was equal to two thirds of the gross produce. The percentage given here is the arithmetic average of the rates given for three type of garden land.

In many cases, actual assessment exceeded even these rates.<sup>55</sup> Due to the steady rise in commodity prices after 1832 the burden of the land revenue was undoubtedly reduced very considerably.<sup>56</sup> Mr. Sullivan, the collector of Malabar, reported in 1841 to the chief secretary of the Madras Government that though the total annual value of the agricultural produce of the district amounted to Rs.10.3 million, land revenue did not exceed Rs.1.6 million, which was only about one seventh of the value of the gross produce.<sup>57</sup> From this he also drew a picture of general agricultural prosperity in the district.

Under the tenorial conditions of Malabar, however, the rise in prices could not have benefited the cultivators to any significant extent. As the jannies had the power to raise rents, they could demand more as rent from the tenants, or take in kind the rents and the land revenue payable by them.

Agrestic slaves and farm servants numbered at this time, as indicted earlier, 0.55 million. We do not have any data bearing on their incomes and living standards. All we know is that an area of about 0.8

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55. William Logan, *Special Commissioner's Report*, Vol.2, Appendix I, Chapter VII, Para 219.

56. Since the assessment was in money the increase in price will reduce the severity of assessment. Price quotations before 1860's are not available. But the commutation price of paddy adopted in the settlement of early 19th century was Rs.0.35 per maund from which the price of rice can be derived as Rs.0.70 per maund. According to price and wages in India series, the average price of rice in Malabar for the quinquennium 1861-65 was Rs.3.25 per maund, which rose to Rs.4.03 per maund in the quinquennium 1898-1902.

57. Sullivan, *Report on the province of Malabar and Canara, 1841*.

million acres of land was cultivated by a tenant population of 0.55 million, many of whom were not in a position to hire any outside labour at all. Among the labouring population a large section belonged to the depressed castes, like Cherumas and Pulayas who were agrestic slaves attached to families. By 1843, slavery was abolished, but this does not appear to have made a significant difference to the economic condition of the slaves.

The primary units of social organization continued to be, in the case of most of the important communities, joint families organized under the leadership of their respective family karanavars.<sup>58</sup> Among the higher castes – except Namboothiris and Tamil Brahmins – the matrilineal joint families, still claiming inheritance through the mother's side and consisting of numerous elementary families, grew into very unwieldy structure. As the conditions for partitioning the properties belonging to the joint families were very strict, the heads of the respective families usually managed the properties in their own way without particular concern for the interest of the other members and without enlisting their co-operation. It led to alienation of family properties by irresponsible chiefs for raising large sums of money, and this practice went on increasing in course of time. In north Malabar, even among the lower castes – like the Moplabs and the Theyas – the matrilineal joint family system was the prevalent mode of social organisation. The Namboothiri

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58. Karanavar was the eldest male member of a joint family with whom rested the authority and the responsibility of managing a matrilineal joint family.

practice of patrilineal joint family system and the law of primogeniture followed by them, however, maintained intact the special position enjoyed by them in regard to land ownership, and it was further strengthened by the continued existence of their large family temples for which extensive properties were kept apart.

## Chapter III

### THE PROTESTANT CHURCH IN MALABAR

Basel Mission is a child of eighteenth century pietism. Pietism was originally a charismatic revolution against the rigid Lutheran church practices. Pietism gave birth to the German Christian society for promoting 'Christian truth'. Piety by correspondence and circulating religious books in opposition to the reign of infidelity.<sup>1</sup> This association had its centre in the city of Basel<sup>2</sup> and carried on their work mainly through theological trained young secretaries from the Tubingen University, Germany.<sup>3</sup>

In the early years of the nineteenth century when European nations were trembling under the boots of the ever progressing, restless army of Napoleon, the Kingdoms of Britain, Germany and Russia combined to stem the thrust of this all conquering might.<sup>4</sup>

The French General Barbanegre, being besieged by the allies in the neighbouring fortress of Hunningeu, spread terror by bombing<sup>5</sup> and swore that his canons would blow up Basel into bits.<sup>6</sup> Having heard this threat,

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1. *26th Basel Mission Report for 1865*, Mangalore, Basel Mission Press, 1866, p.11.
  2. The City of Basel is situated on the Frontiers of Germany, France and Switzerland.
  3. A Schosser. "A Short Survey of the Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel" in *Harvest Field*, Vol. XXVI (1915), pp.373-74.
  4. K.J.John (ed) *Christian Heritage of Kerala*, Cochin, 1981, p.232.
  5. *Basel Mission Report*, *op. cit.*, p.13.
  6. K.J.John, *op. cit.*, p.234

a circle of friends at Basel, lovers of the church and of mankind who were partly Swiss, partly German<sup>7</sup> and members of the German Christian, Society prayed and made a vow that if the Allied force won they would send missionaries to other countries for the propagation of the gospel.<sup>8</sup> Napoleon was defeated at 'Waterloo' and thus on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 1815, six Christian men under the presidency of Rev. Nickolaus Von Brunn constituted themselves as the Evangelical Missionary society of Basel.<sup>9</sup> They adapted Calvinistic theology in their doctrinal position.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 1816, the missionary college of Basel was opened, under the auspices of Basel Evangelical Mission Committee. Their aim was "to train young men in the task of carrying the gospel of Peace into the different parts of the world."<sup>10</sup> Graduates from the mission colleges were working for British and Dutch missionary societies in different countries.

The B.E.M.S. sent missionaries for church missionary society (CMS) in India in the late 1820's and 30's. In the summer of 1820, the committee was invited by the Scottish Missionary Society to send out two missionaries as evangelist to the Jews of the Southern Provinces of Russia.<sup>11</sup>

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7. *Basel Mission Report, op.cit.*, p.13.

8. *Ibid.*

9. A. Schossar, *op.cit.*, p.373.

10. *Ibid.*, p.376.

11. *Basel Mission Report, op. cit.*, p.14.

In 1821 during the celebration of its anniversary a Resolution was passed that “the society should make an attempt to establish missions of their own, while the original plan of training missionaries for the service of other societies should still be carried on.”<sup>12</sup> Accordingly the Basel Mission started sending missionaries in their own banker. They sent missionaries to the provinces of the Caucasus and to Persia.<sup>13</sup> Then the missionaries were sent to Western Africa and also to the Western coast of India.

### **Basel German Evangelical Missionary Society in India**

As soon as the British Parliament declared India open also for non-British missionaries in 1833, the B.M. sent its first three missionaries namely J.C. Lehner, C.L. Griener and Samuel Hebich to India, to work under the banner ‘The Basel Evangelical Missionary Society’.<sup>14</sup>

The three missionaries reached Calicut, the Capital of the erstwhile Malabar on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1834, then proceeded to Mangalore in the same year on the West coast of South Canara<sup>15</sup> and settled there. Later at Mulki and Udupi in South Canara, mission centers were opened. Four others followed in 1836 when Dharwar in the Southern Mahratta country

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12. *Ibid.*, p.18.

13. *Ibid.*, p.19.

14. *Ibid.*, p.20.

15. George Thomson, *Samuel Hebich of India, The Master Fisher of Men*, Cuttack: The Orissa Mission Press, 1905, p.26.

was occupied<sup>16</sup> by the English. In 1838 five brethren were sent out after whose arrival a new station was erected at Hubly.<sup>17</sup> In later years stations were established at Gooledgood in 1851 and Beltigheri in 1853. Special circumstances compelled to opening of a mission in Coorg in 1853.<sup>18</sup> The location of Stations at Anandpur and at Kette introduced the Basel missionaries soon to the lofty and healthy Blue Mountains (Nilgiris).

### **Basel German Evangelical Mission in Malabar**

In 1838, a German brother named Hermann Gundert formerly employed among the Tamil People as a missionary of the church Missionary Society (CMS) in Tuticorin joined the Basel Mission and established himself at Tellicherry. It was a gift of a hill and a bungalow made by the District Judge of North Malabar to Hermann Gundert that led Basel Mission to open its first station in this district at Nettur near Tellicherry in 1839. In due course it was followed by stations at Cannanore (1841), in Calicut (1857) and in Palakkad (1858).<sup>19</sup> The number of missionaries who were labouring on eight different stations was twenty three.<sup>20</sup> The evangelistic work and educational work went on hand in hand because the educational work was directed towards

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16. Basel Mission Report, *op.cit.*, p.31.

17. *Ibid.*, p.32.

18. Wilma John. "The Basel Mission and Socio Economic Revolution in Malabar" in K.J. John (ed) *The Christian Heritage of Kerala*, Cochin, 1981,p.253.

19. Julius Ritcher, *History of India Missions*. Edinburgh-Anderson, 1908,p.196.

20. *Basel Mission Report*, *op.cit.*, p.32.

educating the masses through primary schools and then spreading the gospel. The Basel Mission Missionaries had been supported by a large number of English officials in Malabar. They were also involved in industrial activities as the need for providing jobs to converts arose.<sup>21</sup>

The Basel Mission consisted mainly of German missionaries and when the First World War broke out they had to leave India because Germany was the enemy country of Britain and Germans were regarded as spies.<sup>22</sup> Then the Swiss Basel Missionaries took up the work. In 1919 the Basel Mission joined South India United Church (S.I.U.C) and later in 1947 it became a part of church of South India (C.S.I). At present the six main stations mentioned above come under the jurisdiction of C.S.I. Diocese of North Kerala and most of the schools established during the period under study function as C.S.I. B.E.M. Schools in Kasaragode, Kannur, Kozhikode, Malappuram and Palakkad revenue districts of Kerala.

Christianity in Malabar is almost as old as the Christian era and finds expression in three district communities enforcing to the three broad divisions of the universal church. The Syrian Christian community of the West Coast which had its headquarters in Travancore and traces its origin

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21. W.Bader, "The Beginning of the Work of the Basel Mission in Malabar" in *Harvest Field*, Vol. XV, 1904, p.271.

22. Bernard Lucas, The War and German Mission in *Harvest Field*, Vol. XXVI, 1915, p.415.

from the Apostle St. Thomas<sup>23</sup> has preserved in this district the picturesque traditions of Eastern church. Roman Catholicism, on the other hand, gained a foot hold in Malabar at a much later date, when the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama opened up a new route to this coast for European commerce and European culture.<sup>24</sup> The Protestant faith was the last to arrive. It was not till 1839 that the Basel Mission society to whose labour and sacrifice to majority of Protestant Christians in Malabar owe their conversion established their first outpost in this district.

At first the Basel Mission society had no intention of engaging in direct missionary activity. Their object was merely to train missionaries for other societies which had already started evangelistic work in Foreign lands.

In fact, many British and continental society took advantage of the facility provided by the college at Basel. The largest number of missionaries from this college seems to have been supplied to the church missionary society and came to their fields in India. A few years after the origin when contributions increased, naturally the Basel Mission society was emboldened to establish missions of their own in Africa, the West Coast of India, and China. The first batch of three missionaries for this coast landed at Calicut in 1834, and traveling north wards commenced work with their head-quarters at Mangalore in South Canara.

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23. K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *A History of Kerala*, Notes on letter XVI, p.3 and 5.

24. *Gazetteer of Malabar*, Chapter III, pp. 20-21.

Dr. H. Gundert and Rev. Samuel Hebich, the two pioneer missionaries who blazed the trail for the Basel Mission in Malabar were both men of outstanding personality. Endowed with rare spiritual influence, and talents differing the one from the other. These two men proved to be an uncommonly happy combination, and have left behind a lasting impression upon the Malabar church. Together they inaugurated those lines of activity which have been successfully continued by the mission up to the present time. The open air sermons which Samuel Hebich delivered often amidst much opposition, at crowded fairs or festivals, and the courage as well as unexpected triumph with which he carried the Gospel to the dreaded homes of military officers at Cannanore, won for him an almost mythical celebrity in these parts. Dr. Gundert, a brilliant scholar of the Tubingen University, on the other hand gave his life to the literary and educational work of the mission. As the author of the first Standard Dictionary and Grammar in Malayalam not to mention many text books in history, geography and other subjects for mission. Schools he has contributed greatly to cultural efflorescence.<sup>25</sup>

As conversions increased and the mission's sphere of activity expanded, additions also were made from time to time to the number of Europeans workers stationed in this district. Just before the Great European war there were about seventy missionary ladies and men

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25. G.N. Thomsen, *Samuel Hebich of India*, Chapter XIV, Cuttack, India, p.15.

labouring in Malabar.<sup>26</sup> But it was evident from the very beginning that the needs of a growing church and the many thousands of non-Christians by whom they were surrounded could not be adequately met by foreign missionaries alone. Therefore educational facilities were provided to train Malayalee Christians both for the ministry and for educational work.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to Elementary Schools intended for propagating the Gospel through the length and breadth of Malabar, special institutions were founded in every Christian congregation to raise the percentage of literacy in the community. From these Parochial Schools which mostly taught up to the V<sup>th</sup> class, capable. Students could proceed to one of the High schools, or the second grade college maintained by the mission. Parents who were unable to meet the full expenses of giving a high school education to their children were invited to send them to the Boarding Home maintained at Nettur in connection with one of the secondary schools. Those who were chosen for the ministry after their high school course were at first sent to Mangalore for a four years theological education, but afterwards a Theological Seminary for Malayalee candidates was opened at Nettur.<sup>28</sup> Here the mission also maintained a normal school in order to train teachers for the many

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26. *The Seventy Fourth Report of the Basel Mission in South Western India for the year 1913.*

27. *The Fifth Report of the Basel Mission in South Western India for the year 1894, Section 3.*

28. *The fifth report of the Basel Mission Society in South Western India for 1889.*

elementary schools under their management. Thus in 1913, the Basel mission had in Malabar about 280 Indian workers consisting of evangelists, Bible women, Christian school masters, Christian school mistresses and non-christian teachers. In addition to the educational institutions mentioned above the mission also maintained two orphanages and four hospitals, specially for the benefit of the society. As facilities for medical aid have rapidly increased in the district, and the mission had to face serious financial difficulties, the medical department was practically closed some years ago.

It was Rev. J. Josenhans, principal of the college for missionaries at Basel and General Secretary of the Mission, who was deputed by the Hane Committee in 1851 to inspect their Indian Field, that gave ecclesiastical laws and a social organization to the infant church. On arrival he found that the Malayalee converts who were gathered together from different sections of Hindu society formed four isolated congregations at Cannanore, Tellicherry, Chombala, and Calicut. Like other churches which had been founded by the Basel Mission in South Mahratta, South Canara and the Nilgris, these congregations were without a uniform system of government or a co-ordinated plan of action. To ensure the ordered development of a United Basel Mission church in Western India Rev. J. Josenhans found it necessary to devise for the converts the pattern of a new social order and ecclesiastical polity.<sup>29</sup> The

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29. *The Forty fifth Report of the B.E.M.S. in South Western India, 1884.*

measures which he took to this end may well be described in the words of his own biographer.

He defined the duties and rights of the missionaries towards the Home Committee and among themselves laid down different rules of business and arranged a division of labour and supervision. In accordance with this the missionaries have their regular local meetings which took place as often as required, district meetings when all the Missionaries of the same district meet once a year and General Meetings when the different office bearers and deputies from all four mission districts met every four years for consultation, and to advise the Home Committee.

As regards the congregations, he collected the rules which different missionaries had found useful for the guidance of their churches and compiled a short compendium of church rules. He also formed Presbyteries for each Parish, and Synods for each District in which the Europeans were to be ex-officio members.<sup>30</sup>

To enable each church to look after its own spiritual wants he also created church funds, which he endowed with fields and coconut gardens, formerly belonging to the Mission and imposed church-taxes and encouraged charity. He further appointed a committee composed of Mogling and Gundert, and Ammann to make a selection from the Prayer

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30. *Ibid.*, p.36.

Books of the different Lutheran and Reformed Churches for the compilation of a Liturgy, which was to be translated into Canarese, Malayalam, Tulu and English in order to be read in the different Basel German Evangelical Mission churches.”

From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Rev. J. Josenhans visited Malabar down to the outbreak of the world war when the Basel Mission had to suspend its activities for a time, there was slow but steady progress in the church. In 1851 there were four congregations with a membership of about 50 in Malabar.<sup>31</sup>

By 1913 it had grown to eight stations and about forty outstations with a membership of nearly 7600. This progress was not, however, confined to numerical strength. During these six decades the church had been gradually advancing towards the attainment of both self support and self government.

In 1861 annual contributions from members towards the expenses of the church amounted to about 6½ annas per head.<sup>32</sup> By 1912 the average contribution per church member had risen to Rs.150. Similarly great strides had been made also towards self government. Indian pastors were, whenever possible, given independent positions. They were not only made responsible for conducting divine services, and the

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31. *Twelfth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission for 1851, p.18.*

32. *Thirty third Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South Western India for 1872. Written for the Mission Conference at Allahabad, p.22.*

management of Parochial Schools but had as a rule also to preside over the meetings of the presbyteries. In the Presbyteries of the larger stations, where the number of Europeans missionaries was great, the Europeans were not allowed to occupy more than 1/3 of the seats on the Presbytery. Similarly the number of European members in District Synods too was reduced. In addition to this the Home Committee also sanctioned the formation of a General Synod Board composed of three European members elected by the three synods. The General Synoid Board was authorized to govern the whole church on the west coast according to the existing church rules.<sup>33</sup>

The World War which broke out in 1914 imparted to the progress of the church a momentum which almost proved its ruin. The Basel Mission was considered by the Government to be a German organization. Most of the missionaries, being Germans, had to leave for the internment camp, and all properties which belonged to the Basel Mission were taken over by the custodian of Enemy Property.<sup>34</sup> What attempts other missionary societies made to get back these properties for the benefit of the Malabar church found itself deprived of the spiritual guidance and financial support which the Basel Mission had so generously supplied for 75 years.

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33. *The Seventy-third Report of the Basel Mission in South Western India for 1912. The Indian Church, Pecuniary Contributions.*

34. *Minutes of the Malabar church Council August 1920.*

Along with other mission fields operated by German missions in India, the activities in Malabar also were handed over by the Government to the National Missionary. The German Missions committee of the National Missionary council approached various missionary societies with a request to undertake the responsibilities from which the Basel Mission had been compelled so abruptly to withdraw.

At last the South India United church agreed to shoulder the responsibility, if the Malabar church should affiliate itself with that body. As negotiations for effecting such a union had been set on foot before the Basel mission was compelled to withdraw from the field the Malabar church did not feel much difficulty in accepting the proposal. Accordingly in 1919, the representatives of the Malabar church met and adopted a new Constitution investing the Government of the Malabar church in a body of elected representatives called the Malabar church council and affiliating the Malabar church with the federation of south Indian churches known as the S.I.U.C. In order to carry on the day to day administration of the church, the Malabar church council was to appoint an executive committee in which missionaries who came to Malabar as Representatives of the S.I.U.C. were to have their place.<sup>35</sup>

The jurisdiction of the church council and the church board was however rigidly circumscribed. While technically they possessed almost

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35. *Constitution of the Malabar Church*, S.I.U.C. (1919).

unqualified power in administering the affairs directly connected with the government of the church, they were dependent to a very large extent for their finances upon the S.I.U.C. Besides the evangelistic medical and educational departments of the late Basel Mission were kept entirely beyond the Purview of the church council. The original intention of the S.I.U.C. seems to have been to separate these three departments from the administration of the church, and keep them directly under their supervision. But in response to a request made by the Malabar church Board it was afterwards resolved to grant them an active part in the management of what is called "mission work" as well. These arrangements, however, proved to be a source of endless friction and strife in the church. Owing to representations made by the S.I.U.C., therefore, the German Missions Committee finally removed mission work from the supervision of the church council in 1925.<sup>36</sup>

Under the new arrangement the financial Situation of the church council deteriorated to such an extent that the church board was compelled to handover the orphanages and parochial schools to the Mission committee.<sup>37</sup>

In 1927 when the Basel Mission took back the responsibility for mission work in Malabar more prosperous days seemed to have set in for the church. But trouble started over certain changes which were made in

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36. *Minutes of the Malabar Church*, August, 1925.

37. *Minutes of the Malabar Church*, February, 1926, p.6.

the constitution in order to facilitate co-operation between the church and the mission. The political situation of Germany and the unexpected fall in the financial resources of the Basel Mission threw up another cloud over the horizon. The subsidy which the basel mission had been giving to the church council since the missionaries returned to Malabar was reduced after 1933 and the church council was moreover compelled by the turn of events to take back from the mission the responsibility for the parochial schools.

The Basel Mission Church in Malabar consisted of fourteen Pastorates. All these pastorates were situated on the Plains. The Wynad taluk, remained unexplored by protestant missionaries till 1880 when the Basel mission resolved to open a new station at Manantoddy.<sup>38</sup>

Eleven years later Rev. A.H.Lash, the first C.M.S. missionary in the Nilgiris realized the need for Pastoral care among the Christian labourers who flocked to the tea and coffee estates in Synad. Thus M. Sathyanathan Harding was appointed catechist at Gudalur in the Nilgiris district and until his death in 1911, gave very devoted pioneer service, particularly among the Kurchiars and Kurumbers. At the start there was about 175 baptized protestant Christians, mostly immigrants from the Tamil country. In course of time the membership of the church had risen to 1700. But from the beginning the Waynad Mission had been

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38. *The Forty-third Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South Western India for 1882. Section III on Malabar.*

practically a private enterprise of the Nilgris Missionary with little or no support from the C.M.S. Headquarters. The necessary funds were raised either locally, or from friends in England.<sup>39</sup>

Anglican churches are not, however confined to Waynad. For, in addition to stray families attached to the established church of India at Cannanore, Tellicherry, Palakkad and Malappuram, there is an Indian Pastorate of the Madras Diocese in Calicut. Its beginning are to be sought in the prayer meetings of Indian Anglicans, which, in the eighties of the 20th century, were conducted in the local Basel Mission church. The original congregation was mostly Tamil, and was ministered to by Tamil Clergy men for many years and at present the Pastorate is affiliated to the society for the propagation of the Gospel.<sup>40</sup>

No Account of the Protestant church in Malabar will be complete without a reference to the Sectarian denominations which affected it. For, though numerically their adherents were at the bottom of the scale, forming but a small minority of the protestant church, these denominations were not united.

### **Conversion – A Break with the Past**

The circumstances connected with conversion have often exercised a very far reaching influence upon the economic development of

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39. *Notes on the History of the C.M.S. Waynad Mission* by Rev. H.B.Roberts, C.M.S. Missionary, 1911.

40. *Annual Report of the St.Mary's Church Indian Pastorate*, Calicut for the year 1936, p.11.

Christian communities. Mass movements have for example, “by preserving the integration of the individual in his group.” Protected many churches from social dislocation and economic loss.<sup>41</sup> Mass movements do not however, account for the entire protestant community in India. According to J.R. Mott about 80% of the protestants are the product of mass movements. The remaining 20% consist of those who embraced Christianity either as individuals or in families, and their descendants.

The social and economic problems which early missionaries created by isolating such converts from their natural environment have led many observers in modern times to be critical of their policy and to deplore its consequences. The Bankura Christian community of Bengal may be mentioned as a typical example of what is called “conversion by extraction”.<sup>42</sup> Fifty years ago no such thing as the local Christian community is said to have existed. Land was purchased and the Christian village came into existence. An economic survey of the community made before the Tambaram (Madras) Conference (1858), however, shows that a considerable blunder of strategy was committed when those families who were agriculturists were uprooted from their home and established in a place where they were given no land for cultivation. Instead of creating a virile, self supporting Christian society, this experiment, like similar

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41. *Christian Mass Movements in India, Chapter XV.*

42. W. Hoch, *Missions of the Basel Society in Canara and Malabar.* "In *Proceedings of the South India Missionary Conference held at Tambaram, Madras, April 19, 1858.*

experiments elsewhere, is said to have produced a generation which looks for sustenance to the mission which took their fathers from their original villages.<sup>43</sup>

The annals of the Protestant church in Malabar do not contain a single instance of mass conversion. There was of course, some indication of a tendency towards mass movement among the Thiyyas in the first decade of this century.<sup>44</sup> In 1892 Potheri Kunhambu a Tiyya wakil wrote in his *Saraswativijayam* about the pulayas of Malabar who were in a sad state. He explains that they oscillated between the worlds of colonial modernity and tradition, belonging wholly to neither. But being of the lower castes, not only his knowledge of the upper Sanskritic reaches of Hindu tradition of no avail to him, he is also excluded from it on the grounds of his lower being. Education is the greatest wealth – the epigraph to his novel states the central message and hears it aloft like a standard. He was involved with the education and upliftment of the pulayas of Malabar.

One can understand *Saraswativijayam* only as part of Kunhambu's persistent and agonized engagement with the Hindu tradition of which he was a part but which denied him a place within it. *Saraswativijayam* was a radical novel for its time with its fierce critique of the injustice of caste

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43. C.F. Hall, *Bankura Christian Community*, History of the Community, Calcutta.

44. *Sixty seventh report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South Western India for the year 1906.*

and the emancipatory message of education for lower castes. The stagnation and iniquity of traditional society is contrasted with the promise of equality and freedom brought about by colonialism and the missionary presence.<sup>45</sup> But this did not take place. From the very beginning converts have entered the Basel Mission church in Malabar in isolated families or as individuals. And except in the case of two new stations opened by the Basel Mission at Madai and Mattul after the Great war, converts have been, for reasons which will be presently examined, uprooted from their home and village to begin life at a common centre under new conditions. The narrow exclusiveness of the caste system as it is practiced in Malabar made it impossible for a convert to continue in the society to which he belonged. At the last census it was found in the united provinces that converts to Christianity remained in their caste, inter dining and intermarrying freely with non-Christian members. In fact cases seem to have been mentioned where the arrangement had survived for thirty years after conversion.<sup>46</sup>

Although the most progressive Hindu families have now begun to make a concession in the matter of inter-dining such free and unfettered social intercourse between Christian converts and the members of the castes to which they previously belonged is not known anywhere in Malabar today. It would have been unimaginable in the last century.

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45. Dileep M. Menon, *Caste and Colonial modernity, Studies in History*, Vol. XIII, No.2 1977.

46. *Twenty seventh report of the Basel evangelical mission in South Western India*, 1866, p. 57.

On the other hand, Physical contact with a convert is considered in three parts to make an orthodox Hindu ceremonially unclean converts have been regarded in Malabar as outcastes and even the nearest relations gave up all intercourse with one who embraced Christianity.

The Marumakkathayam system of family organisation and inheritance prevalent in Malabar made the convert's fate all the more precarious. Under this system "a mother and all her children, both male and female, all her grandchildren by her daughters, all her brothers, and sisters and the descents on the sister's side, however distant their relationship, live together in the same block of buildings, have a common table, enjoy all her property and share it after her death in common with one another."<sup>47</sup> There are wealthy Nair tarwards with about two hundred members belonging to different branches and separated from one another by generations of descent, yet all able to trace their descent from one common ancestress. When a member belonging to such a joint family embraced Christianity, the penalties decreed by caste made it impossible for him to continue in their midst, and banished him at once from home and kindred. Conversion from Hinduism could not, therefore, give a member of a Marumakkathayam joint family the right to a partition of the tarward property which was impartible under the Marumakkathayam law as it existed before 1933. All that the convert could claim was to continue to reside in the house and be maintained as before if the other members

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47. T.K. Gopal Panikkar, *Malabar and Its Folk*, p.14.

were willing to share his company, or to get separate residence and maintenance allowance allotted to him, if the other members refused to live with the convert. Even in the case of Hindu families which did not follow the Marumakkathayam system, the Mitakshara law was not modified by local custom and usage that it was very seldom a convert could get an adequate share of the joint property. The opposition from the local Janmy usually gave the finishing touch to the picture of a convert's helplessness. Thus for example Weismann of Chombala made repeated attempts to induce the Hindu landlords to allow converts to remain in their rented houses and compounds but his entreaties met with the stout refusals . For those who forsake their ancestral caste and customs, we have neither house nor gardens.<sup>48</sup>

The isolation which the Malabar church suffered in the land of its birth has not, however been without its compensation.

On account of its isolation from the environment, the Basel Mission church in Malabar has remained singularly free from this taint. Though drawn from many mutually exclusive castes in the most caste ridden district in India, the members of the church have been welded by common tribulation and a common faith into a homogeneous brotherhood.<sup>49</sup>

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48. *The Fifty seventh Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in south Western India 1896*, p.49.

49. J.W. Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India*, Madras, p. 336.

## Literacy Education and Occupations

As the world meeting of the International Missionary Council held at Tambaram, Madras (1938) declared "Education is and must always be a major concern of the church."<sup>50</sup> For no other process in modern life enables the rising generation to appreciate their social heritage so well, or to play their part so efficiently in working for its fulfilment. The church will therefore look largely to the Christian primary schools for the ideas and attitudes which sway the majority of its members. The Christian high schools and colleges will decide the kind of leadership which is to guide the church on its journey.

Literacy might be only one of the avenues to education. But even so its effect upon the economic well being of a community was great. For this ability, protects the poor villager against fraud in accounts, enlarges his vision, increased his efficiency enabled him to give up habits which undermine his health or dissipate his resources and fires him with fresh hope and new aspirations. Commenting upon the lack of education among industrial workers the Royal Commission on Labour, remarked. In India nearly the whole mass of industrial labour was illiterate, a state of affairs which was unknown in any other country of industrial importance. It was almost impossible to over estimate the consequences of this disability, which was obvious in wages, in health in productivity in organization and in several other directions. When the Malabar church

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50. *International Missionary Council*. The World Mission of the Church, p.86.

became an autonomous body elementary schools which specially served Christian congregations were handed over by the mission to the church.<sup>51</sup> Among the mission schools three were secondary schools for boys, one a girls' high school and another a second grade college. Pastor's and Presbyteries from the early days of the Malabar church exercised their influence to see that Christians parents do not neglect the facilities that were provided for the education of their children.

The table<sup>52</sup> will show extent of the educational activities of the Basel Mission church.

#### Literacy

	Percentage among total population	Percentage among males	Percentage among females
Madras presidency	9	16	3
Indian Christian in the presidency	17	22	11
Malabar	14	23	6
Hindus in Malabar	17	27	8
Muslims	8	14	1
Christians	41	48	33
Basel Mission church Malabar	87	96	82

51. *Minutes of the Malabar church council*, October, 1938, p.28.

52. *Census of India (1931)* Vol. 14, Part I, p.278.

Malabar was well known in south India for its literacy. But even in such an area the percentage of literates within the Basel mission church stands far above the district ratio. Educational institutions and church rules alone could hardly have accomplished this feat. For such rules were not always strictly enforced and many children who left school before completing the fifth standard rapidly lapse into illiteracy. In the words of the Hartog Committee "The explanation of such relapse is simple. Retention of initial literacy acquired at the early age of ten or eleven depends largely on environment, and the environment of the great majority of Indian pupils, who leave school at the primary stage is not conducive to such retention." The parents in the village home were usually illiterate they were too poor to buy books and attractive vernacular literature and periodicals suitable for children were not available, though there were vernacular books which might be read by children under religious impulse.<sup>53</sup>

Condition within the church had on the contrary been much more favourable to the retention of literacy. Almost every Christian home, however contains, a Bible and a hymn-book which the inmates often read. Besides many religious tracts and pamphlets were within their reach. Popular journals published either by the mission or the church too have helped poor Christians to exercise their ability to read. Thus on the

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53. *The Seventy Fourth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South Western India, 1913, p.72.*

eve of the world war more than 600 copies of a Malayalam fortnightly magazine called *Keralopakari* and about 850 copies of a Malayalam monthly called *Balamitram* were printed by the mission for circulation in the Malabar church.<sup>54</sup> After the war journalism within the Basel mission church had a very uncertain career. Owing to financial difficulties the church council had to discontinue various publications.

The existence of Christian high school and a Christian second grade college was a great incentive to higher education in the Malabar church. In addition to free scholarships or loans granted to deserving Christian candidates by mission schools and the mission college a stipend fund with a capital of about Rs.20,000/- was also established by the mission for the whole mission field on this coast. Loans without interest were granted from this fund to Christian students who desired to go outside Malabar higher education. Of course among the applicants preference was given to those candidates whose services were likely to be needed by the mission. The loans should be returned in easy instalments, and the amount available for fresh applicants in any year depended upon the repayments already made. Fee concessions and scholarships granted by first grade colleges maintained by other missions in south India too had been of considerable help in securing the benefits of a university education for young men and women from the Basel mission church.<sup>55</sup>

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54. *Ibid.*, p.73.

55. *Minutes of the Malabar Council*, 1931, August, p. 16.

## Educational qualifications by Age Groups (Males)

	Age	Percentage of the total number in each age group						
		Illiterate	Just literate	First form to third form	Fourth form to sixth form	S.S.L.C.	Intermediate	Graduation
1	20-30	6	36	28	16	11	2	2
2	31-40	7	46	27	9	7	1	2
3	41-50	12	40	28	9	7	6	3
4	51-60	11	47	23	14	3	7	1
5	61-70	17	56	14	8	6	-	-
6	Above 70	19	56	15	4	4	-	-

## Educational qualifications by Age Groups (Females)

	Age	Percentage of the total number in each age group						
		Illiterate	Just literate	First form to	Fourth form	SSLC	Intermediate	Graduation
1	20-30	17	37	30	7	8	1	1
2	31-40	21	43	26	4	6	4	4
3	41-50	24	41	28	5	1	2	2
4	51-60	42	37	19	2	-	-	-
5	61-70	46	38	16	-	-	-	-
6	Above 70	52	41	7	-	-	-	-

The proportion of boys who left the high school classes without being able to secure a complete S.S.L.C. certificate was comparatively high. Financial difficulties were not the only obstacle in their way. Owing probably to underfeeding many boys who came from poor families were too slow to profit by a high school course. The number of those who failed to appreciate the facilities that were provided for their education also remained fairly large. Among over 8000 members whose educational qualifications were ascertained 289 males 300 females had successfully undergone courses in professional training –mostly in teaching, divinity or medicine – but only 31 males and 9 females could mention any technical examinations they had passed.<sup>56</sup>

Although facilities for technical education were formerly very limited in Malabar, the Basel Mission Industries offered an opportunity to get practical experiences in many branches of textile manufacturing, tile manufacturing and mechanical engineering. Technical and technological courses outside Malabar which involve long years of training are moreover above means of most families in Basel Mission church. The literacy and education had been a little help to the members of the Malabar church in finding employment. For within the church only 35% of the total population was employed as against 56% in the presidency and 39% in Malabar. But in comparing the percentage of workers within the church with the percentage outside among Basel Mission Christians

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56. *Ibid.*, p.17.

most children between 5 and 15 went to school in the 1930s.<sup>57</sup> Among other communities in Malabar and the presidency the majority of children did not, except in rare cases, attend school.

An analysis of the unemployed in the community according to educational qualifications throws some light upon the problem of finding employment. More than half the unemployed males in the community belong to the lowest educational group.

With reference to the economic consequences of education, the Basel mission church in Malabar forms a deplorable contrast to the Syrian Christian community in Travancore. In 1821, the Syrian Christians were economically so backward that Mar Dionysius III, the Syrian Metropolitan of Malankara wrote in a letter to the then British Resident of Travancore as follows:

The majority of the Puthencoor Syrians were poor and support themselves by daily labour. Others employed themselves in merchandise and agriculture. There were very few indeed among them possessing property worth five thousand rupees.” But the progress of literacy and education had enabled Syrian Christian in the course of a hundred years to complete successfully with other advanced communities in every walks of life. The spread of education and the opening of salaried posts

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57. *Madras Administration 1937-38*, Government Press, p. 104.

seemed to have created an economic regeneration in the community.<sup>58</sup> The savings from the salaries and the professional incomes became the capital necessary for the starting of trade and industries. The progress of higher education in the community enabled them to compete successfully with others in public administration, the professions, and liberal arts.<sup>59</sup>

Although the percentage of literates stood remarkably high in the Malabar church and higher education had made steady progress among the members, no economic regeneration such as we find in the Syrian Christian community in Travancore had taken place here. For it was only after the world war that educated young men from the Basel mission church began to enter government service in sufficiently large numbers. Secondly employment opportunities were comparatively more in Travancore and Cochin than in Malabar. Added to this was the attitude of the early missionaries who tended to regard seeking employment anywhere outside the mission with disfavour.

At the outbreak of the world war when the Basel mission was for a time compelled to withdraw from India the vast majority of educated men among Basel mission Christians were therefore employed under the mission. The war either closed or restricted these opportunities. And for a time the Malabar church had to pass through a period of great

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58. P.C.Joseph, *The Economic and social environment of the church in North Travancore and Cochin*. CMS College, Kottayam, p. 70.

59 *Ibid.*, p.71.

suffering. Such difficulties, however turned the rising generation to other avenues.<sup>60</sup>

Mission Christians to solve partly the problems created by the action of the British government. The table below indicate part of this solution.

### Occupations in the Basel Mission Church, Malabar

Occupation	Percentage of workers under each head in the Basel mission church		Percentage of workers under each head in Malabar	
1. Exploitation of animals and vegetation	7.7	9.4	40.0	26.8
2. Exploitation of minerals	-	-	0.003	-
3. Industry	46.9	43.8	13.5	17.1
4. Transport	4.1	-	2.7	0.1
5. Public service (including teachers, nurses etc under government or local bodies)	6.1	11.1	1.4	0.01
6. Profession and liberal arts	16.8	15.9	4.2	0.92
7. Persons living on their income	5.2	10.2	0.09	0.01
8. Domestic service	1.4	8.7	1.1	21.6
9. Others	2.0	-	26.6	31.4

Source: *Census of India, 1931*, Vol.14, p.116.

60. *The Fifty fifth report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South Western India, 1894*, p.57.

Tack of variety formed the main characteristic of occupational distribution among the Basel mission Christian in Malabar. According to the above table the majority of people find employment in industry or professions and the other main departments of activity are also adequately represented.<sup>61</sup>

More than half of those who are classified as carrying in trade are only clerks in commercial establishments. About three fourths of those engaged in professions and the liberal arts are servants of the church or the mission, nearly 90% of those who are described as engaged in the exploitation of animals and vegetation are agricultural labours, practically all those mentioned under transport are employed in motor vehicles or the railway. Not only have Basel mission Christians failed to spread out on the economic field, but have in fact lost some of their original occupations. Scores of Fishermen have joined the Basel Mission church in Malabar. But among workers whose occupations were examined in 1931 only one solitary individual was found to carry on fishing as an occupation. The majority of converts who entered the church must originally have been cultivators; but in 1931 cultivation occupied a very insignificant place among occupations in the community. The aversion with which non Christians considered a convert often made it impossible for him to pursue his previous employment. Under the prevailing system of land tenure agriculturists especially could get no land for cultivation.

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61. *Census of India, 1931*, Vol.14, part 2, p.116.

The disabilities of the caste system moreover led converts to look with contempt on the occupation which was connected with the iniquitous social organization from which they had escaped. To the vast majority of artisans and peasants who embraced Christianity the industrial establishments started by the mission offered the means of earning a comfortable livelihood.

In fact the spread of literacy within the church enabled the members to adjust themselves to conditions in the factory with much less trouble than they could otherwise have done.<sup>62</sup> Besides the more intelligent and better educated among the members were rapidly absorbed into the evangelistic and educational departments of the mission.

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62. *Minutes of the Malabar church Council*, Sept. 1932, p.32.

# GROWTH OF BASEL MISSION INDUSTRIES AND THEIR IMPACT

In the year 1833 the British Parliament while renewing the charter of the East India Company, made provisions for granting the right of entry into India, to all Europeans. This Act was passed when the Home Committee was arranging to send out three young men of the Basel Mission College as their pioneer missionaries to India. In 1834, Rev. Samuel Hebich, John Lehner, and Christopher Greiner embarked in the ship 'Malabar' to the Malabar coast. The ship cast anchor on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, 1834 in Calicut. From Calicut the missionaries went to Mangalore situated about 195 KM north of Calicut and there the first activities of the Basel Mission society was inaugurated along all their respective lines.<sup>1</sup>

A good number of Roman Catholics were living in the town of Mangalore at that time. The new missionaries faced many difficulties at first. Caste Prejudice in those early days was very strong and people desiring to embrace Christianity had to make heavy sacrifices. They were regarded as outcastes by their community, and so they lost all employments all pecuniary help from their relatives and friends, and were hence wholly dependent for their livelihood on the missionaries. These

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1. H. HoFmann, *A Brief History of the Basel Mission Industries*. Mangalore, 1913, p.15.

difficulties made the missionaries to devise ways and means to find employment for their first converts. Thus the Basel Mission Industries came into existence.<sup>2</sup>

The evolution of industrial activity of the Basel Mission can be divided into three phases chronologically first phase (1839-1852) the experimental efforts of missionaries, second phase (1852-1882) under the control of Industrial commission and third phase (1882-1914) under the auspices of the Mission Trading Company.<sup>3</sup>

During the early phase (1839-1852) the missionaries organized various industrial activities mainly based on local crafts along with efforts to rehabilitate converts in agriculture. Both experiments were not a fully successful achievement. This early phase of industrial activities was characterized by the initiatives undertaken by the industrial missionaries on their own and its organization was marked by a high level of decentralization.

Since the initial industrial activities were not successful in 1846 an industrial commission was established in Basel and during the middle phase industrial activities became increasingly under the central control of the industrial commission. This period is characterized by the

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2. *Ibid.*, p.17.

3. Jayaprakash Raghaviah, *Basel Mission Industries Malabar S. Canara 1834-1914*. New Delhi, 1990, p.71.

establishment of factory type of production organisation. It was during this period that hand loom industries reached viable levels of growth.

In the final phase (1882-1914) due to trading surplus the Basel Mission industries were able to enter into the capital markets in Europe. Tile factory happen to spring up in Malabar under the banner of Basel Trading company. Tile factories were opened at Puthiyara, Feroke, Kodakkal and also at Olavakkode. There was a big market for tiles. While there were 89% of employees as converts in tile factories the share of converts is about 55 per cent only. The apparent reason for this could have been that tile factories would have to be located in areas which have availability of raw materials and transportation facilities. In such areas, labour recruitment would have followed availability than the preference for converts. From tile factories the Basel Mission moved into the weaving and spinning industries and thus weaving mills were established at Calicut and Cannanore. The Kakki Mill cloth largely made for uniforms in the armed forces were manufactured by Basel Mission for the first time in India.<sup>4</sup>

Trade activities were also under taken by missionaries under the leadership of trade commission which had existed in the mission side by side with the industrial commission. It was later taken over by the newly formed joint stock company of missions.

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4. *Ibid.*, p.80.

The conducting of trade not only to assist mission by their profit but also to teach the non-Christians the real Christian way of dealing in social and economic matters.

### **Basel Mission Industries**

We shall now turn to a detailed account of the process of industrialization. In 1840, the Rev. Weigle, the missionary in charge of the Mangalore congregation, with the intention of starting a printing press went to Mumbai to study the art of printing press and there in the course of his study, was presented with a lithographic press for the mission by some English Friends. With this he returned to Mangalore in February 1841 and this was the nucleus of the new press, which later developed into a fairly large industry called the "Basel Mission Press. During the next year a second lithographic press was presented to the Mission. Work was prosecuted vigorously by means of these presses, with the result that in the year 1843, it was possible to print Bible Portions of both the old and New Testament in Tulu, Kanarese and Malayalam. In the year 1851 Plebst came to India and transformed the lithographic press into a typographic one. The press also acted as a light to the world in the printing of religious books and literature.<sup>5</sup> It met the demand of the various schools and colleges of the Basel Mission and other corporations in the Kanarese and Malayalam speaking districts. It also took up work

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5. *Ibid.*, p.20.

for such publishing houses as Macmillan & Co and the Madras and Bangalore Auxiliaries to the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Another start along industrial lines was made in the year 1844, when weaving was introduced. Weaving was a popular industry then carried on by certain people of the weaver caste. The material named 'Calico' is said to be called after the town of Calicut on the West Coast. This peculiar cotton cloth was first woven there. This new industry was first started on a very small scale. Rev. Metz the missionary of the Mangalore station supervised this department till 1851, when Haller, a trained specialist in weaving was sent out from Germany, who on arrival at Mangalore introduced the first handloom with the Fly shuttle. Along with weaving, dyeing work was also started, and the Khaki dye was the first, invented by Haller.<sup>6</sup> This improved productivity of weavers from 50 per cent to 200 per cent depending on the cloth.

He endeavoured to prepare a dye for hunting suits which would approximate to the natural colour of the soil and would not be conspicuous from a distance. The one which he prepared out of the rind of the cashew-nut tree (*Anacardium occidentale*) and of the extract of the heart wood of the catechu tree (*Acacia catechu*) both of these trees being common in this district, answered the purpose and was called Khaki,

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6. *Report of the Dept. of Industries, 1931 to 1936*, Government Press, Mangalore, p.15.

from the Hindustani 'khak' meaning ashes, dust. When Haller first brought out his khaki, the then superintendent of police in Mangalore was so pleased with it that he got permission to introduce it for the use of the police force under him.<sup>7</sup>

Lord Roberts, when he was the commander-in-chief of India, once paid a visit to the Mangalore weaving establishment and it was then that he happened to see 'khaki' which he afterwards recommended for the use of the British soldiers." Likewise, the Shikari cloth was first introduced by this weaving establishment. Webster designed the colour and so the material became known as 'Webster's Shikari.'" Encouraged by the success of weaving in Mangalore, weaving establishments were established in other mission stations on the west coast such as Cannanore and Calicut, with increased improvements in various departments.<sup>8</sup>

Although weaving was introduced in 1844, it was not possible to train young men in other useful handicrafts. Attempts were therefore made to send young men abroad to study the trades of book binding tailoring, blacksmithing etc. This having been found unsatisfactory, two lay missionaries Muller, a watch maker, and Boesinger, a mechanic came out to Mangalore in 1848, with the intention of training men in the mission itself. They carried on watch making and clock and timepiece

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7. *Ibid.*

8. HoFmann, H., *op. cit.*, p.28.

repairing for some time. Eventually, this industry became a failure owing to the lack of sufficient scope for such work.

A Book binding department was started in the year 1854 in connection with the printing press. The printing and book binding were mainly related to religious and educational activities. Job works for various organizations were undertaken.

Moreover another handicraft, carpentry, was introduced in the year 1856 at Calicut by Lauffer, a well trained master carpenter who came from Germany. Calicut was chosen because it was already a centre of timber industry. Here also many young men learned the carpenter's trade and many of them returned to their respective mission stations quite able to make their own living.

In the year 1865 another industry, tile making was begun at Mangalore. Until then the want of a well fitting roofing tile was keenly felt all over the country. Plebst first drew attention to this fact, and encouraged the Mission to start the first tile factory at Jeppo near Mangalore. The first tile press was established in 1866. It was at first worked by hand, and thereafter by bullocks. The number of workmen employed in the factory in the beginning was twelve, and the daily number of tiles made was only 500. In 1866 seven well-equipped up-to-date factories were being run, employing about 2000 people (1200 Christians and 800 non-Christians) who made about 60,000 tiles a day.

As this industry was being developed, the necessity for a mechanical workshop was keenly felt to meet the needs of the various factories. Accordingly a Mechanical establishment was opened at Mangalore in the year 1874, under the superintendence of Huttinger who later became the chief Engineer of the Basel Mission Home Board.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Basel Mission Weaving Establishment**

The Weaving industry was at first confined to the making of cotton checks of suiting. But, gradually, Jacquard looms were fitted up, and on them not only ordinary table and household linen, such as table clothes, towels, napkins, etc were woven, but also superior damask linen of ordinary and superior mercerized materials were produced. In the year 1902 in order to provide for girls who did not continue their studies after their primary education, embroidery was added to the weaving industry. This department was later enlarged and placed under the management of two European lady superintendents with native assistants. Ninety girls at Calicut and twenty girls at Cannanore were employed in this particular departments in 1902.<sup>10</sup> A later development was the introduction of mechanized knitting. The Basel Mission factories became the first to manufacture vests and stockinette materials.

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9. Jai Prakash Raghaviah. *op.cit.*, p.41.

10. *Census of Employment in Basel Mission Weaving Units as on July 1877, 1903.*

Until some years ago, coloured twists required for weaving, with the exception of a few, were imported from Europe. The dye houses in connection with the weaving establishments at Calicut and Cannanore were later converted into up-to-date well equipped plants. This enabled the dyeing of fast colours for materials.<sup>11</sup> This became a well known speciality of Basel Mission cloth industries. Some of the work in the weaving industry was done by hand, but owing to the pressing demands for products from all parts of India and from other countries as well, steam power was introduced for doing the twisting and winding of threads on bobbins, and for dye works. Accordingly steam Engines were introduced. The actual weaving, however was done on hand looms.

A tailoring department was established in connection with the weaving industry. In that department youths from the different stations of the Basel Mission who could not prosecute their studies beyond their primary course, were admitted as apprentices. During the course of their apprenticeship, which generally extends over a period of three to four years, most of the boys were at liberty to leave their temporary home and started their own tailoring shops or they should have worked in other shops in their respective towns. The two tailoring departments had the pleasure to record that a number of young men were taught this useful trade.<sup>12</sup>

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11. *Ibid.* p.45.

12. *Ibid.*, p.49.

The Calicut Weaving establishment was opened in the year 1859 with ten looms. The Mangalore weaving establishment specialized in manufacture of superior cotton checks, table and household linen and mercerized ladies and gentlemen's clothing goods.

Basel Mission united weaving establishments had the administrative office at Calicut. The Calicut Head Office controlled and directed the activities of all the three establishments, both in regard to manufacture and sale. Patterns of all the products were issued from the Head office to all parts of the world. Travelling agents were also sent out from Calicut throughout India, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, for advertising and selling the products. The first tile factory was started at Jeppoo, Mangalore in the year 1865. The hand presses and mills driven by bullocks were replaced by machines worked by steam power in the year 1881, when the first steam engine was set up at Mangalore. The tiles manufactured there having been found of immense usefulness to the public and to the government, the latter, as a mark of its appreciation, issued order to their public works department to use mission tiles for all public buildings.<sup>13</sup>

The government made available firewood from forests and encouraged the manufacture of these tiles. At first only flat roofing tiles were made at Jeppoo. Later, ridge tiles both plain and ornamental,

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13. H. Hofmann, *op. cit.*, p.30.

skylights and ventilators, ridge and hip terminals, grooved spire tiles, hanging wall tiles, ceiling tiles of many different designs, hourdis or ceiling slabs, common or ornamental clay flooring tiles, Victoria cement flooring tiles, and earthen ware, drainage pipes, terracotta vases flower pots, architectural terracotta ware etc began to be made. These products were appreciated by architects and builders. This was especially the case in towns where timber was rare and expensive.<sup>14</sup> It could be stated that BM Tile Industries in an indirect way helped arrest deforestation. The products of all these weaving establishments were exhibited in various exhibitions. In the year 1911, in order to facilitate matters and to make it easier for the public in effecting purchases, the establishments were united under one head and called Basel Mission weaving establishments at Calicut. The products were exhibited in exhibitions and this gave them great publicity. Marketing of these products effectively still posed a problem. The products provided certain advantages namely resistance to heat, exclusion of noise from storey to storey, water tightness, strength and durability.

There are monuments that exhibit the technical skill of the clay manufacturers of tile works, in many large towns of India and Sri Lanka.<sup>15</sup>

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14. *Ibid.*, p.31.

15. *The Chapel at Jappoo, the belfry and band-stand at Calicut*, a Chapel in Ceylon.

The second tile factory was started at Calicut in the year 1873, similar to the one at Jeppoo, with hand presses, bullock mills etc. Gradually, the work developed and steam engines were installed. The factory had two hundred and twelve hands engaged in its operation, the daily out turn being about twelve thousand tiles of various kinds, such as flat roofing tiles, flooring tiles, ceiling hourdis, ridges etc.

In the year 1882, a factory was started at Kudroli, a suburb of Mangalore, where three hundred and eighty eight people worked and the outturn being about five million tiles a year. Another factory at Malpe, near Udipi, was started in the year 1886, the fifth at Codacal near Edakulam, where two hundred and eighty five people worked, the sixth at Palghat, where two hundred and forty persons worked, and in the year 1905, the seventh factory was established at Feroke, about 6 km from Calicut, where two hundred and thirty three persons worked. These seven factories were equipped with up-to-date machinery and works were carried on under factory rules and regulations, and the factories were periodically visited and inspected by government officials, such as factory inspectors, sanitary and medical officers, and the district magistrates.<sup>16</sup>

The products of these seven factories were sold through the Indian Empire, Myanmar and Ceylon and also exported to foreign countries. In

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16. Jai Prakash Raghaviah, *op.cit.*, p.72-73.

Africa, the Railway buildings on the Uganda Railway from Mombaza to Port Florence, the Railway terminals at Victoria Lake, were all covered with Mission roofing tiles. In Africa Basel Mission Tiles were also being stocked at different places. Tiles were also exported to Aden, and to Basra on the Persian Gulf at the mouth of Euphrates. The tiles were exported in rather large quantities to the straits settlements to Sumatra, British Borneo, and even to Australia. This means that tiles had won really a world wide reputation.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Basel Mission Mechanical Establishment**

The next mechanical establishment was began in the year 1874. It was at first meant to make minor implements required for the different tile and weaving factories, and to repair machinery for those factories. The work, however, has developed greatly along other lines under the able management of its founder, Huttinger. Boys from many different congregations went there for practical training and later worked as engine drivers, firemen, blacksmiths etc being employed on Railways, in factories, mines and elsewhere. The Mechanical Establishment not only executed repairs, but also made new machines, such as tile presses, water pump etc. Many other useful articles such as water carts, night soil carts, lamp posts, iron gates etc were also made.

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17. *Ibid.*

The establishment won a great reputation in the making of iron safe of various kinds. Many public offices, banks and mercantile houses used Basel mission fire proof safes, which were fitted with modern unpickable and uncopyable 'Protector'. Keys and locks, made with drill proof armour plating. This made it very difficult to be drilled or cut open by burglars.

The Mechanical establishment later took up contracts for the construction of bridges of considerable size. For the Public Works Department in South Canara the ME constructed some splendid bridges. The establishment also turned out splendid wooden household furniture of artistic designs at moderate cost. Many public offices patronized this establishment. To many a government office iron racks and record shelves were supplied.<sup>18</sup>

It is a striking fact that all these factories, three weaving establishments with their branches, seven tile factories and the mechanical establishment put together gave employment to 3600 Indians of whom 2800 were Christians. Workmen were looked upon merely as operators in the factories but much consideration was given to their material and spiritual welfare. All factories had provident institutions connected with them. Such as the savings fund and the sick fund, all the benefits of which the working men and women were permitted to enjoy.<sup>19</sup>

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18. The Mechanical Establishment of Basel Mission issued illustrated catalogue and furnishes list of articles manufactured by them.

19. Jaiprakash Raghavaiah, *op.cit.*, p.42.

The facilities for depositing savings from their wages for the purpose of encouraging among them the invaluable quality of thrift. Hostels were maintained in some of the factories for young men and girls. In several Basel Mission factories houses were built for the accommodation of families, and these were rented to them at a nominal rent.<sup>20</sup>

The Basel Mission Industries had created a spirit of self-reliance amongst many of the members of the congregations on the west coast. And many Indian Christians began to run book binding and carpentering establishment handed over by the missionaries. Many weavers were supplied with looms and other accessories to enable them to carry on their trade independently. At Cannanore and Mangalore several weaving establishments came into being, conducted independently by Indian Christians.

The Basel Mission Industries not only contributed their net profits to the general work of the Basel Mission carried on in India, but also gave substantial help to other permanently useful institutions.

One or two instances are quoted here: the buildings of the Basel Mission college MCC Calicut, were constructed entirely by funds contributed by the Basel Mission Industries. A substantial donation was also given for the Calicut Young Men's Christian Association's building

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20. *Inspector of Factories, IV Circle, Coimbatore, 1939, p.12.*

fund. These instances showed that the establishments were not mere money making concerns, but were also a means of doing good to the whole country and to its people.

The pioneer missionaries from the very commencement of their mission work in India, looked forward to an India thoroughly changed, socially intellectually, morally and physically.

### **INDUSTRIAL LABOUR**

The industrial workers in India constituted a permanent labour force such as existed in European countries. In fact most of the workers in organized industry were not permanently domiciled in the industrial centers in which they were employed but were villagers who came to the centers of employment for varying periods and whose homes were in the native villages.<sup>21</sup> Industrial labour within the Basel Mission church had an entirely different character. They formed a permanent class of workers, dependent solely on wages as a means of livelihood and wholly detached from the land. In fact owing to the peculiar circumstances which characterized the early history of the church, Christian labourers who found employment in factories had from the very beginning severed their connection with their ancestral villages. Families depending upon weaving establishments – whether handloom factories or power loom factories were found to be generally more prosperous than families

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21. *Ibid.*, p.15.

depending upon tile factories. For in weaving establishments the workers had to show more intelligence and manual dexterity wages on the whole were decidedly higher.

The effect of disparity in wages got very much aggravated by the varying demand for female labour in the two industries. In a weaving or a hosiery factory there were many delicate operations which could best be performed by female labourers. The operations which carried out in a tile factory were on the other hand so strenuous and fatiguing that female workers did not get much scope for employment. The following table which contains the number of males and females employed in the different factories situated near Christian congregations will show how families who depend on the tile industry were at a strenuous disadvantage.<sup>22</sup>

	Commonwealth Weaving & Dying works Calicut	Commonwealth Weaving Factory, Cannanore	Aaron's Spinning & Weaving Mills Pappinassery	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Puthiyara	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Feroke	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Codocal	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Olavakkodu	Standard Tile Works, Feroke	Malabar Tile Factory, Feroke
Male	299	441	929	186	309	121	164	385	371
Female	148	240	237	19	2	53	32	7	16

22. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

The scope of industrial welfare was not measured by wages and income alone. In order to obtain a complete picture of the conditions under which labourers lived was to examine the operation of various acts and administrative rules by which the state seeks to secure for the workmen certain minimum standards of health, safety and comfort inside the factory. A study of industrial welfare must also include all attempts made by the workers themselves, through organization and corporate endeavour, to establish better living conditions for themselves.

The Workmen's Compensation Act (1923), The Factories Act (1934), The Madras Maternity Benefit Act (1934) and the Payment of Wages Act (1936) from the four pieces of labour legislation with which industrial workers within the Basel Mission church were most intimately concerned. The factories Act laid down a maximum of 54 hours a week and 10 hours a day for adult workers in perennial factories. According to the Report on the working of the Factories Act, out of 1290 perennial factories in the Presidency 318 factories allowed less than 48 hours a week in the case of men, and 250 factories in the case of women.<sup>23</sup> All weaving establishments and tile factories in which the members of the Malabar church were employed however work for 54 hours a week with a maximum of 9 hours per day. About 48% of the workers in the congregation found employment in one large weaving establishment

which did not seem to possess adequate arrangements for the elimination of dust. The harmful effects of dust upon the operative's health attracted the attention of the Royal Commission on Labour in India: "In a number of factories the manufacturing processes disseminate a large quantity of dust, arrangements for the elimination of which are frequently defective. Mechanical systems which result in a constant flow of fresh air would add greatly to the comfort of the operative, and would in some cases improve his output, more important is the conservation of the worker's health, for the prevalence of dust may result in pulmonary disease. In certain manufacturing processes, particularly connected with cotton, jute and wool the reduction of dust to a minimum should be made obligatory."<sup>24</sup>

The Payment of wages Act proposed to secure the prompt payment of wages earned. According to this act the person responsible for the payment of wages in a factory had to fix periods in respect of which the wages should be payable, and no wage period should exceed one month in duration.

In the factories where Basel Mission Christians were employed wages were paid at the end of every week or fortnight. According to the Madras Maternity Benefit Act Perennial factories had to pay maternity benefit to women workers at the rate of 8 *annas* a day for seven weeks.

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24. *Report of the Royal Commission in Labour in India*, Government Press, p.56.

The workmen's compensation Act formed another measure which failed to achieve its purpose in certain cases. According to this Act if personal injury was caused as a workman by accident arising out of his employment, and the effects last for more than seven days, his employer was liable to pay compensation. Varying rates of compensation were prescribed for death, and disablement whether total or partial. Among welfare schemes undertaken by managers were given to the sick fund saving and endowment fund and the provident fund which formed a characteristic feature of the factories managed by the Commonwealth Trust.<sup>25</sup> In one Commonwealth Factory 67% of the labourers were reported to be members of one or other of these funds facilities for the worker's recreation and the education of their children were provided by the Aaron's Spinning and Weaving Mills. Night Schools were conducted for the benefit of factory hands by the Malabar Christian College at Calicut and by the Devadas Malabar Reconstruction Committee at Feroke. No co-operative credit societies were found in any factory, but co-operative stores for the benefit of factory hands were started by Aaron's Spinning and Weaving Mills, the Standard Tile Works and the Kerala Tile Works. In these factories no welfare work carried on by labour organizations.<sup>26</sup> The International Labour office on Industrial Labour in India States: "Welfare work is also carried on by some workers

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25. *Ibid.*, p.57.

26. International Labour Office, *Industrial Labour in India*, 1900, p.31.

organisations, the most notable examples being some of the postal unions in different parts of the Bombay presidency, the railway men's unions and the Ahamedabad Labour Union's. Some of the railway men's union have organized co-operative societies and various kinds of funds for the provision of specific benefit, unemployment and sickness benefits. The All India Railway men's Benefit Fund and Life Insurance. The Welfare work of the Ahamedabad Labour Union is carried out by different committees which respectively responsible for running hospitals for both indoor and outdoor patients. Although worker's seemed to be conscious of their disabilities at all stations no regular trade union was found anywhere except at Cannanore in Malabar.

When the Basel Mission Internationals passed into the hands of the Commonwealth Trust a definite change took place in the attitude of the management to the Christian employees. Formerly these factories were maintained by the Basel Mission for the purpose of providing a means of livelihood for converts and for training them in handicrafts.<sup>27</sup> Thus in 1913 out of 2428 persons employed in the Basel Mission Industrial establishments in Malabar 1824 or 75% were protestant Christians.<sup>28</sup> When these factories were transferred to an association which did not have any official connection with the Malabar church, the original purpose of these industrial concerns gradually receded into the

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27. H. HoFmann, *op.cit.*, p.22.

28. *The 74th Report of Basel Mission in South Western India, 1913*, p.20.

background. The following table which gives the total number of working days in weaving establishments and tile factories where most of the Christian labourers find employment will show how hard they were often but by economic fluctuations and labour troubles.<sup>29</sup>

The impact of Second World War posed great problems to the industrial establishments and also threats to labourers.

	Commonwealth Weaving & Dyeing works Calicut	Commonwealth Weaving Factory, Cannanore	Aaron's Spinning & Weaving Mills Pappinassery	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Puthiyara	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Feroke	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Codocal	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Olavakkodu	Standard Tile Works, Feroke	Malabar Tile Factory, Feroke
1938	303	277	309	310	310	309	274	268	280
1939	3056	233	308	300	312	306	193	277	281

No sort of unemployment insurance was found in any factory. It must however be admitted that the help rendered by the church out of its meager resources, commendable though it might be, formed but a poor substitute for unemployment relief funds of the contributing type to which an unemployed labour could turn without injury to his self respect.

29. *Inspector of Factories IV Circle, Coimbatore, 1913, p.17.*

## **The Commonwealth Trust (India) Limited, Calicut**

Mention was made of the intervention of the world war and the taking over of some firms by the British Government. After the war, the Commonwealth Trust Ltd was incorporated in 1919 for the purpose of acquiring and carrying on business formerly run by Basel Mission Trading Company. In 1978 keeping with the Government of India's policy of Indianisation of foreign policies a company under the name and style of Commonwealth Trust (India) Ltd came into existence. At present C.T.I.L. is a Public limited Company owned and managed entirely by Indians with its registered office at Mananchiri, Kozhikode. However, the purpose continues to be to support the various charitable institutions set up by the Basel Mission trust. The scheme of transfer of assets provide for limiting the dividend payable to the share holders of the company to 15% and to ensure that all surplus will be utilized for the benefit of the company.

The company is a pioneer in south India for the manufacture of terracotta tiles and hand woven fabrics and continues their leadership in these fields. The product of the company are well known in India and foreign markets. "Comtrust" has five tile factories and 2 hand loom weaving factories. The textile factories are situated at Calicut, Mananchira and Beach Road and the tile factories at Feroke, Puthiyara, Olavakkode in Kerala and Jeppo and Kudroli in Mangalore.<sup>30</sup>

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30. Hofman, *op. cit.*, p.31.

The material is said to have been woven in Calicut first and the material got the name 'CALICO' from the name Calicut.

The colour which subsequently became famous as khaki was originally invented by this firm, likewise, the SHIKARI CLOTH which is now very popular was first introduced by this weaving unit. The company also supplies fire retardant woolen upholstery for seats and curtain materials to Indian Air lines. East India Hotels (OBERIO Group) Indian Hotels (Taj Group) and to I.T.D.C. and Indian Railways.

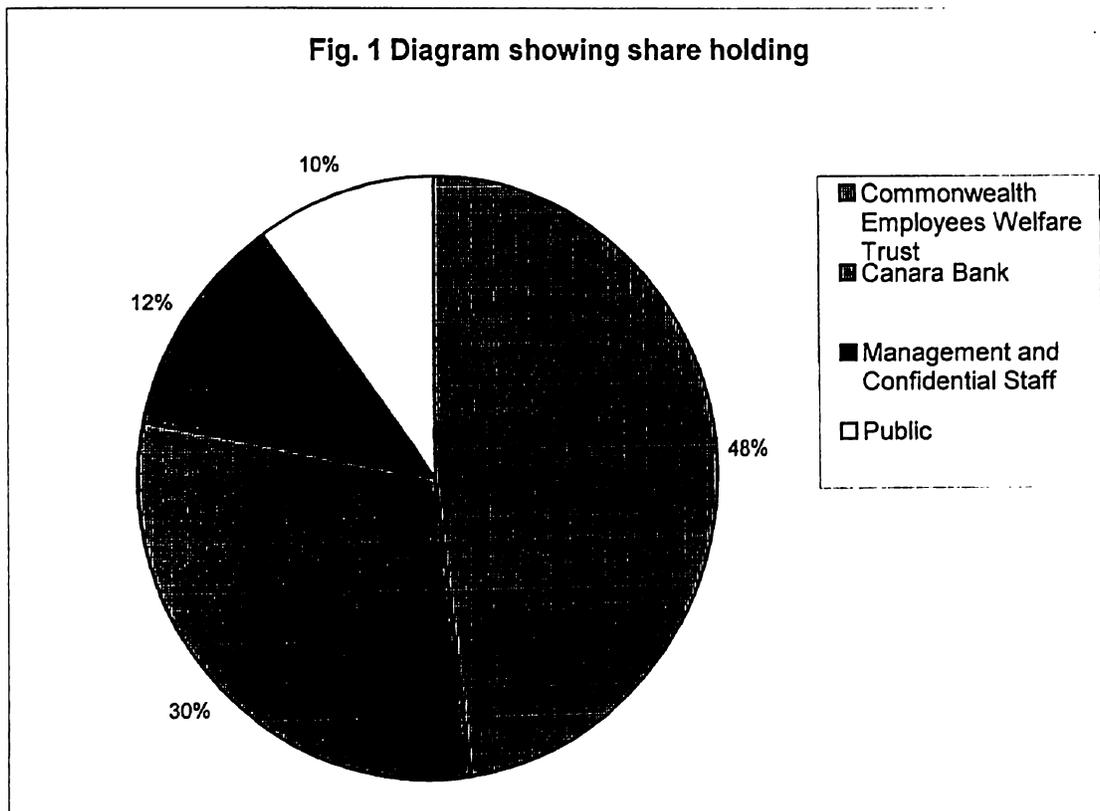
The main business of tile division is to manufacture and sell terracotta tiles and auxiliary products. The companies domestic market for tile products include, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra. The company also exports tiles to middle east countries.

### **Capital Structure**

The Share capital of the company is 1,25,000 equity shares of Rs.10 each, which is fully paid of this 50,000 shares have been allotted in pursuant to a scheme of amalgamation without payment being received in cash. The capital structure also contains, 5000 unsecured special debentures of Rs.1000 each issued and allotted pursuant to the scheme of amalgamation to COMTRUST Charitable Trust A major portion of these debentures is held by employee welfare trust which has been formed exclusively for the benefit of employee. In 1977, as per FERA Act at least 51% of the shares had to be with Indian Resident.

Accordingly, the share holding pattern of the company was arranged as follows:

Commonwealth employees welfare Trust	: 48%
Canara Bank	: 30%
Management and Confidential	: 12%
General Public	: 10%
Total	:100%

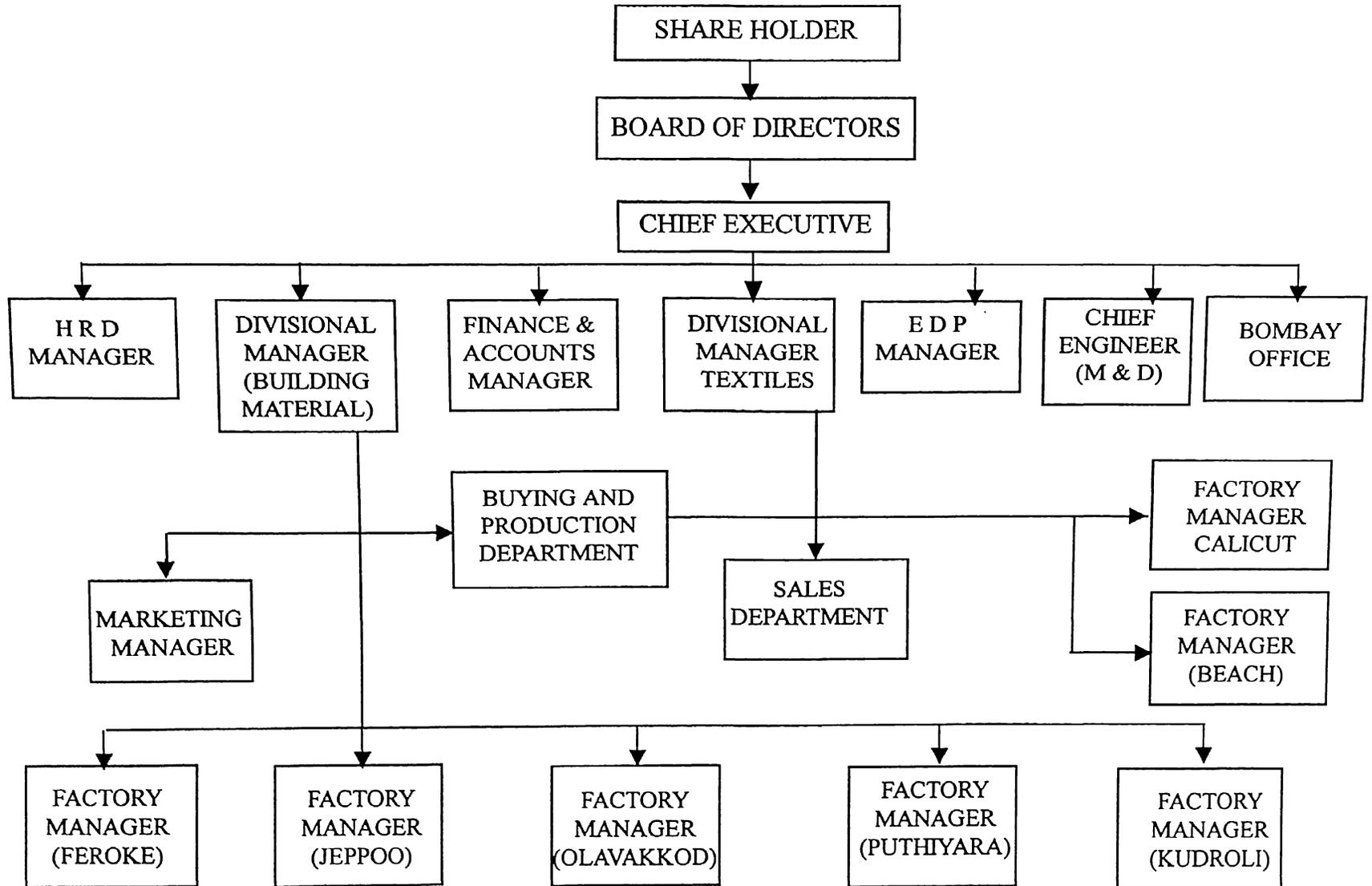


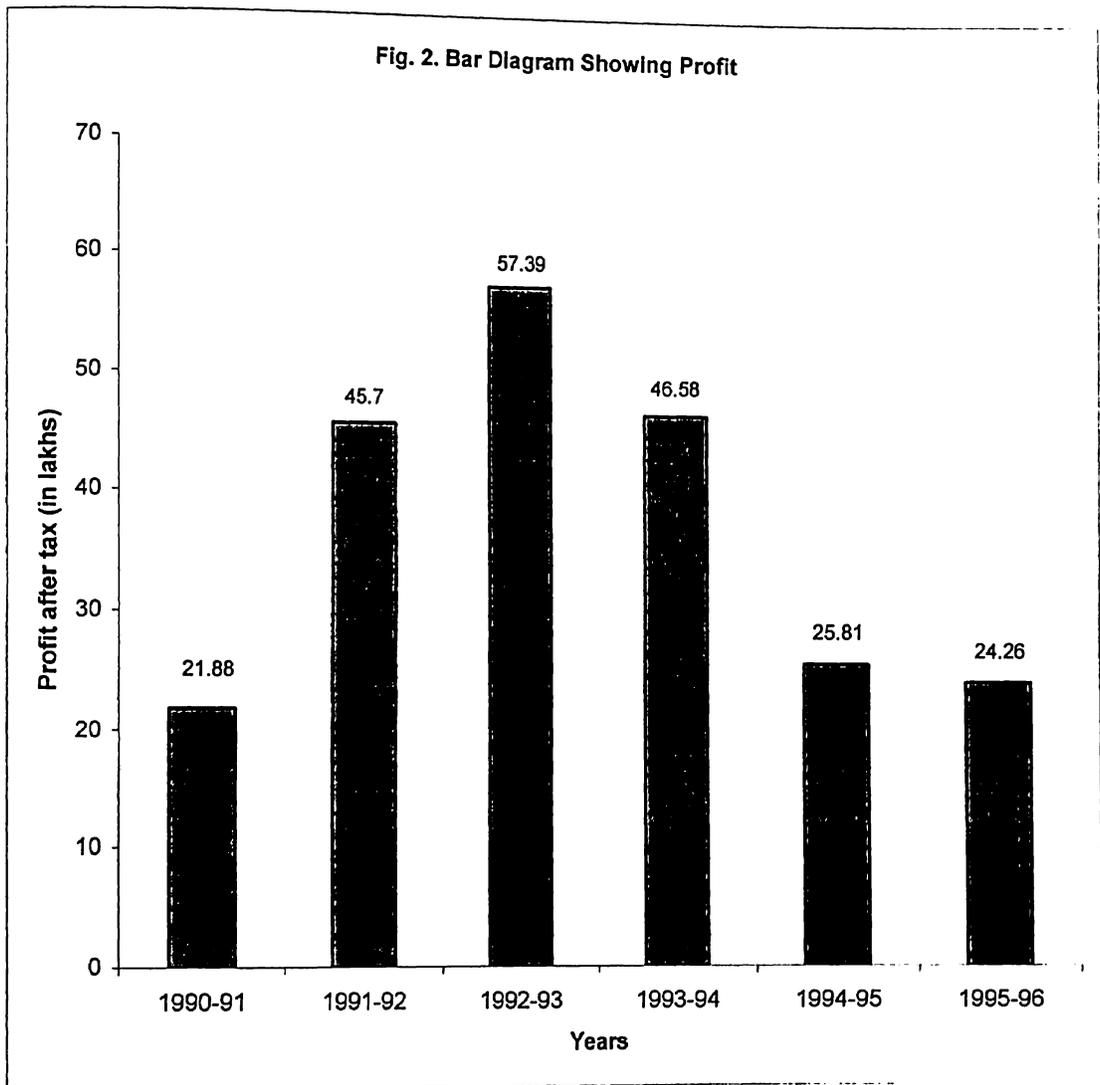
## **Organization structure**

Organisation structure of C.T.I.L. is internal arrangement of group of individual, who are working together for the common goal of the company. The company is constituted with seven elected directors including Chairman, twenty executive staff and 242 other grades.

The company is managed by the Chief executive elected by the Board, is not a director but an employee, of the company. The Chief Executive is assisted by Divisional Manager Textiles and all other functional managers.

# ORGANISATION STRUCTURE





**Source: Compiled from the Profit & Loss Statement and other Financial Data of Commonwealth Trust Office, Calicut**

## **Production Textile with Tile**

The Commonwealth Trust (India) Ltd has two types of products – Tile and Textile. The Textile Division of Comtrust produces only cotton hand woven fabrics for this purpose the company employees 420 looms in the two factories. Over 1000 men and women are employed in the factories. The products of textile division are woven on both plain and Jacquard looms. Main raw material of textile goods is yarn, incidental raw-materials are dyes and chemicals.

The tile division of Comtrust produces, different types of tiles mainly Terracotta Tiles. The factory alone employees about 2000 persons. The main raw materials for the production of tile is clay and firewood.

### **a) Production of Fabrics**

The textile production process is controlled by a separate department in the factory called Production Programming and Control Department (P.P.C). The main function of materials on the basis of priority of orders.

The department consists of a team of well qualified and experienced personnel for conducting day to day operations. PP&C Department provide timely information to the dye-house, yarn store, winding section and warping section. In each stage of the process of

production, there is another department for developing new designs and samples.

The production is done according to the nature of orders received from the concerned party. The order contains the pattern number, quantity required etc on the basis of this, sales department will prepare H.O. Text order and forwarded to PP&C, PP&C programme the production on the basis of this.<sup>31</sup>

### **Production Process**

Textile production consists of different processes starting from dyeing and ends to hemming and stitching. All these process are done in respective sections, viz. Dye House, Bobin Winding section, Warping Section, Weaving Section and Hemming and Stitching Section.

#### ***1) Dye House***

Dye House is an important department in textile factory. The yarn must be dyed before being issued to weavers for this purpose PP&C prepares dye order to the dye house. The dyeing process is done manually, but employing all modern technology known available to achieve an excellent range of rich colours. A fabulous colour range is developed out of most sophisticated imported vats, naphthasis and

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31. *Interview with Vijayan*, HRD Manager, Comtrust, Calicut, March 10, 2002.

dazzling reactives. Mainly four types of dyes are used for the process, they are vat, dyes reactives, Naphthalas and Acid dyes.

The dyeing process starts with KIER BOILING. It is done by using steam. The purpose of this is to remove impurities contained in the grey yarn. Kier Boiling is done by using caustic soda and detergent. This is done for about 8 hours after that it is washed within the boiling vessel by spraying water through a pipe which is inside the boiling vessel. Next step is bleaching of yarn using bleaching powder to give white colour to the yarn.

After bleaching it is again washed in the ordinary water. Then it is washed in sulphuric acid and then in soda ash water after that it is washed in the ordinary water again and then put it in a machine to squeeze the water then sorted into different counts.

For dyeing the yarn the dye is to be mixed in hot water which is heated by passing steam into it up to a certain degree Celsius. To make dyes first they take the required colour which is in the powder form. Then it is pasted by using Texta pole oil. After that caustic soda water is mixed with this. Then sodium hydrosulphate which is in powder form is mixed with this coloured water to get original colour. The coloured water is slowly mixed with hot water which is filled in tubes. And then the yarn put into this water. It is kept there about 40minutes. Woollen yarns is to be dyed for 2½ hours and jute is to be dyed for 1, 1½ hours. In case of jute

peroxide bleaching is also done. Vat dyes got indirect colour. The colour seems to be different in the tube and when came into contact with the atmosphere, it will get its original colour. The dyed chamber is kept there fore ½ a day and then dyed a yarn is bundled if any defect is found it is sent for correction.

## ***2. Bobin Winding Section***

When dyeing is over, the yarn is sent to PP&C department for inspection. After inspection PP&C department issued the yarn to bobbin winding section. The Bobin winding is done manually. After bobbin winding, the bobbins are again reached at the PP&C department.

## ***3. Warping Section***

After bobbin winding the PP&C department issued the bobbin to warping section for preparing warp. This warp is stored in PP&C department. Then on the basis of priority, PP&C issues the warp to weavers along with weaver's card.

## ***4. Weaving Section***

For fresh weaving warps are drawn through Healds and Recks. These are tied up with Heald Shaft on the other and hand warps are joined with the balance in the looms. Mean while PP&C issues warp yarns to the pern winding section. A sample of cloth must be approved by the supervisor.

When weaving is over, the fabric is inspected by weaving shed supervisor. They measure the cloth and record it in the weaver's card and affix their signature. Then this weaver's card is forwarded to PP&C department. On receipt of this PP&C prepares a set of production record card showing pattern number, quantity, pieces etc. Then the material along with the production record card is forwarded to hemming and stitching section.

### ***5. Hemming and Stitching Section***

In this section the finishing work is done. The finishing work contain stitching, ironing rolling etc. Rolling is done for the purpose of dispatching. If there is need for pre shrinking the material returned to dye house for washing it in the ordinary water. This section transfers the finished material to the warehouse along with production record card.

### **Production of Tiles**

The raw materials for the production of tile is clay and fire woods. These are purchased locally from the outside contractors. Two type of clay are used for the production. Lean clay and plastic clay. These are generally available from the paddy fields, from where it is transported to factories. Clay is not available in rainy season so it is purchased in bulk and stored in clay dump. For the production of tiles lean clay-yellow in

colour and plastic clay-black in colour are to be mixed in fixed proportion. Different factories adopt different ratios for mixture.

**Ratio adopted by different factories and yearly requirement of clay**

Factories	Lean clay	Plastic clay	Ratio of clay mix
Olavakkode	8,400 boxes	8,400 boxes	1 : 1
Feroke	38,400 boxes	19,200 boxes	2 : 1
Puthiyara	13,200 boxes	13,200 boxes	1 : 1
Jeppoo	19,200 boxes	9,600 boxes	2 : 1
Kudroli	9,000 boxes	18,000 boxes	1 : 2

Source: The Commonwealth Trust Office, Calicut.

Tile factories stores clay for a certain period to cope with the seasonal fluctuations. The stock usually kept at every month of May. Over and above the clay required for current year production are as follows.

**Table showing clay in stock**

Factory	Lean Clay	Plastic clay
Olavakkode	11 months	11 months
Feroke	9 months	12 months
Puthiyara	10 months	10 months
Jeppoo	11 months	11 months
Kudroli	11 months	11 months

Clay purchased during a season is estimated by using the following formula.

$$\text{Clay purchased} = X \times (Y.z)$$

Where X = Quantity consumed in 12 months on 100% full working

Y = Stock in the dumps both Lean and Plastic

Z = Stock on 31<sup>st</sup> May.

On receipt of the requirement for a year the purchase department sends tender notices to various clay suppliers and arrange for clay purchase. Another important raw material for production of tile is firewood. It is purchased on contract basis and it should be supplied in split and stacked form.

#### Yearly Requirement of Firewood at Different Factories

Factory	Kiln section	Drying Section
Olavakkode	3,600 c.metre	900 c.metre
Feroke	10,000 c.metre	6,000 c.metre
Puthiyara	4,800 c.metre	2,000 c.metre
Jeppoo	900 chowkes	165 chowkes
Kudroli	1,080 chowkes	320 chowkes

Source: Commonwealth Trust Office, Calicut.

Before starting production a programme of production is made for each factory. Head office production department prepares a production programme for each months for each factory based on number of potential working days. This is arrived at after deducting the number of Sundays and other festival/national holidays during that month.

## **Production Process**

The tile production process is having five process which are done in respective sections or departments. They are clay section, pugmill section, press departments drying section and kiln department.

### ***1. Clay Section***

In this section the main process is clay preparing and transporting from clay dump to vat. The clay – Lean and Plastic mixed in the required proportion. The clay is kept there some time in order to remove excess water.

### ***2. Pugmil Section***

The clay mixed is then fed into the main pugmill. This is done by filling the clay in rail trolley and lifting it to the top of the feeding place. The clay from here is then fed into the pugmill manually. The clay is extruded through a mouth piece and it is cut into blocks and stored.

### ***3. Press Department***

After storing for two days, these blocks are sent to second pugmill where it is cut into slabs. The slabs are transferred to Revolver Press for pressing. Smearing oil is used to avoid sticking. The pressed tiles are received on a wood pallet on one side and it is transferred and placed on conveyer belt manually on the other side. Expression roller is used for cutting houridis, bricks, flooring tiles, etc.

### ***4. Drying section***

Pressed tiles (wet) are kept on the kiln top for drying. Normally it will take 10 days for drying. During monsoon it will take 20 to 25 days to get it completely dried. The factory uses artificial drying also by burning fire wood block on the Kilm Verandha and Kiln tops. When tiles are kept on racks the pressed tiles should completely be dried before it can be burnt.

### ***5. Kiln Department***

The kiln is the heart of the industry from which the main process is carried out. All the dried goods are sent to the kiln for baking for about 4 to 5 days. The kiln is an old type of cyclic kiln having a number of chambers and each chamber has fixed capacity. The dried tiles are brought to the chamber and is sealed with bricks and clay paste.

Firing is done through feed holes from the top of the Kiln firewood is used for burning the dried tiles. After keeping them for 4 or 5 days

these tiles are taken out and then sorted into different classes as per the company's specified standard and stacked separately.

## **Marketing**

Comtrust has separate sales department for marketing their products, both in domestic and foreign markets Domestic sales again divided as local sales and country sales. A major portion of tile products and a small portion of textile products are sold in local markets. A major portion of textile products are exported also a small portion of tile products are exported to middle east countries.

The company is a pioneer in South India for manufacture of 'Terracotta Tiles' and Hand woven Fabrics and continues their leadership on this fields. Apart from leading textile stores in the country, the special customers of Comtrust fabrics are large hotel groups such as East India Hotels (Oberoy Groups) Indian Hotels (Taj group) various projects under Indian Tourism Development Corporation, Railway, Indian Airlines etc company supplies fire resistant furnishing galley curtain and light weight blankets to Indian Airlines. The annual turn over of textile products comes approximately to 4 crores of total production about 65% of total production is exported. Domestic market for textile products cover mainly metropolitan cities like Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. 95% of sale of tile products are made through domestic market and only 5% is exported.

## **Marketing of Tile Products**

A major portion of tile products are marketed in domestic market. Marketing of tile products are arranged in two ways, directly or through agents. The direct sale of tile products is rare. Major portion is marketed through dealers. For the purpose of sale production the company appoint commission agent all over India. The rate of commission is between 5% and 7.5%. The Agents appoint sub agent also.

The company receives the purchase order directly or through agent from the customer on receipt of purchase order a set of confirmation order is prepared, first copy to the customer second to the main dealer and last copy to the concerned factory where delivery is made. Simultaneously sales department instruct the factory to despatch the required quantity to buyers destination. Invoicing takes place at factory. The original copy of Invoice along with Way bill forwarded to Agent through banks in receipt of the amount the bank credits that amount to company's account. The export sale is also made through agents by water transport.

## **Marketing of Textile Products**

Major portion of textile products are exported. There is domestic market also for the textile products. Now the company concentrated on exports. These exports are channelised through their London agent, Parry

Murray & Co. Parry Murray and Company is not an agent because the Company does not pay commission to them. They just buy the products of Comtrust and sell it at higher rate.

### **Domestic market working**

On receipt of orders from customers, textile sales department prepare H.O.Text order and passed to PP&C department. PP&C after checking it, returned to sales department specifying the delivery period and other remarks, if any then the textile department confirm the order.

In the order along with the items required the buyer will also mentioned their banker's name and address, mode of dispatch ie. by lorry/rail etc. Textile department then give a description of the order to factory. After completing production the finished goods goes to warehouse. Invoicing is done here and the goods mound to dispatch section where it is packed on gunny bundles. On one side of the bale buyer's address is shown and also the gross and net weight of the bale and relative RR/LR are sent to textile department together with the invoice for onward transmission to party.

Textile department will prepare bill of exchange on the party's name to recover the value bill of exchange like:

D/A : Document against acceptance

DA : Document on payment.

Depending on the credit worthiness and the relationship with the buyer, a period say 30/40/60 days are allowed to buyer for the payment of D/A bill. Bill of exchange together with copy of invoice, original LR/RR are forwarded to Comtrust and they in turn negotiate the documents to buyer's bank for collection. On receipt of payment from Party's bank, the process are credited to Comtrust's account.

## Export

For Export to any country, the company has to obtain a code number from RBI and also from chief controller of Imports and Exports. Parry Murray & Company forwarded the orders to Comtrust. The order specify material required width, length, rate, buyer's address, identification mark for showing outside bales, destination point, mode of shipment, delivery required, terms etc. The company accept orders with letter of credit, is safe to the company.

As soon as the invoices are ready, company arrange for inspection by textile committee. For inspection the application is given in triplicate together with a copy of invoice to Textile Committee.

The Textile Inspector will examine the materials and give back 2 copies of application with his endorsement. Then apply for certificate of origin to Textile Committee by sending the 2 copies of combination form given by Inspector. Then the Textile, committee will issue, the certificate

of origin in duplicate. The original of this document is forwarded to the agents. This document is necessary for the buyer for claiming duty free at the time of clearance of goods.

As soon as the inspection is over, the goods are dispatched to Cochin/Madras for arranging shipment to buyer's destination point.

After inspection and dispatch of goods the following papers are forwarded to clearing agent:

- a) 6 copies of invoice
- b) 6 copies of packing list
- c) GR form in duplicate
- d) Draw back claim form (for handloom goods draw is 3% on F.O.B.value).

This is in cash discount allowed by the Government to the exporter for Central Exercise duty paid on yarn used for exports on the basis of foreign order. Bank will advance 70% of the value of the order to exporter as pre-shipment advance (Packing credit) charging nominal interest. Bank will also discount the bill given to them for negotiation and credit the amount to the party in advance before they receive the amount from Overseas.

### Export Earning of COMTRUST for Five years

Years	Export in lakh	% of total turnover
1990-91	96.11	14.41
1991-92	185.20	18.50
1992-93	258.24	23.15
1993-94	278.21	21.85
1994-95	302.00	19.54

### Sales Analysis

The sales performance of the company for the last years shown an increasing trend both in textiles and tiles. The demand for both handloom items as well as for terracotta products continues to be good and present indication is that this situation will continue in the immediate future.

Year	Textile	Tile	Total
1990-91	1.44	5.23	6.67
1991-92	3.09	6.92	10.01
1992-93	3.78	7.37	11.13
1993-94	4.30	8.43	12.73
1994-95	4.50	10.90	15.40

Source: The Commonwealth Trust Office Records, Calicut.

Comtrust has seven factories. Two textile and 5 tile factories. Textile factories situated in Calicut, Kerala. Of the 5 tile factories 3 are in Kerala and 2 in Karnataka.

The tile division of Comtrust Produces different types of tiles, more than 86% of the companies products are roofing tiles. The company is pioneer in India for the manufacture of Terracotta Tiles. The manufacturing process of tile include different sections clay section, pugmill section, press department, drying department, and kiln section. More than 95% of tile products are marketed in domestic market. A small portion is exported to Middle East Countries.

The Hand woven fabrics of textile division is famous in India. Textile division produces material only against orders.

The raw materials required for manufacture is yarn dyes and chemicals. The production process include dyeing, warping and weaving. The textile division export about 65% of the total production. The domestic market include metropolitan cities.

The company has been performing excellently in export business. To day Comtrust tiles and textiles adorn some of the best known land marks in India and abroad.

In the end it can be summed up that the Basel Mission's Industrial activities were the pioneering efforts in modern manufacturing in both

Malabar and S. Canara. The Basel Mission produced a technology oriented labour force which played a pivotal; role in absorbing and transforming new technology.

## THE BASEL MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN MALABAR

The aim of Basel mission educational work in Malabar was to disseminate the Christian message and to train local assistants. While attempting to achieve the goal, the missionaries also involved in establishing schools, promotion of the vernacular and the literature. During the 1860's a great debate was going on among the protestant missionaries as to whether education could be a means of evangelism in India or not. Some agreed to the view that education could be a means whereas some others felt that it would be a distortion of the commandment found in the Bible. Hence simple preaching on crucified Christ would be sufficient for the work in India. In this debate the Basel Mission started their policy as follows:

Being convinced that preaching is very necessary and that teaching should not be neglected. We neither belong to those who think that the mission has no business to establish schools, nor to those who believe that India should chiefly be evangelized by means of educational establishments.<sup>1</sup>

In the Malabar context the poor could not do their education and continued to be slaves to the landlords due to poverty and oppression. In this context it was further stated:

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1. *33rd Basel Mission Reports for 1872*, p. 33.

... we do the utmost in our power to establish primary schools in all our churches so that even the poorest and most ignorant may be brought up in all the nurture and a domination of the Lord and may receive that amount of education that will enable them to read and understand the word of God and to become intelligent members of their churches.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the Basel Mission established various types of school not only to spread the Christian faith, but also aimed at imparting basic education to all converts. According to the rule laid down in the Basel Mission, the parents of the Christian children were bound to send them to school till they were about fourteen years old.<sup>3</sup>

## **Types of Educational Work**

### **1. Schools**

The Basel Mission schools were used as the main means for their work in Malabar. It was said: "it has been our anxious desire to implant religion in the hearts of the pupils."<sup>4</sup> When the Mission commenced their work there was an indigenous system of education. In the Pyal School the system mainly emphasized the learning of Hindu scriptures and the

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2. 'Basel German Evangelical Mission' in *Harvest Field*, Vol. VI, August, 1895, p.318.

3. Peter Wilson Prabhakar, *The Basel Mission in South Canara*, Mangalore, 1988, p.20.

4. *Basel Mission Report for the year 1873*, p.3.

teachers taught them from their memory, thus seemed to be inadequate since the language used was very high Sanskrit which was not used in daily life, the memory was the only factor that was important. It was only the Guru's memory as well as complimentary forms of address that he taught. The Collectorate and Thahsildari schools could not survive for one reason or other. The Collectorate schools were open to everyone who belonged to any religion the leading citizens probably the high castes did not accept the policy of admitting every body.<sup>5</sup> Thus the caste structure was one of the main obstacles which prevented the people from gaining education. This was the context in which the Basel Mission started its schools in Malabar during the end of 1830's. The Basel Mission established mainly two kinds of schools. Schools for non-Christians and schools for Christians. Under each kind there were more than four categories of schools.

### **1. Schools for Non-Christians**

The Basel Mission established a number of schools for non-Christian even before they organized a congregation. These schools were opened for everybody irrespective of caste and creed. The schools were recognized as a means to impart Christian knowledge among the non-Christians. The mission's annual report states that their motivation was to give deep impression about Christianity on the non-Christian children.

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5. Mustafa Kamal Pasha, *History of Education in Malabar under British Rule*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis, Calicut University, 1991, pp.60-63.

So that they would later convert themselves to Christianity and live as responsible members of the society. These schools seemed to be one of the main contacts that the mission could make with the non-Christians. The mission opened the following types of schools for non-Christian among the labour class.<sup>6</sup>

#### a) Elementary Vernacular Schools

The Basel Mission established an elementary vernacular school in every station when they began their work. The first Mission school at Tellicherry<sup>7</sup> was founded by Hermann Gundert on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 1839 a month after Gundert had arrived in Nettur near Tellicherry, the first station of the Mission in Malabar. In the beginning there were only twelve pupils on the roll and soon the number was increased to forty. Likewise he also opened another at Nettur and taught Bible for one hour a day in each school. The subjects taught were Malayalam, English, Science and Geography that were written by Gundert himself. Christian children also attend these schools where there was no separate parochial schools.<sup>8</sup> Little English was taught in these schools in the hope that it would attract the pupils to the schools and therein the schools would prosper in course of time.<sup>9</sup> In 1863 a vernacular school was erected by

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6. *B.M.R. for 1862*, p.40.

7. K.P. Varid, *Dr. Hermann Gundert*, Kottayam: NBS, 1973, p.34. See Appendix.

8. *23rd B.M.R. for 1862*, p.64.

9. *26th B.M.R. for 1865*, p.66.

the liberality of a Paris gentleman Kosru Dara Shah and it was opened in 1864 with about 50 to 60 boys.

Samuel Hebich, one of the pioneer missionaries of Basel Mission in India started the first Kanarese mission school in Mangalore in the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 1836 with a Sudra teacher by name Timmappa. In 1841 when Hebich moved to Cannanore he started an English school where Ambu Gurunathan, a Tiya who was popular among the people was appointed as a teacher.<sup>10</sup>

A vernacular school was also opened in Chombala and in July 1864 a vernacular school for non-Christian boys was reopened in Putiangadi in Calicut district under an active Christian master but the attendance did not give much encouragement to the mission. Some objected to send their children to attend these schools because of the teaching of Bible in the schools which had a prominent place among the subjects instead of Hindu scripture. There was objection to the mission collecting the school fee from the pupils because the pupils thought that they should not pay for studying Christian books. Few only however left.<sup>11</sup>

The religious instruction was pretty much in the hands of catechists, although non-Christian school masters continued to be

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10. P.S. Velayudhan, *Kerala Charithram: A Compilation of Kerala History*, Vol.I, Cochin, 1973, p.120.

11. *19th B.M.R. for 1858*, p.59.

employed. The mission intended to replace them by Christians especially in the year 1860 because of the former's inefficiency. Inefficiency referred here could be meant that either the teachers failed to teach the pupils well or they were not able to lead the pupils in the goal of missionaries which was to convert them to Christianity, therefore the latter must have been the probable reason. In Calicut a brother convert had commenced to teach Bible History and English in 1858 in one of the vernacular schools attended by sixty schools in spite of a higher school fee, which was demanded in consequence. The boys had made good progress. Many of them were better versed in the Bible stories, than in their mythological fables. In the Codacal school also a little English was taught.

#### **b) Franco-Vernacular School**

A Franco-vernacular school located at Mahe, the French territory near Tellicherry was opened on the thirteenth of September 1881. In this school Malayalam, French and English were taught.<sup>12</sup>

In the year 1883 there were 108 boys of whom 11 were Christians.<sup>13</sup>

#### **C. Anglo-Vernacular schools**

The Basel Mission started Anglo-Vernacular schools at Cannanore, Tellicherry and Calicut. But at the end of 1875 it was discontinued. The

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12. *42nd B.M.R. for 1881*, pp.68-69.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

main purpose of these schools was to bring Hindu youth who aimed at a higher standard of education, under the influence of the gospel. Although the mission took great pains to give sound secular instructions in these Hindu youths, they never lost to their chief aim and saw that their endeavours are not in vain.<sup>14</sup>

The upper and middle class Hindu society had a desire for English education and the probable reason behind this was that English was the language of the rulers and therefore it would be an avenue to a place of profit and honour in the government office. Everyday the school opened daily with the reading of a portion of the holy scripture or the bible and prayer in the morning and closed with a short prayer in the evening. The subjects taught in these schools were English, Malayalam, Arithmetic, Geography and Indian History. Bible was taught and pupils failed in a class unless they fetched high marks in it.

The schools admitted children without regard to caste or creed and most regular scholars in each class were exempted from paying the school fees. Moorkoth Kumaran who studied in Tellicherry Mission school as a free scholar right up to the matriculation class stated that “there are significant number of men who were similarly benefited by one.”<sup>15</sup>

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14. *B.M.R, 1839*, p.35.

15. Moorkoth Kumaran, *Basel Mission Sangham, Speech delivered on the Celebration of 100th year of Basel Mission in India Tellicherry, 1934*, p.23.

Strict discipline was maintained in these schools some Muslim boys were dismissed in Tellicherry on disciplinary grounds because they did not submit to the order and discipline of the school.

There were several conversions from these schools and both teachers and pupils got converted. When there was a conversion the attendance used to fluctuate.<sup>16</sup> There were rivalry government schools since the B.M. withdraw from the grants-in-aid system and recognized its schools along its own lines.

Since the government made a rule that all the candidates who apply for government job should pass government school examination, the pupil who wanted a position in government offices left mission schools. As a result the school at Cannanore was closed down in 1861 and Calicut school in 1863. It is mentioned that the English school at Kallai was shifted to the centre of the town east of Mananchira and in 1859 for the first time the school was found to be described as B.G.E.M. Anglo Vernacular school.<sup>17</sup>

At Tellicherry during 1858-57 the number of pupils were greatly diminished on account of the establishment of Roman Catholic opposition schools. The reason behind this seems to be religious that the Roman Catholics did not like the spreading of protestant faith and the non-

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16. *31st B.M.R. for 1870*, pp.19-20.

17. *B.M.R. 1838*, p.21.

Christian as again in the religious grounds did not like the way the missionaries tried to induce Christianity to the pupils.<sup>18</sup>

In the year 1873 the changes in the staff of teachers, the dismissal of the head masters, and want of Christian teachers proved a great drawback of the Anglo Vernacular school at Cannanore. The building of the Anglo vernacular school at Tellicherry had to be enlarged as it was too small to accommodate the large number of boys who attend the schools. Of all the Anglo-vernacular schools, Calicut had in 1873 the most numerous attendance, namely 221 boys and was in a very efficient condition.

The Brennan school in Tellicherry was found by an English man Edward Brennan and was directed by Reinhardt.<sup>19</sup>

The Brennan school has transformed into a college imparting education to the society.

#### **d) High Schools**

The Basel Mission established high schools too. Very few people appear to have considered seriously the immense good, which the Basel Mission had accomplished through the founding of the Basel Mission Parsi High School for boys at Tellicherry in 1859. It was a middle school earlier. A Parsi gentleman had donated a large sum of money towards the

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18. *B.M.R. 1839*, p.46.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

founding of the school and hence the term Parsi was added to the name of the school. The small girls school at Calicut opened in 1846 attained the dignity of a high school in 1902.<sup>20</sup> The Manager and Headmistress of the school Metzger introduced a course in Hygiene and Elementary Nursing. Many pupils studied in B.E.M. Calicut schools. Vatakara attained recognition for high school in 1923.

The Mission granted loans in addition to free scholarship, to deserving Christian students. For this, the mission had a special stipend fund, with a capital of Rs.2000000 for the whole mission field on the coast. This system of stipend seemed to be a part of evangelization that non Christians would be attracted to Christianity. In these schools also the study of Bible had a prominent place. There were discussions regarding caste, Marumakkathayam, idolatry and other institutions of Hinduism and the schools provided places for pupils belonging to several caste groups to come and study together Brennan school was later raised to a high school. The Mission High School was intended for the poor.<sup>21</sup>

### e) College

The B.G.E.M. had only one college in Calicut known as Basel German Mission College. In 1872, the B.G.E.M. Anglo-Vernacular school in Calicut was raised to a middle School. During the last decade of

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20. V.G.M. Pavamani, "History of the Work of the Basel Mission in Malabar." In *Malabar Christian College Centenary Souvenir, 1848-1948*, Calicut, 1948, p.17.

21. *23rd B.M.R. for 1862*, p.65.

the 19th century Headmasters and Managers changed in quick succession and the time was ripe for further expansion of the school and to appoint teachers of still higher qualifications. The non-caste Hindus, especially the prominent members of the Tiya community were beginning to feel the need of an institution which would provide collegiate education for them for, unfortunately the only college in Calicut, the Guruvayurappan college had its doors closed to them. They, therefore looked up to the German missionaries for opening at least a second grade college which would cater to the educational needs of their community and ultimately to their social and financial advancement.<sup>22</sup> In 1907, an application was forwarded to the Madras University for the affiliation of the Boys High School as a second grade college. The affiliation was granted in 1908 and the first college class was formed in March 1909 with Rev. W. Muller as principal. The class consisted of 15 students of which two were women. The optional subjects provided for were Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Ancient History, Modern History and Logic. The Laboratories were well equipped and the library contained a fairly large selection of good books. With the institution raised to the level of college, a hostel which could accommodate at least fifty students was erected in the campus to the west of the college at a cost of nearly 14000.

Thus B.G.M. College was the only college where the students belong to lower caste could get college education. It was reported that for

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22. 71st B.M.R. for 1910, p. 20.

the purpose of perfecting the equipment of the college Hindus contributed Rs.50000 and it was said: “many donations were accompanied by letter conveying the hearty wishes and warm sympathies of the donors.”<sup>23</sup>

On August 7, 1914 when England declared war on Germany, the B.G.M. college which depended largely on financial help from friends in Germany and Switzerland felt the blow as perhaps no other institution had in the whole of the sub continent. The whole missionary activity was crippled and several new schemes had to be dropped. The name of the college was prudently changed to Basel Mission College the “G” (for German) being dropped to appease the Government authorities. In 1919 when the home board of the Basel Missionaries decided to withdraw their missionaries from the Nilgris and Malabar and confine their activities to South Canara, the Madras Christian college then very generously came forward to take up the management of the college and high school. The name of the college was changed once again, now to Malabar Christian college the dignitaries both Europeans and Indian led the institution to fame it achieved in the Malabar region. The years 1927 to 1935 saw a gradual increase in the strength of the institution as a whole both in the college and in the high school which had fallen considerably during the period of economic depression that followed the first world war.

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23. *71st B.M.R. for 1910*, p.22.

The missionary policy of admitting children without regard to caste and creed provided the people chances to be educated, all castes coming together under one roof.

### **Schools for children**

The Basel Mission started educational institutions for Christians. To impart education to all local converts so that they may be able to read and write, particularly able to read Bible and live a responsible member in the congregation was the main motive behind this and one of the primary duties of the missionaries. A considerable amount of money was spent on the education of the Christians which included primary and high education.

#### **a) Parochial schools**

The elementary schools for Christian children were called parochial school. Since 1848, the mission opened parochial schools in almost every congregation with a Christian teacher. There was a compulsory rule that parents or guardians of Christian children were to send them to school till they were 14 years old. This rule was sometimes not followed as some parents failed to see any benefit in getting their children educated.<sup>24</sup>

The course of instruction comprises Bible stories of the New and old testaments and the learning by heart of scriptures passages, reading

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24. *B.M.R. for the year 1865.*

and writing of the native language outline of geography, the elements of arithmetic, grammar and portions of native classics.

There were 28 parochial schools in Malabar and of the 28 parochial schools, 3 are exclusively for girls and 2 are infant schools. The parochial schools may be fitly called the backbone of the native church.<sup>25</sup> These schools were also the nursery where the tender minds were stored with a certain amount of Bible knowledge and hymns, all learnt by heart.

The interest taken in parochial schools, as purely Christians institutions was far from satisfactory and daily attendance in many instances were very deficient. The parents were to pay fees towards the education. But in the case of very poor parents either part or the whole of the fees was defrayed from the poor fund. This was done on application of the parents in order to train them to a sense of responsibility for the education of their children.

The parochial schools were sometimes in remote villages where there were no other schools. Hence non-Christians attend these schools. Most of the parochial schools were of the primary grade and the education in them was in the vernacular with the exclusion of English. They were as rule attended by both sexes together. But in larger congregations separate schools for boys and girls were maintained and classes opened in which English was taught.

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25. *B.M.R. for 1876*, p.63.

## **b) Night schools**

Night schools were conducted at night after the day's work. According to the rule laid down by the Basel Mission no one would be admitted into full membership of the church unless he or she was able to read and write. But some times this rule was waved, where a large number had been admitted in a congregation and conducted night school to make up the deficiency. Writing, reading and arithmetic were taught in these schools.<sup>26</sup> During 1898-99 a night school was opened at Codocal.

## **c) Orphanages (Boarding School)**

Orphanage was one of the significant features of the mission's educational work. The census of the mission did not separate boarding school and orphanage. The features were also same.<sup>27</sup> This was one of the general policies of protestant missions too. The Basel Missionaries were the pioneers in founding boarding schools in Malabar. These schools were established to give educational and to protect the poor local Christian children. The mission admitted poor children from six to fourteen years of age where parents were either dead or utterly unable to provide for their children or quite unfit for training them, or living in a place where their children get no training.

Malabar had two orphanages, one was for girls at Chombala and the other was for boys at Parapperi. In the beginning of the mission work

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26. *B.M.R. for 1908*, p. 67.

27. Dick Kooiman, *Conversion and Social Equality in India*, Delhi, 1989, p.88.

boarding schools were started at Cannanore, Tellicherry and Calicut, in which Tellicherry school was called orphan boys school till 1865.

Since 1866 it was called Boys Boarding school. Both of these boarding schools carried on to accustom the boys and girls to manual labour, selected number of the most promising boys and girls were provisioned to be trained for mission-work as teachers and preachers.

Concerning the orphanages it was put on a more simpler footing, corresponding with their character as charitable institutions, training the destitute for humble spheres of life. In the Chombala orphanage, the number of girls had gradually been increased from 55 to 33 in 1882 as it was found that many of the girls would well be sustained by their parents. The caring of starving orphans was regular feature of the B.M's work. Famine orphans were received at Calicut and Tellicherry.<sup>28</sup>

The subjects taught in these schools were comprehensive. For example, in the girls boarding school at Cannanore there were five forms and first form was the senior class. Though elementary instruction in vernacular was taught in the orphanage/boarding school some of the schools had a higher class added where English is taught. In some school history, Bible lessons church history, Malayalam, arithmetic, handwriting, geography and physiology.

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28. Vijayakumar, Ecumenical co-operation of the Mission in Karnataka 1834-1989: *A Historical analysis of the Evangelistic Strategy of the Missions*. A dissertation presented to the Faculty of Luther School of Theology at Chicago, May, 1976, p.59.

In boarding schools, the forenoon was dedicated to lessons, whereas the afternoon was employed for field and garden work in the boys institutions and for sewing, knotting and crochet work in the girls institutions.

There was support from the Basel Home Committee as well as from the friends in India which must have included also the local people. Besides these, the then government also had given grant towards the running of boarding schools. In 1870 the mission was able to build a new double storied house with the government grant at Calicut. The orphanages for boys in Tellicherry was united with that in Paraperi and the orphanage for girls in Calicut with that in Chombala.

Thus the orphanage or boarding school were a very great blessing to most of the children educated therein. Their good conduct and diligence that they took with them was repaid handsomely by helping them to become ideal members of the society.

#### **d) Agricultural School**

In connection with the boy's orphanage an agricultural school was started at Parapperi in 1897. The mission started a farm in which coconut palms areca palms and plantain trees were planted. There was also a small vegetable garden. There were confirmed members in the church.<sup>29</sup> Next year in 1899 it was shifted to Codacal. A land of 46 acres was

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29. *B.M.R. for 1898*, p.97.

bought and ten lads worked under the care and guidance of the former headmaster O. Eckelmann of the orphanage. There was no hint of teaching any persons as such, but it must be a practical training in manual work. This was known as ‘settlement of orphanage boy’ E. Diez the then missionary at Kasaragode stated that it was not for any gain to the mission but “to afford the boys during their studying the institution a congenial and healthy recreation as well as to teach them farming and give them to taste for it. This was his reply to the remarks of the Editor of the Harvest Field in 1887.

### **e) Middle School**

Middle school was started as a preparatory school for supplying the mission with catechists and teachers. Therefore it was called preparandi school. After the elementary or parochial schools and then boarding schools, those who intend to serve the mission as catechists or school masters were sent to the middle school. These schools were mainly for boys of 14 to 18 years of age. In Malabar Tellicherry station had one middle school at Nettur. Here four annual courses were imparted to Christian lads of the whole district. Instruction was given through the medium of the respective vernaculars in Bible reading, Sacred History, outlines of the doctrines of the Christian religion. Geography, History, Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra, English, Greek, Sanskrit, Canarese, Malayalam and Singing.<sup>30</sup>

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30. *B.M.R. for 1898*, p.99.

Thus sufficient store of knowledge both religious and secular preparatory to enter either the training school in Nettur or the catechist seminary in Mangalore was given in the middle school. In these schools, schooling and boarding was free.

#### **f) Training School**

The B.M. started a teacher's training school at Nettur. The main motive behind starting the training school seemed to be the replacement of non-Christian teachers by Christian teachers. The mission faced a great deal of problems due to insufficient number of Christian teachers. Hence non-Christian teachers were appointed. Hence scholars were both practically and theoretically trained to be masters in the Christian and non-Christian vernacular schools.

The government prescribed only one year for training. The government required an entrance test. To the mission this was 'quite insufficient'. The primary teachers and lower secondary teachers were as inferior to an upper primary candidate and a fourth grade Master of 20 years ago. To make up for these defects, the mission kept students for one more year in the mission training school. The candidates who had passed their government examination had to pass a professional examination conducted by the missions.<sup>31</sup>

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31. (1) Sacred History, (2) Introduction to the Holy scriptures, (3) Christian Doctrines, (4) Church History, (5) Memoriter (scriptural sentences and church hymns taught in the schools), (6) Method of Bible lessons, (7) Singing, (8) Violin and Harmonium as an optional subject.

There was also training schools for religious purposes called theological seminars. It was commonly called 'Melsale' or the Preacher's seminary. The Malayalam Theological Seminary at Nettur fed upon the Christian high school at Nettur. Training was given here to Christian scholars to become catechists. The course of instruction extended over four years.<sup>32</sup>

Besides this in the first year, Dogmatics and introduction to the old testament was taught, in the second year Ethics and Introduction to the New Testament was taught. In the third year, practical theology and church history and in the fourth year apologetics and symbolics were taught in the seminary, imparted through the medium of the vernacular.

### **g) Nurseries and Sunday Schools**

The mission considered their educational work in complete without mentioning of their nurseries for little ones and Sunday schools. Nurseries were only a necessity where people could not themselves be expected to look after their little children. The Mission established nurseries chiefly in industrial centers like Mangalore, Hubli, Cannanore etc. Nurseries were a great blessing to such places to the Christian. Congregation for not only were the small children kept from the dangers of the street, but were also accustomed to cleanliness and orderliness. They were also told bible stories and sung children songs.

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32. (1) Exegesis of the old New Testaments, (2) Homiletics, (3) Catechetic, (4) Hinduism, (5) Mohammedanism, (6) Greek, (7) Sanskrit, (8) Malayalam, (9) English, (10) Music.

Malabar stood far ahead of other districts concerning number of pupils in its Sunday schools as 3300 in 1879 Sunday schools aimed in catechizing of all Christian children of the churches. Sunday school were in Calicut was quite active.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to teaching Bible in Sunday schools, regular Bible teaching was given in quite a number of private schools on week days. This proves that in Malabar more advanced ideas are held in many quarters, then in the considerably more conservative districts of Kanara and South Mahratta.

### **Female Education**

The Basel Mission encouraged Female Education. But it was a slow process even among the Tiya women. In 1912 the institution of the Basel Mission had given training to 18 Christian ladies as elementary school trained teachers. But there was none from the non-Christian communities. This absence reveals some sociological problems of women education in a traditional society. The orthodox sections of Hindu society were also against women education.<sup>34</sup>

The mission laid the rule that all Christian boys and girls were bound to attend parochial schools. Julie Gundert started a Boarding school at Chirakkal, Cannanore which was for girls. Where manual

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33. *B.M.R. for the year 1879*, p.30.

34. A.K.Gopalan, *Ente Jeevitha Katha*, Trivandrum, 1980, p.10.

labourers of women were taught. Later on this school was shifted to Chombala near Vatakara. At Calicut there was another one which was started by Fritz. In 1867, the Calicut boarding school had 69 girls from 1867 to 1878, the Calicut boarding school had 69 girls from 1867 to 1878, the girls received were increased to 136 of whom 60 were non-Christians. The girls school in Calicut had a training class and nine girls went up for the teachers examination of whom eight passed very creditably in the third degree in the year 1878. Hence out of 34 women employed, 8 were teachers, 16 girls returned to their parents and 6 died due to diseases.

Mrs. Julie Gundert devoted much of her time to the girls school in Tellicherry in spite of her weak state of health. The girls of the boarding school in Tellicherry were instructed Malayalam and English reading and writing and were also taught geography, arithmetic as well as singing with the additional labour of Mrs. Mook who was the first agent sent by a special committee that came into existence in Switzerland in 1901 for the education of the female sex in India.<sup>35</sup>

### **Establishments of Schools**

The Basel Mission found it essential to start primary educational institutions as part of their activities.<sup>36</sup> Thus despite the opposition from

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35. *B.M.R. 1879*, p.92.

36. K.K.N.Kurup, "The Basel Mission and Social Change in Malabar with special reference to Dr.Gundert" in Kurup and John (eds) *Legacy of Basel Mission and German Gundert in Malabar*, Calicut, 1993, pp.59-60.

the government and people to certain extent the Basel Mission Missionaries were strongly determined to establish educational institutions. They learnt Malayalam and with liberal contributions from the Basel Home committees as well as from the European friends of the mission.

The pioneers of Basel Missionaries who found schools are Hermann Gundert, Samuel Hebach, J.M. Fritz, Christian Mueller, J. Strobel, J. Bosshard, Th Schangler, G. Wagner, W. Schmolch, A.Mathissen, Knobloch, J.Jaus. and J.Oster Mayer. The major role of the missionaries seemed to be leadership, organising all that needed for establishment of schools.

Local population in respective places played a very important role in the establishment of the mission educational institutions. The lower castes or castes outside the high caste fold who did not get education like the caste Hindus took initiative towards the establishment of schools.<sup>37</sup> Most of the parents willingly sent their children to the mission schools.

Both Christian and non-Christians in the local areas contributed towards the establishment of schools by giving money as well as land for the construction of school building. The 1856 report states that the residents at Tellicherry resolved upon finding an English school in connection with the Basel Mission and several gentlemen came forward

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37. Adrian Mayer, *Land and Society in Malabar*, Oxford Press, 1952, p. 34.

to contribute according to their might to spread the knowledge within their own sphere. In 1858 Kakhassroo Darashaw, a wealthy Parsee merchant donated a sum of Rs.1500 towards the erection of a spacious vernacular school for 50 to 60 boys at Tellicheerry. It was reported in 1859, "A rich Nair in the neighbourhood of Kodakkal voluntarily offered a piece of ground for a school, and erected the building, almost entirely at his own expense."<sup>38</sup>

## **Management of Schools**

### **a) Teachers**

The Basel Mission missionaries employed quite a good number of native teachers. This included both men and women as well as Christians and non Christians. At the beginning of the mission schools the teachers were local Hindus. When Gundert started schools at Tellicherry and Nettur and also Hebich who started school at Cannanore, they employed teachers from the Tiya caste. Thus it is clear from the above written statements that that mission sought help from the local people in getting right persons as teachers in the schools.

A tabular view of teachers at mission schools taken from each years census shown in the annual reports of the Basel Mission is given below:

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38. *Ibid.*, p.35.

Year	Christian School Mistress	Christian School Masters	Non-Christian School Masters
1855	0	7	12
1861	4	28	18
1865	5	19	4
1870	5	22	10
1875	5	24	14
1880	9	29	52
1895	23	73	52
1906	44	100	107
1913	65	132	163

Source: Basel Mission Report for the year 1914.

From the above table it is seen that regarding the position of teachers the mission gave importance to men rather than women. In the reports only the services of men were recorded. Most of the head masters in the high schools were natives who were Bachelor in Arts. It can also be seen from the above table that majority of the school masters were non-Christians. This shows the social progress of the non-Christians especially of the Tiyas and that the mission was not parochial in matters of appointment and promotion. The Indian head masters were denoted with praiseworthy services. For examples the crisis – crisis might have been fall of attendance of the pupil – in the Anglo-vernacular school, Calicut in 1877 was solved by the ability of the headmaster. G.T.

Varghese (1895) report stated that Nettur High School had received a good report from the school inspector concerning its functions. It was reported “much of the success is due to the ability and devotion with which the Christian headmaster, Mr. Joseph Muliyl, B.A. and his assistance discharged their duties.”<sup>39</sup>

House Rent Allowances were provided by Basel Mission to the teachers. The amount was fixed according to the Locality. House rent were usually granted to those who were married and did not own a house pension was also given to those who duly retired from the mission schools.

#### **b) Admission procedure**

The Basel Mission schools admitted pupils irrespective of caste and creed. Pupils were to pay fees through few were exempted on the request of their parents who were unable to pay the fees due to poverty.<sup>40</sup>

Thus the educational work of the Basel Mission in Malabar was always directed towards educating the masses through primary education which was used as a means to spread the Christian faith. The educational contribution the mission did not think of spreading Christianity only but also in giving primary education to make the people literate.

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39. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

40. *B.M.R. for 1899*, p.98.

## **Impact of the Educational work of the Basel Mission in Malabar and S.Canara**

The aim of Basel Mission was to emancipate the people from all kinds of social evils and to create a new Christian community. Emancipation was the aim of the Mission. In the nineteenth century Malabar was experiencing from several types of bondage like casteism which was a great social stigma that arrested all the progress of human life. The Basel mission made deliberate efforts to eradicate it. The eligible lower caste teachers were also appointed to teach the children in schools. The teaching also stressed upon unity and equality in humanity.<sup>41</sup>

The response of the people of Malabar towards the B.M. educational work varied from place to place. There were positive responses from places like Tellicherry, Cannanore, Calicut and Palghat which were also the important stations of the Basel Mission in Malabar. The response of Hindu community included entering pupils in schools, cooperation in the educational work as teachers as well as other contributions as money, land and erecting school buildings. In 1910 Hindus residing in Calicut contributed Rs.500 towards the expenses of B.G.M. College.<sup>42</sup>

Among the low castes it was Thiyya caste which responded positively to the B.M. educational work a great majority of the students in

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41. M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1966, p.1.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

the mission schools were from Tiya community and few of them had same traditional background in Sanskrit learning.<sup>43</sup>

### **1. Development of the people**

It is not the Basel Mission work that provided the people an integral liberation but there was a liberation in a limited sense for the people in a pluralistic religious context.

The change in the social life was seen in terms of status, education, profession etc. that the people could not achieve before due to the caste structure which was a major obstacle to them in their progress. Those who accepted the new faith entered into a 'new movement' a new 'community' a new way of life where there was no caste distinction, no polluted community, no superstitions, no communal disintegration but spirit of unity, equality, integrity loyalty.

They could get jobs with higher Hindus, do more pleasant work and get higher pay. They enjoyed more freedom of expression than any other communities in the society.

The modern industrial technology in connection with weaving, tiles, press, book binding, tailoring was transferred into the hands of this new community.

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43.K.K.N.Kurup, *Modern Kerala Studies in Social and Agrarian Relations*, Delhi, 1988, p.84.

The Basel Mission had a short span of activity in many areas of Malabar promoting educational institutions. While laying special emphasis on religious and spiritual matters, the society also took secular aspects of life seriously. It thus worked intensely in the field of education, literature, medicine, industry and agriculture and in a number of these fields the society was the pioneer in Malabar. Its emphasis on compulsory education and the establishment of schools in every congregation was a novel idea in the field of education. The Basel mission provided equal educational opportunity for both boys and girls. These activities contributed to the development of education and the modernization of society.<sup>44</sup>

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44. *Basel Mission Report, 1914*, p.95.

## Appendix

**HERMAN GUNDELT'S CONTRIBUTION  
TO EDUCATIONAL WORK**

Hermann Gundert was born on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1814, in the Centre of Stuttgart, the capital of the Kingdom of Wierttemberg. His father, Ludwig Gundert, was a merchant and his mother Christine Nee Ensslin was very gifted merchant's daughter who inherited the shop from her parents. He took his Doctor's degree in Philosophy and he completed his theological examinations at the University of Tubingen, stayed a few days with his father and set out for England. Dr.Gundert was one of the most outstanding missionaries of the Basel Mission in Malabar and was famous for his great zeal in preaching the Gospel and his unique scholarship in Theology, Philosophy, Linguistics and History.<sup>1</sup>

He was German by birth and worked with the British missionaries in Tamil distract of Tirunelveli. He was sent to Rhenius, a German missionary of church missionary society at Sinduponturei, Tirunelveli in order to see how things were going on there.

Hermann Gundert left Madras on August 5<sup>th</sup> 1836 and reached Sinduponturei on August 21<sup>st</sup> on the way he visited the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai. He was very much impressed and wrote home "at the

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1. K.J.Joseph, "Dr. Hermann Gundert's Contribution to Kerala Historiography" in K.K.N.Kurup and K.J.Joseph (eds) *Legacy of Basel Mission and Hermann Gundert in Malabar*, Calicut, 1993, p.66.

beginning, I think it (the concept of temple) was a system full of spirit, the many fold effects of God were traced in the nature. The most important part of Gundert's visit to Tamilnadu was his stay with Rhenius from August 1836 to March 1837. Along with Rhenius Gundert studied the Tamil classics of the Sangam period as well as the Tamil writings of the early and contemporary Catholic and Protestant missionaries.

Gundert got to know the revision of Rhenius grammar, which was just published. So he became familiar with Tolkappiam, the old authority in Tamil grammar.<sup>2</sup> Gundert set out for Chittoor where he arrived on May 1<sup>st</sup>. He was heartily received by Mrs. and Mr. Lascelles, a judge in Chittoor court. Mrs. Lascelles came to be like a mother to Gundert and finally arranged Gundert's marriage with Julie Dubois from Neuchatel Switzerland, who also belonged to the Party of Groves.<sup>3</sup>

At Chittoor he visited villages in the vicinity and in the distant surroundings trying to establish schools. Gundert started keeping a diary on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1837, and made the following entry on September 5<sup>th</sup> "I began an exploratory tour in the western valley of Chittoor on the Palmanor road taking Andrew and Vedamuttu with me in the bullock bandy. Stopped first at Iruvaram, a village of Telungu chettis, rich people it seems, who have great desire for a school . . . walked from them to the

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2. L.Johanbnas Frshnmeyer, *Industrial Mission*. Bangalore: Basel Mission Press, 1893, p.4.

3. *Ibid.*

Pariar village at the foot of the mountains; behind Iruvaram. These are all Tamiler, as none knows to read, I had offered them a school already several weeks ago .... Sat under the big tree, under which their 8 stone idols – round shaped stones, without any human resemblance, of different sizes between ½ and 2 feet height anointed with oil are placed.

After Tirunelveli, he joined the Basel Mission Society in 1838. He was the first missionary of the Basel Mission in Malabar stationed at Nettur, near Tellicherry. As a missionary he did his work and write and compiled many literary works.

Dr.Gundert was basically a teacher, his mission was education. Gundert was the first missionary of the Basel Mission in Malabar to start a primary school at Nettur in Tellicherry. He taught there Science, Geography, Malayalam and English and Bible. Gundert has a high place among Christian missionaries as for his contributions to Malayalam language and literature and concerned. Yet he did most of his work in connection with his missionary attempt. The early twentieth century, historians looked at Gundert as a linguist and a scholar.<sup>4</sup>

### **Gundert's writings**

The educational system that was prevalent in Malabar has no uniformity in teaching since the mission schools had their own curriculum. Gundert took initiative in establishing many schools in

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4. K.K.N.Kurup, *Modern Kerala: Studies in Agrarian Relations*, Delhi, 1988, pp.84-85.

Malabar in 1840's prepared school books for mission schools. Gundert was able to publish school text books for pupils because his job on the Inspector of Schools was mainly to make curriculum for the schools under the Government.

### **Books for Primary Education**

Hermann Gundert prepared text books for primary education in Basel Mission schools. Here a few books are noted down which were first used in mission schools and later in the schools under the British government in Southern Peninsula.

#### ***Padamala***

During the 1840's Padarambam and Panchathanthra were used as books for learning Malayalam language. These books were both prose and poetry and were mostly 'Panchathanthram', 'Ramayana', 'Sreekrishnacharitham' etc. But these prose section was written by Gundert himself to create an ethical awakening and to character formation of pupils.<sup>5</sup> In 1860 a kind of enlarged edition of these two was published as Padamala and used as a text for Malayalam in the schools under British government. Those who studied in Malabar during the second half of the nineteenth century learnt Malayalam language through this book.

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5. K.P.Varid, *Dr.Hermann Gundert*, Kottayam: BBS, p.125.

Gundert's compilations depended heavily upon indigenous literature mentioned above and thus it was a unique attempt to make western style of education into an indigenised system.<sup>6</sup>

### **Historical Books**

Gundert recognized the importance of myths and folklore of the land, as peoples memories are woven into a dream and fantasy to supplement the reconstruction of the history of Kerala in the absence of proper documents. Gundert wrote a few historical books which were used as textbooks in the Basel Mission schools and then in the schools under the British government.

### ***Keralolpathi***

This book contained three main sections namely (i) Era of Parasurama (ii) Era of the Perumals, (iii) Era of Thampurans. Dr. Gundert took care to incorporate the Parasurama legend in the body of his text as it is integral part of Kerala tradition. This book throws considerable light on the Aryanisation of the land, in addition to the rule of Perumals, emergence and growth of Zamorins, the arrival of the Portuguese and of the political organization of the Petty principalities which Kerala was divided into land of feudal lords.<sup>7</sup>

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6. Rev. Vinod Allen,. *Basel Mission in Erstwhile Malabar Challenges and Responses*, Department of History and Community, Kottayam: FFRRC, 2000, p.11.

7. Hermann Gundert, "Keralolpathi" (1868) in Hermann Gundert, *Keralolpathiyum Mattum*, Kottayam: DC Books, 1992, p.152.

This book was first published in 1843 in Mangalore. It gives the students information about the traditional historical account of Kerala. But according to Albert Frenz, this work presents a form of sacred writings, which portrays the legendary and mythological origins of Kerala rather a precise historic or geographic knowledge.

### ***Loka Charithra Sasthram***

Gundert started this book with the story of creation, fall of man, etc from the book of genesis, the first book in the Bible. History of Germans and Indian History are also included in this book.<sup>8</sup>

Since from a biblical understanding Gundert regarded world history as the history of creation of man. According to K.V.Chериан the book of genesis in Gundert's view was the dawn of the history of human beings. Though this criticism was raised when the book was first published, it still was being used as a text book in the mission and government schools.

### ***Kerala Pazhama***

This book was the first of its kind in scientific historical treatise in history of Malabar people written in Malayalam by Gundert. It add rays of light to Kerala History especially of Portuguese period. It as first published in Paschimodayam, a magazine which shed new light in the

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8. Hermann Gundert, *Lokacharithra Sasthram (1851)* in *Hermann Gunderrt Keralolpathiyum Mattum*. Kottayam, 1992, pp.349-385.

history of periodicals in Kerala.<sup>9</sup> The arrival of Portuguese in Calicut in the year 1498 is colourfully depicted in the first chapter of Kerala Pazhama. Dr.Gunder referred all the Portuguese materials and wrote the book which is even now read by lovers of Kerala History with great enthusiasm.

### ***Malayala Rajyam***

This was the first geography book in Malayalam written by Dr. Gundert. It is a scientific book prepared according to the western conception of geography.<sup>10</sup> It contains the geography and history of Malabar. The first section has the geography and people of the land which includes the customs, agriculture and living creatures. The second section is history which is divided into (a) History before the arrival of Portuguese (b) History after the arrival of Portuguese. In the third section Gundert describes about Malabar Provinces, and about Kochi and Travancore. It was the first time in 1860's that history and geography became teaching subjects in the schools in Malabar.

### **Linguistic Writings**

Only three works of Gundert are mentioned here which were published during 1845-1872. Two of them became very prominent and a

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9. Cheriyan Kuniethodath. *The Genius of Malayalam* in K.K.N.Kurup and K.J.John Legacy, p.185.

10. *Ibid.*

real help to the students of Malayalam language. They stood even at the close of the twentieth century as outstanding works on linguistics.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Pazhamchol Mala***

The English title given to the book is Malayalam proverbs applied to Christianity. The work was first published in Malayalam in 1845. It has eighteen themes and each one is arranged according to the theme and has been interpreted. These interpretations are very much connected with Christian Principles. K.P. Varid quotes the preface to Pazhamol Mala, "This tract was written by Dr. Gundert with a view of bringing home to the minds of the Malayalis some spiritual truths by an interpretation of Malayalam proverbs on Christian premises. This work of Gundert on proverbs was first published in 1845 and one thousand proverbs published in Tellicherry in 1850 which was followed by the thousand two hundred proverbs at a later date. Proverbs have a primary place among the Malayalis. Hence Gundert's work on proverb is significant.

Gundert's intention of compiling the proverbs and interpreting them seemed to be a part of his career as a missionary.

### **A Grammar of the Malayalam Language**

The early works on Malayalam Grammar were by foreigners which were written in foreign language and the only indigenous work

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11. *Ibid.*

Leelathilakam was in Sanskrit. In 1799 Robert Drummond, in 1839 Fredrick spring and in 1841 and 1845 Joseph Feet published works on Malayalam Grammar.

Dr. Hermann Gundert's contribution to Malayalam language secondly rests on his grammar of the Malayalam language. He transformed the manuscript of his Malayalam. English Grammar into a Malayalam-Malayalam Grammar, and had edited at Thalassery in 1851. Although it was incomplete at that time there was a novelty in its presentation. It underwent revisions and in 1868, the first complete grammar of Malayalam was published. The syntax in Gunderts grammar is unique when compared to any other Malayalam Grammar ever published.<sup>12</sup>

The Malayala Vyakarana Chodyotharam was also written at the same year Gundert wrote his Malayala Bhasa Vyakaranam (Malayalam Grammar). It was published in 1860. The manuscript of the former is kept at the Archive of the Basel Mission in Basel. It became the school grammar and as edited several times by L.Garthwaite and was also translated into English.

Scholars look at Gundert's completed work on Malayalam Grammar (1868) as authentic, comprehensive and scientific. Critics look it as a scientific grammar since its method is synthetical and the examples

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12. Cheriyan Kuniathodath, *op. cit.*, p.163.

are taken chiefly not from the colloquial language, but from the ancient sources like shastras. But the student of the present age<sup>13</sup> find it difficult to accept it as an authoritative modern grammar of Malayalam.

### **A Malayalam and English Dictionary**

Gundert's magnum opus was his a Malayalam and English Dictionary. The dictionary is the high point of Gundert's immense diligence and comprehensive ability. This dictionary compiled under Christian missionary auspices was first published in 1872 in Mangalore.<sup>14</sup> Gundert united in his dictionary all features of a unique Linguistic Encyclopaedia. He traveled in Malabar, Thiruvithamcore, Palakkad, Ernad, Malappuram and other places to collect regional words and phrases and he not only referred to old Malayalam writings, but also government records and court judgements. Among them the Tellicherry records are of great importance. An outstanding character of Gundert's dictionary its passionate adherence to people's Malayalam as different from bookish high Malayalam. The words are arranged alphabetically and the meanings – past and present are shown in different contexts too. At the same time Gundert paid attention to the comparison of the cognate Dravidian languages.<sup>15</sup>

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13. K.M.George, *A Survey of Malayalam Literature*, Bombay, 1968.

14. A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam: NBS, 1967, p.407.

15 "Preface" in *A Malayalam and English Dictionary*. Mangalore: Basel Mission Press and Tract Depository, 1872, p.v.

William Logan opines the lavish industry, research and ability displayed in this work, are beyond all praise and have opened up to the enquirer.<sup>16</sup> Mahakavi Ulloor recognizes this work as a great treasure to Malayalam language. He remarked that this dictionary had eternal validity.

This dictionary is a masterpiece of deep erudition and discriminating scholarship and inevitable patience and stands as a monument to the love and affection of a foreign missionary for the people of Kerala.

Dr.Hermann Gundert was the pioneer in the publication of Kerala periodicals too. *Rajya Samacharam* and *Paschimodayam* were the first two periodicals in Kerala. Though the real editor of the periodicals was not Dr.Gundert, it was he who contributed to the success of the publication.

### **Religious writings**

Gundert's contribution on diverse subjects also includes religious literature in which he included Christian, Hindu and Muslim literature. His most important work in the Christian and inter-religion field was his translation of the Bible old and New Testament consisting of 1168 pages in 10 point type into Malayalam. Before compiling this book, Gundert examined Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German and English versions of the

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16. William Logan, *Malabar*, Delhi, 1984, p.105.

voluminous work and consulted several Pandits to get the most appropriate word.

The four gospels were translated directly from Greek.

Gundert also wrote a number of Malayalam hymns to be sung in the congregation. Out of 350 hymns used in the Basel Mission churches, 211 were written by Gundert himself. Although these hymns were written to fit the German tunes, most of them became popular. The hymns could really influence people in their cultural formation.

Gundert wrote a number of religious books in Malayalam, some are translations from German and English. 'Advices for Confirmation', 'Answers by God to human problems', 'Essence of Biblical history', 'History of Christianity', 'Reformation in Germany', 'Art of Dying Happily. Heart of Man', 'Judgement on Religion', 'Judgement of God', 'Diamond Needle', 'Abridgement of Gospels', 'Pilgrim Progress' and 'History of Samuel Hebich' are some of his books written in religious settings. These books helped to propagate faith which was his main missions in India.

Gundert was also the first to deal with apocryphical and old Indian sources. His aim of indigenizing Christian thought became so clear that the mission board in Basel forbade this type of approach. Only when Gundert completed his 'Nala Charitam Saram' from Mahabharata more than ten years later, did he discuss the inter religious dialogue again,

much more effectively than in his, first Bible tract 'Satyadeva Ithihasam'. It seems that the longer Gundert stayed in India, the more he got convinced of the necessity of the inter religious dialogue. He was fully aware that each religion needs a non inter changeable identity. To understand a Mappila locality in Ilikunnu, Gundert scrutinized the literature of the Mappilas in order to understand them better.

Gundert's second son Samuel Gundert who was born in Tellicherry on the 41<sup>st</sup> of August 1840, was trained in Basel to be a missionary and sent to Malabar in 1864.<sup>17</sup> Like his father he too had mastered many languages and his great works in addition to a Malayalam English Dictionary (1872) were a book on Malayalam proverbs adopted to Christianity and the Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, translated from Hebrew into Malayalam.

Dr. Hermann Gundert was a scholar, a missionary a linguist as well as an educationist. He aimed at laying a proper literary foundation for the mission work in Malabar and to give Malabaris as well as Malayalis, knowledge and sharpen their minds. When dealing with the literary heritage of Gundert, it is an approved fact that he was a born teacher endowed with a linguistic genius and an enormous capacity for working. Although he was a missionary and translated the Bible and many Christian scriptures, his Malayalam language stands for above the narrow

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17. Peter Wilson Prabhakar, *The Basel Mission in South Kanara 1834-1947*, Mangalore University, 1988, p.157.

borders of a certain type of faith or creed. His mission was a linguistic one. Gundert with his works which depended on indigenous literature like Panchathanthram Ramayana etc made a unique attempt to make western style of education into an indigenised system.<sup>18</sup>

In short, Dr. Gundert spent 75 years of his life for Basel Mission work. His name is immemorable in the History of Malayalam Language and literature. Gundert has an important place in the history of Kerala as a great scholar and literary genius.

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18. K.K.N.Kurup, 'The Basel Mission and Social Change in Malabar with Special Reference to Dr.Gundert', in K.K.N.Kurup and K.J.John (ed) *Legacy of Basel Mission and Hedermann Gundert in Malabar*, 1993, p.60.

## Chapter VI

### THE BASEL MISSION IN SOUTH CANARA

Mangalore is described in the Torteval of Hilton Brown, a best seller of 1936, as one of the loveliest locales in the world – lying between Goa and Cochin.<sup>1</sup> With its two important rivers, the Gurpur to the north and the Netravatti to the South. The more northerly of the two districts on the west coast of the former Madras Presidency with an area of 10,411 sq.km. is the district of S.Canara. Geographically Mangalore, the head quarters of the South Canara district occupies a very strategic location along the coast, lying between 12°48' and 13°13' North and 74°47' and 75°17' East. It is contiguous to Goa in the North and Kasargod in the South. In the south, due to the bar formed by the two rivers, Netravathi and Gurpur, Mangalore could not find place as a sea faring port until very recently when the whole harbour was built at a tremendous cost and pace in recent times at Panambur, which is the new port of Mangalore.

Mangalore was till 1956, capital of the South Canara district in the Madras state consisting of the Mangalore Taluk and Amindivi islands. It is situated between the two arms of a fine lake of salt water each of which receives a river at the mouth. Today it is an important city in Karnataka and can proudly boast of an important harbour and a university. It derives its name from the Sanskrit words 'mangala' meaning happiness and 'ura'

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1. T.W.Venn, *Mangalore Mysore City*, 1945, p.9.

meaning place.<sup>2</sup> Mangalore has been mentioned as Mangaruth in Christian Topography by Cosmos Indicopleustes in the middle of the sixth century.

The city of Mangalore actually nestles between seven hills and therefore compared to Rome, and is the home of pioneer of industry and commerce of S. Canara. It was one of the five pepper exporting ports of Malabar in the old days. Malabar and Canara were pepper growing areas and pepper was the main source of revenue and also the cause of much distress and strife mainly traceable to the never satisfied greed for pepper.<sup>3</sup> The district of South Kanara had a measure of isolation in the past owing to natural barriers as a result of which it came to have certain features of its own. On the other hand, various facts and the ethnic intermingling of groups here gave the district of the cosmopolitan atmosphere and a catholic spirit. The other important towns in this district are Udupi, an ancient Brahmin dominated town, Kallianpur, adjacent to it, another important town referred to in early history and Karkala, a predominantly Jain town. Barkur and Coondapur are ancient towns equally important and the former was once as important as Mangalore during the time of Vijayanagar and Ikkeri kings.<sup>4</sup>

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2. George, M. Moraes, *Mangalore: A Historical Sketch*. Mangalore, 1927, p.1. The imperial Gazetteer of India, Calcutta, 1980, p.371.

3. Alice F. Sequeria, *Political History of the East India Company*, Factory-Tellicherry, Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay, 1941, p.22.

4. K.V. Ramesh, *A History of South Canara from earliest times to the fall of Vijayanagar*, Dharwar, 1970, p. 231.

### **The country: Various connotations**

Canara or Karnad means the black country. It is formed from the two Canarese words Kare (black) and Nadu (country). The black soil country, the true Karnatak is the plain that slopes east from the Sahyadiris. The name was probably given to the coast by travellers who found that the language was the same as in the Karnatak and that the coast was under the rulers of the black soil plains.

The area is also alluded to by the indigenous people as Tulunadu. Tuluva denotes the people or area speaking Tulu. Theories put forward to its origin are traced to the legendary ruler called Rama Boja, who is supposed to have made many gifts like Tulu-dana, Tulu Purusha. So the dynasty was called Tolav and the region called Tulu or Tuluva. But according to B.A. Saletore, the word Tuluva can be traced to the Kannada verbal root Tulu meaning to attack denoting the war like nature of the people.<sup>5</sup>

M. Govinda Pai states that Tulai means to ply or to row in water showing a sea faring people while Sedyapu Krishna Bhat opines that the word Tulu denotes water and therefore the name Tulunad means a region which abounds in water, denoting the occupation i.e., of Fishermen. Tuluva also means in Tulu, mild and meek.

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5. K. Abhishanker, *Gazetteer of India*, Karnataka State Gazetteer, *S. Kanara District*, Bangalore, 1973, p.1.

South Kanara is essentially a forest district with luxuriant flora and valuable timber. When Mangalore was under Tippu Sultan of Mysore he introduced several penalties for the selling of sandal wood trees which were a source of revenue and necessary for his navy. The western ghats have steep cliffs and in the northern part in the southern have parallel ridges intersected by deep valleys beyond 80 kms from the sea.

The South Canara district is eloquently described by Sarojini Naidu as the Nandavana, pleasure garden of India.<sup>6</sup> The population of the district according to the 1971 census was 19,39,315 the first census having been taken in 1871. A special feature of this district population from villages to towns because of employment opportunities and educational facilities available in the town. Towns grew in importance as regards to communications, trade and commerce, industrialisation and the like.<sup>7</sup>

### **Historical Background**

The South Canara district was once the mighty Tuluva kingdom of Karnataka, Tuluva or Tulunadu was the old name and it was converted into the district of South Kanara in 1860 part of the British division, in the Madras Presidency. During the Vijayanagar period south Kanara was referred to as Tulu rajya and Tulu desa in an inscription.

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6. *Gazetteer of India*, p.86.

7. *Ibid.*, p.88.

The Mauryans had invaded the Karnataka area and the Tulu country was part of the Mauryan Empire till the death of Asoka. The most ancient ruler known as Nannan, and the medieval period rulers were the Alupas, who were in Banavase: 12000 (ie North Canara, Dharvar and Shimoga districts). The Alupas were the first known dynasty which accepted the Suzerainty of the overlords of Karnata. Then came the Kadambas of Banavasi who were under the Vijayanagara rulers, but were actually quite independent.

The first mention of Vira-Ballala III Hoysala King who had taken Chikkaji Taiji as his senior queen and was of Alupa descent. Perhaps is that he was virtually in control of Tulu nadu after the founding of the Vijayanagar Empire, especially for internal security and for foreign trade.

Vijayanagar appointed a governor each for Barakuru and Mangaluru, the two biggest townships each having a fine harbour.<sup>8</sup> The Mangaluru Rajya discontinued being under the independent governor in 1515 AD after Krishnaraja brought it directly under the Vijayanagar Empire. The decline of the Vijayanagar was followed by the rule of the Nayakas of Keladi who transformed their Tulu country into one province from the two Barakuru and Mangaluru seriously attempted to reduce the local chieftaincies to nullity, raised forts at strategic places and stationed garrisons for political safety.

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8. K.V. Ramesh, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

During the seventh and eighth centuries the Tulu country had made great strides in the economic field and that Mangalore was even in those times a flourishing and populous township well known enough to be called Maha-nagara (great city) in the records of an imperial dynasty.

South Canara is predominantly an agricultural district. Landed property is called balu (life and subsistence) Lands were owned by the royalty as well as by citizens. The right of cultivating royal lands was held by officials serving under the king. Gifting of Royal lands to temples and Brahmins, to citizens and also to deceased warriors' families was in vogue under the early Alupas. The social structure was made up of the caste system in which priestly class and the Brahmins were respected by the people.

The caste system was deeply rooted with its four principal castes, excommunication was common, there was also the lowest class of the untouchables, and the excommunicated people were called nalku-jati. The family was closely knit unit of the social structure.

The Alupa Kings were Saivas, in the medieval period of the Alupas, the Vishnu-Krishna cult developed and also Jainism. When Jainism entered south Canara is not known but it must be at the end of the thirteenth century when patronage was received only with the Hoysala authority over S.Canara.<sup>9</sup>

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9. K.V.Ramesh, *op.cit.*, p.233.

The Vijayanagar kings gave grants to both Saiva and the Jaina bastis, Jainism which had flourished during the Kadamba period and in the Golden Age of Vijayanagar declined steeply and the Tulu country passed into the hands of the sultans of Mysore for a brief period till the British assumed full control over it from 1801 AD. The period between the fall of Ikkeri Nayakas and the Mysore Sultans was one of great confusion and social and economic disorder.

### **Ethnic background of the Christians of South Canara**

South Canara was inhabited by Hindus, Jains, Christians and Muslims. The Hindus are the original people of the land, known as the Tuluva people. The Jains formed a strong community especially in Karkala and Moodbidiri towns during the time of the Hoysala suzerainty over Kanara. The Muslims were the converts out of the contact with the Arabs who traded along the coast especially at Bhatkal in the North Canara.<sup>10</sup> Their descendants are known as the Moplahs or Nayavats. The Christians, more specifically the Catholics of South Canara are both the native, but very few in number, and the immigrants from Goa and Protestants converts made by the Basel mission. The Catholics from Goa were all Konkani speaking, while the local Catholics were Kanarese and Tulu speaking, the Conversion being from among the villagers of Ullal and Suratkal only who were the fisher-folk and later from the outcastes.

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10. Gururaja P. Bhatt, *The Kadamba Kula, A History of Ancient and Medieval Karnataka*, Bombay, 1931, p.252.

The protestants were Tulu speaking people. These Konkani Catholics from Goa had an impressive ethnic background as they were almost all of them from the Bamon (Brahmin) Charode (Kshatriya) and (Vaisya) castes of Goa. Some local converts who included the Jain converts to Catholicism while the Basel mission converts also included the Jain converts to Catholicism. While the Basel Mission converts were mainly from the Billava and Bunt community (non Brahmin class). The Konkani-speaking communities of South Canara are from Goa having fled here for various reasons. The Christians have a rich heritage and distinct racial characteristics. Konkani speaking communities are (1) Konkani Shenvis or Saraswati Brahmins (20 Non-brahmins such as Sonars, Konkani Kumbis and Marathas, Bhandaris, Konkani Kelasis, Barkule and other Vanis. The muslim Navayats and the Catholic Christians of Goa, Kanara and Ratnagiri.

#### **South Canara – Colonial Administration and Regional Response**

The year 1799 is profoundly significant in the history of South Canara. The fourth Anglo-Mysore war, which was fought in that year resulted in the final overthrow of Tipu's power, and the Victorious British acquired the coastal district Treaty of Sri Rangapattana (22<sup>nd</sup> June 1799) which since then became the part of the Madras presidency. The British advantages of controlling the coastal province of Kanara, as it would give them an uninterrupted tract of territory from the eastern coast to the western coast. The important ports on this western coast of the Peninsula

(Mangalore, Barkur, Barrur, Honavar, Bhatkal etc) had greatly helped the earlier rulers of the region to maintain an efficient cavalry.

The utility and importance of Ports in the promotion of trade and commerce both inland and foreign can never be exaggerated. South Canara was also rich in agricultural products, spices and other forest resources which had attracted the British attention. The British had appeared for the first time at Mangalore in 1737 in connection with a treaty with the Bidanur Governor of Mangalore. The advance of the Bidanur General under Somashekara Nayaka II into Nileshwar in the first instance and across the Kavaï river afterwards brought the Bidanur power into conflict with the East India Company at Tellicherry. But in 1736 the Malayalis aided by the English, recovered the Alikunnu fort at the mouth of the Kavaï river and three other to the south of it. In February 1737 Lynch, one of the English factors went to Mangalore and executed a treaty with Surappayya, the Bidanur Governor there.<sup>11</sup>

The English obtained from this treaty certain commercial advantages including a monopoly of the pepper and cardamom trade in those portions of the Kolathiris domain which had been conquered by Bidanur. The year 1763 saw the conquest of Bidanur by Haidar Ali. It was unacceptable for the British who were much apprehensive of the consequences. They knew that Mangalore, well fortified and converted

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11. K.K.N.Kurup, *History of the Tellicherry Factory 1683-1794*, Calicut, 1985, p.33.

into a naval stronghold could very well be used by Haider Ali to intercept English shipping in the Arabian sea. Haider was not late in understanding the embarrassment of the British about his success and perhaps as a consolation for them, granted a Firman to the British East India Company on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1763. It gave the company commercial privilege in the Province of Kanara and Soonda. As regards South Canara it enabled the company to have free liberty to export annually from Mangalore three hundred corge of rice, for the service of Tellicherry exempt from the duty called 'Adlamy', or if they chose to carry this rice to Bombay, and succeeded in getting some more commercial concessions in south Canara.<sup>12</sup>

When the first Anglo-Mysore war broke out between the English and Haider Ali in 1767 an English army was sent from Bombay under the command of Major Garvin by land and Admiral Watson by sea and seized Mangalore and largest portion of Haider Ali's fleet in 1768.

The capture of Mangalore was considered by the British at that time as a very significant event in the history of their expansion in India. In 1768 Tippu made a lightning attack on the Port of Mangalore to drive the English away. Finally Haider and Tipu succeeded in putting an end to the British activities on the coast of Malabar and Canara and drove them into the sea.

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12. B. Sheik Ali, *British Relations with Haidar Ali 1760-1782*, Mysore, 1963, pp.34-35.

When the second Mysore war broke out in 1780 South Canara was converted into a scene of hectic political activity. The treaty of Mangalore signed between Tipu and British on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1784 put an end to this war. The Treaty of Mangalore proved to be a truce which could not last very long.

The Third Anglo Mysore was fought in the year 1790-92. The Treaty of Srirangapattanam signed on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1792 sapped further the economic, financial and military resources of Tipu. The acquisition of Kanara by the British gave an important advantage which they had been coveting for a long while.

### **Land Monopoly and Agrarian System in South Canara**

The territorial possession of Tipu Sultan after his demise at the Battle of Seringapatam were partitioned among the British, the Nizam and the Peshwa. The fertile and strategic province of Kanara with the coastal lines was annexed by the English India Company. The southern most regions of Canara adjacent to Malabar were later formed into a separate district known as South Canara consisting of Korial Bekel, and Neelisaram. It was the first time that these regions passed into the sovereignty of a foreign nation and experienced the colonial policy of surplus extraction.

Since 1799, till the formation of the South Canara district incorporating the taluks of Coondapur, Udipi, Mangalore and Kasargod

and Uppinangadi, the entire British possessions came to be known as the province of Kanara. Captain Thomas Muro was put in charge as settlement officer and collector of Kanara.

The transfer of power from the native government to the British with the vast resources of a fertile region tempted the company to realize the total juma of Tipu Sultan from its territorial possessions. The acquisition meant the loss of hereditary status which the native chiefs had enjoyed, and their reduction into the position of mere landlords and pensioners. The resentment over this led to the revolt of the Rajas of Kumbala, Vittal and Nileshwar.<sup>13</sup>

The regions of South Canara Betsal and Vittal taluks had actively participated in these anti colonial revolts in the beginning of British rule. The Raja of Vittal or Vittal Hedga along with the Rebels plundered the Manjeshwar temple in May 1800. The Rebellion had nothing formidable in itself but would soon become so if neglected. They plundered villages, seize the better sort of inhabitants extort fines from them in order pay their followers, exact ceths of secrecy and threaten to murder those who make any discoveries.

The northern division of Canara had also witnessed a series of revolts during the early years and in the later period of the British

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13. Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, Vol. II, London, p.220.

occupation. Following the continuous fall in the price of agricultural products and a trade depression there had been several riots in the northern division of Kanara.

Thomas Monroe who was deputed to the districts of Kanara immediately after its acquisition by the British, had given an elaborate report on revenue matters in his letter of 31 May 1800 to the Board of Revenue. The Revenue policy<sup>14</sup> of Munro had declared that his revenue settlement was 'fixed and permanent'. The distinguishing feature of the system, stated an authority, is that the state brought into direct contact with the owner of land and collects its revenue through its own servants without the intervention of an intermediate agent. Such as the Zamindar or farmer, and its object is the creation of peasant proprietors. However, even under the peasant proprietors, land monopoly continued and mule wargdars controlled big tracts of land under the category as peasant. The system was later criticized by the Board of Revenue on the following grounds.

Unfortunately the share of government was generally fixed too high and the result of this over assessment increased as its pressure has been by the fall in the value of produce since the settlement or mode has never allowed the system a fair trial various restrictive also led to much

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14. *Thomas Munro to William Petrie, President of the Board of Revenue, 16 June, 1800, Para.9*

interference with the Ryots through they were far from being a necessary consequence of the system.<sup>15</sup>

There had been substantial changes in the status of a land holder in Kanara from that of his counterpart in Malabar. For all practical purpose, Malabar was considered a ryotwari tract by the administrators and jurists both in the British and later periods. The Malabar land holder who was known as a Janmi claimed his land a hereditary possession and enjoyed absolute proprietary right. The forest and waste land comprised in his patta were not assessed by the colonial government. A wargdar in Kasargod although he was a janmi was quite inferior in status. His land was classified as 'Sarkar' and he had to obtain permit from the authority to quarry stones. The revenue realised from his land was higher than that of the revenue realized from same category of land in Malabar. He had to pay revenue for forest and waste land.

His theory on Ryotwari had been substantiated as follows: "All systems of Indian Revenue must, I imagine and in making a direct settlement with every independent land holder, without the intervention of any superior lord; and in making every one of them answerable for his own rent, and whole of the estates comprising a village or district answerable for the failure of any particular estate therein, by second assessment.

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15. Board of Revenue to the Secretary to Government, Revenue, 27 June 1856, Board's Minute, 23-30, June 1856, Vol. No.2535, p.119.

The Ryots of India units in his own person the characters of labourer, farmer and landlord, he receives the wages of the labourer, the profit of the farmer on his stock, and a small surplus from one to twenty per cent of the gross produce as rent, but on an average not more than five or six per cent. The smallness of this surplus prevents him from letting his land to an under tenant, because the rent should not be equal to his subsistence, and also because no tenant would give him even this rent.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of these arguments raised by him in favour of Ryotwari system the land was alienated in favour of sub and under tenants and that even led to rack-renting with a disastrous effect on cultivating tenants.

Under the Zamindari system, the collection of revenue was the responsibility of the Zamindars and their salaried agents. In the Ryotwari system this responsibility was entrusted to the traditional village staff on a meager, but regular monthly payment of the government. The entire revenue system in Kanara was exposed to new experiments with fluctuating demands. There were discriminations in the assessment of the same categories of land holders and some of them were heavily assessed and a few others were lightly. The efforts on the part of the officials to equalize the demand on different holdings foredoomed to failure as there was no survey of land. Further the rich and the influential landlords tried their best to maintain those inequalities.<sup>17</sup> The revenue

16. *Thomas Munro to J.B. Travers*, Secretary, Board of Revenue, 27 Feb. 1800, p.36.

17. K.N. Krishnaswami Iyyer, *Madras District Gazetteers, South Canara*, Madras, 1938, p.27.

system was more based on the traditional Beejavari, but some of the holdings failed to achieve the estimated produce of twelve times. The ecological and the geographical factors also created a pathetic situation regarding the revenue affairs. It was stated that: "South Canara is essentially a forest district. The slopes of the western ghats from north to South clothed with dense forests of magnificent timber and the forest growths stimulated by the heavy rainfall approach within a few miles of the coast."

Munro pointed out the complex nature of land holdings in these words "The lands in this country never having been surveyed the extent of cultivated and waste being unknown and the fields so mixed and divided that hardly anybody but the owners knew to whom they belonged."<sup>18</sup> The intention of Munro was to make the assessment on land permanent or fixed in the case of Ryotwari system also within a century of British occupation of South Canara, a major share of its agricultural produce, more than 50 per cent of gross produce, was collected as land revenue by the Raj. Since the occupation of the Province, through various theories and modus operandi, of revenue assessment, the colonial government was aiming at this goal. To achieve it they tried several experiments and south Canara was heavily assessed.

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18. *Thomas Munro to William Petric*, President of the Board of Revenue, 4 May 1800.

The land revenue system was a major instrument of colonial exploitation of surplus.<sup>19</sup>

### **Land Monopoly**

The land monopoly institutions in South Kanara were identically the same as those generally existed in South India. The upper castes of the Hindu religious groups like the Brahmin, Nayara and Samanthas controlled the land system. Besides them certain temple institutions managed by Brahmin, Jain and Nayar communities also controlled land for public purpose of religion. In reality they had also functioned as land controlling units.

During the advent of the East India Company as a territorial authority of Kanara most of the agricultural lands were consolidated by families belonging to priestly and political classes. They also belonged to the upper castes and enjoyed much hegemony and superiority in the social system. As they controlled land, their position and social status became superior.<sup>20</sup> In brief their caste and land status were identical only in the colonial period there was a disintegration in the medieval system of land control mainly due to the introduction of compulsory land sale and other activities leading to commercialisation of land. The land and revenue regulations of the colonial system facilitated the depressed castes

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19. K.K.N.Kurup, *The Beginnings of Colonial Agrarian System in South India. Modern Indian History Congress*, Mysore University, 1993, p.33.

20. *Ibid.*, p.36.

and other religious groups like Muslims to invest their merchant or primitive capital in land and function as landlords. This process had been strengthened by the end of the 19th century and the land survey and settlement of 1903 recorded the titles of many Muslim families as land monopolists in different villages of South Canara.

### **Economy and society S. Canara**

#### **a) Division of Land**

The system of land division that existed in the Pre-British period continued during the colonial rule also Francis Buchanan, who visited South Canara in January 1801 says that “the land may be divided into rice land and garden ground (land). This broad division was made on the basis of the crop that was raised in a particular piece of land. The cultivation of crops was decided by factors like availability of water, physiographical situation, and elevation or otherwise of the land called Potta or Mojaru.<sup>21</sup>

These fields were situated in low-lying areas near the banks of rivers. Rice was cultivated extensively, and the surplus was exported by the company government to the other parts of the country and also to the Arabian countries. Coconut plantations extended along the whole coast line of south Canara in tolerably extensive plantations and on the banks of fields and in other favourable spots throughout the whole district arecanut

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21. Francis Buchanan, *op cit.*, p.228.

and pepper were too important commercial crops produced in the region. Betel leaf was also cultivated on a larger scale. Another important commercial crop cultivated was sugarcane. Agricultural crops both commercial and non commercial, certain other grains were cultivated. There prevailed a system of slash and burn cultivation known as Kumri. It was cultivation of land, mostly outside a warg by felling and burning a patch of the forest, the ashes serving as manure. Another system of cultivation that prevailed in this region was known as 'hakka' the cultivation of dry crops was carried on by the villagers on the hill sides and plain wastes, to a limited extent, and this system of cultivation was known as hakka.<sup>22</sup>

### **Agricultural Techniques and Irrigation**

The method of cultivation and the agricultural techniques followed in South Canara during the period under study was primitive and was a continuation of the Pre-British system. Rotation and the fallowing of crops was completely non-existent. Irrigated agriculture based primarily upon tank or reservoir storage and secondarily upon riverine sources was the dominant and stable system of cultivation. There was no extensive irrigation work in South Canara. The south west monsoon was sufficient to ensure the first crop even on lands where there were no facilities for storing water. Artificial irrigation was used for the second and third

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22. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

crops. The tanks and embankments erected and maintained by the people themselves.

### **Agricultural Labour**

Another important factor in the agrarian system was that of the agricultural labour. Agricultural labours mostly belonged to the Holeya caste.<sup>23</sup> Depending upon their nature of employment, agricultural labourers were divided into hired labourers or hereditary serfs.

### **Industry**

On the industrial climate of Kanara, Sir Thomas wrote in 1800. "Canara will probably never be a manufacturing country, because it produces none of the raw materials necessary to render it such – and because of the heavy rains which last so great a part of the year are in insurmountable obstacles to all operations which requires to be carried on under a clear sky and the open air."

The industries of this period were not industries in the modern sense of the term. They were rural industries, mostly based upon agriculture and the agrarian raw materials, like coir-making, oil crushing, jaggery making, toddy drawing and salt manufacturing. Among these coir industry was the most flourishing, and coir was exported to the other parts of the country, especially to Bombay. Coir industry was one of the

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23. *Ibid.*, p.231.

flourishing village industries of this region and was a source of revenue for the state.<sup>24</sup>

The manufacturing techniques of all these village industries were undeveloped and mostly traditional. These industries and their products served the need of the people between 1799 and 1860 considerable changes took place in the agrarian relations in South Canara. These changes were the result of the new agrarian system that developed during the initial phase of British Colonial Administration in this region. According to Burton Stein "Agrarian system is a concept which permits me to treat the relationship between people, groups of people, and the land as a systematic unity, as a whole Agrarian system to stem is a broader concept, in the society in relation to land. People various groups of people, and land are the various components of the same agrarian system. Agrarian relationship that exists among the various classes or groups of people in relation to land – its ownership, its production, revenue administration and revenue payment. The British annexation of the region had destroyed certain old elements – political economic and social – which figures in the agrarian system of the pre-annexation period. The system of letting out land for cultivation because crucial in forming the agrarian system and relations of the people."<sup>25</sup>

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24. Burton Stein, *Integration of the Agrarian System of South India*, p.204..

25. *Ibid.*, p.207.

Though the system of revenue administration introduced by the company was Ryotwari, it never safeguarded the economic interest of the Ryots.

### **Trade and Commerce**

The major items of exports were mostly agricultural products. The products of South Canara like rice, pepper, cardamom, coir and arecanut were exported not only to the other parts of the country like Bombay, Goa and Malabar, but also to foreign countries like Arabia and to the French ports. In 1809, Alexander Read considered Mangalore to be the Emporium of Kanara. Certain piece goods like cotton and silk cloth, fruits, metals horse were imported from the other parts of India like Malabar, Goa, Bombay and also from Arabia.

About 1/3 of the rice exported went to Arabia and the rest to Malabr Goa and Bombay. In 1801, Buchanan observed that rice was the grand article of export, and was exported to Muscat, Bombay, Goa and Malabar. Next to rice, supari or betel nut and pepper were the chief items of export.<sup>26</sup> Sandalwood was sent to Bombay and Cinnamon and turmeric were sent to Muscat, Cutch and Surat. Buchanan also observed that blue cotton cloth was imported from Surat. Throughout this period, the principal items of import were coconut, coir, copper dates, iron, kopra or dry coconut, coconut oil, kerosene, paper, camel, cotton, dry grain and

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26. Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p.243.

horses. These were imported from places like Bombay, Goa, Malabar, Travancore and also from Arabia.<sup>27</sup>

The items of export were betelnut, cardamom, tobacco, coffee, cotton, jaggery, iron-sandalwood, sandalwood oil, pepper, rice and paddy, sugar dry fish and dry greens. These were exported to Arabia Bombay Coromandal coast, Goa, and Malabar. The most important foreign market for the rice of South Canara was Arabia, any problems which affected their demand, naturally effected the export of rice fro Mangalore to Arabia.

Duties – both land and sea – were levied as goods transported from one place to the other, as also on imports and exports.

South Canara, under the colonial government, witnessed certain changes the society and social relations of the people. This social transformation was mainly due to the policies pursued by the company government in the region. The deposition of the three important chieftains, the British revenue system and the introduction of law courts had brought about significant changes in the society.

The introduction of the new revenue system played an important part in changing the economy and subsequently the society of the region. Many of the money lenders and zamindars were also serving the

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27. *Ibid.*, p.245.

company government as revenue officials. In the newly emerged agrarian society they played an important role in the agrarian relations, and were only next to the British government in fulfilling their self interests. As a result of these changes, land mortgages and transfer of land from the poor to the rich almost became the order of the day. The moneylenders or the zamindars acted as middlemen between government and the peasants. The poor peasants were at the mercy of the zamindars or the money lenders.

The zamindars under this ryotwari system were not basically different from the zamindars of the permanent settlement in Bengal. They used to lease out their lands to the under tenants through the various systems of leasing out land for cultivation. As a result of this the Zamindars became almost absentee landlords exploiting the hard work of the poor peasants, which widened the gulf between the rich zamindars and the poor peasants.<sup>28</sup>

The introduction of a judicial system with regular law courts also caused certain changes in the old village system of deciding disputes. The village headmen or other richer person in the village lost their position in the society. The British judicial system was too expensive and was beyond the reach of the common ryots.

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28. Ibid., p.250.

### **Castes and Communities – S. Canara**

South Canara presented a mosaic of castes and communities. Brahmins, apart from their age-old functions of religion, learning and teaching, were land holders and engaged themselves with the task of cultivating land. The Havika Brahmins had particularly specialized in arecanut cultivation in South Canara. The company Government availed of the services of the Brahmins in their administration, appointing them to posts of accountants, patels, managers, sherstadores and the like.

Next to Brahmins, were the Bunts, who were the chief landowning and cultivating class. They followed the aliyasantana system of property inheritance or matrilineal succession. Some of the Bunts were also absorbed by the government in the field of revenue administration.<sup>29</sup> Gaudas or Halvaklum akkalu, were another important community among the Hindus. They were more numerous in the Puttur, and Amara Sullia Maganes of the Buntwal Taluk. They were a land owning and cultivating class. They spoke a dialect of Kannada known as Arekannada in the region.

The Devadiagas and Sappaligas were the two communities. Why by profession served as musicians in the temples. A large number of them were cultivators of land also. Billavas or Halepaikas were another important community among the Hindus. Their profession according to

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29. P. Gururaja Bhatt, *Studies in Tuluva History and Culture*, pp.259-260.

tradition was toddy drawing. Many of the Billavas had the affix Baidya or Pujari added to their name, as a large number of them, were Baidyas or Physicians and pujaris or performers of puja or worship in the demon temples. The Billavas used to own lands and also were agricultural labourers.<sup>30</sup>

Besides the Brahmin and various husbandmen communities there were some communities of people who carried on various artisan activities. They depended for their livelihood more on their professions and less on lands. These were the Vishwakarnas, Patvegar, Bilimagga, Ganiga, Kumbara, Mogavira, Madivala and Samagara or Cobler. The Vishwakarnas were divided into various sub-groups. Akkasale (Goldsmith), Badagi (carpenter), Kammara (Blacksmith) and the Kanchugara (brass worker) The Bilimaggas were weavers of the region. The Ganigas were oil mongers. The Kumbaras were earthen pot-makers. The Mogaviras were fishermen of south Canara.

In the northern parts of the district they were also known as Kharvis, Madivala also known as Agasa or Dhobi was of the washermen community of the region. The Bhandari or the barbers engaged themselves in hair cutting. The samagaras or cobblers were leather workers. These communities carried on their traditional professions.

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30. *Ibid.*, p.262.

the mission. The social and economic condition which prevailed in South Canara during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the stratified

Societies of the regions conversions to Christianity resulted in expulsion from the castes and caste related occupations people mostly belonging to middle and lower levels of caste hierarchy sought conversion to escape the oppressions of society. In the process they got removed from their traditional occupations which was related to caste. It became a need to resettle the converts in the alternate avenues of economic activities.

### **The Basel Mission and Economic Measures**

The Basel Mission took up industries as part of their work for upliftment and the poorer people were inducted as workers of the household or in their workshops.<sup>33</sup>

The Mission made some experiments to try out coffee plantation in 1840 on a piece of land donated by collector H.M.Blair. But it had to be given up as it had not proved successful for the converts were indolent. Also attempts to make sugar out of toddy proved an unprofitable venture as the expense of the fuel was too much Rev.Ott made a trial with farming in Moolky as most of the girls belonged to the agrarian class. The experiment succeeded.

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33. Henry Wilson, *The Basel Mission's Industrial Enterprises in South Canara and its impact between 1834-1914*. *Indian Church History Review*, 4, No.2, 1980, pp.94-95.

One interesting contribution of the Basel Mission was that of F Metz to the study of botany in South Canara. He was the first to begin the collection of plants from this district. In order to help the travel union in Germany near stuttgart for maintaining a collection of plants. Metz collected these plants and identified them. A series of papers by Hohenacker and Metz was published from 1857 to '1858 in Flora and Botanssesche Zeitung where several set of plants collected by Metz were advertised for sale.<sup>34</sup>

Later C. Stolz another missionary got interested in the medicinal wealth of Mangalore and collected many plants. Particularly the herbaceous flora, and got these identified through Hohenacker. The publication of the book 'Five Hundred Indian Plants and their use in Medicine and the Art' written in Kanarese (1881) was a great contribution to medicine.

#### **The Basel Mission Industrial Establishment**

An industrial commission was formed as early as 1846 but only 1854, was it given greater importance when it was made a department of the Basel Missionary society and with a separate treasury.

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34. R.K.Arora, B.H. Wadhwa and Raizada, *A Contribution to the Botany of South Canara district, Karnataka. The Botany of South Canara District*, iiDehra Dun, 1981, pp.1-2.

The reason for venturing into industrial undertakings was not merely for profit but to have a kind of an educational institution. It was part of a modernizing programme and since suitable school education was necessary in the civilizing process, primary education in Mission schools was made compulsory for the children of the converts. Rudolf H. Fisher says:<sup>35</sup>

By 1913, the Basel Mission was the largest single industrial entrepreneur in South Canara and Malabar. Its seven weaving establishments and seven tile factories employed 2,500 Christian out of a total of approximately 20,000 congregation members and gave work to an additional 1000 non Christians. The net profit of the Basel Mission industry was large enough to cover one quarter of a year's expenses of the Mission in India.

In 1846, the Basel Mission had started an industrial school to train their people in weaving, carpentry lock making but that was given up.

### **The Printing Press**

The first industrial undertaking that met with real success was a printing press with a book binding department attached to it. The printing press started in 1861 at Balmatta more for, the Christians than the weaving establishments for while it benefited the industrial worker, it

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35. Rudolf, H. Fisher, Mission and Modernisation, *The Basel Mission Factories as Agents of Social Change (1850-1914) Wholeness in Christ*, p.200.

also acted as a height to the world in the printing of religious books, tracts etc.

Charles George Andrew Plebst had come to India with Inspector Josenhans in 1851 in Mangalore in charge of the press he had to transform the lithographic press into typographic one, a difficult task as the vernaculars have a large number of letter types. This first important undertaking of the Mission met with real success as the press had a book binding department attached it which naturally gave more employment to the people.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Weaving Establishment**

In 1854, the industrial Commission sent Goetleb Pfeleiderer to India to manage the industry with a Knowledge of it. He set up shops and helped the growth of industry through buying raw material and sale of finished goods in the weaving establishment. The main difference in their weaving was that these factories in Mangalore (the other two were in Calicut and in Cannanore) used the imported technology fly shuttle loom of European design thus allowing for greater speed in work, 11,408 yards of different fabrics were woven weaving had been introduced on a commercial scale by the Basel Mission through Rev Metz in 1844.<sup>37</sup>

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36. *B.M. Report 1857*, Mangalore the Basel Mission Press & Book Depot, Canara Ltd, pp.107-08.

37. Joseph Mullers, *Missions in South India*. London 1854, p.107.

In 1851, Hallers, a European weaver was sent and he erected a little factory in Mangalore with 21 handlooms of European construction and a dye house. He was the inventor of the dye, the Khaki colour and the famed Khaki cloth which Lord Roberts took for the British military uniform and is now universally popular, was first manufactured in Mangalore.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Tile Industry**

The basic material for manufacture of tiles is clay or felspar, which is found abundantly in the river beds in the western coast. Much of the credit of starting the first modern tile factory in India goes to the Basel Missionary, Geroge Plebst. Plebst came to India on the invitation of Joseph Joesenhans in 1858. Plebst a trained machinist from Germany went back to Europe to study the latest techniques of tile making, seeing the famous Gillardon Tiles in Alsace, thought it was a remarkable article for India. Returning to India with a set of moulds as well as screw press, he went about making the necessary tile drying frames etc. Plebst collected the soils of the river bed of river Netravati and had then tested in the laboratories of Switzerland and Germany with the help of the native potters he established the first tile factory in Jeppo, Mangalore.<sup>39</sup> The factory produced 500 tiles a day and used a Pugmill powered by bullocks.

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38. *Ibid.*, p.108.

39. *B.M. Report*, 1865, p.29.

### **Final Phase Development of Tile Industry**

The success of the first tile factory led to the establishment of tile factories in Malabar and in South Canara. In July 1864 for the first time, 'Mission Roofing Tiles' were made and the first turnover was 7,485 roofing tiles fetching an income of Rs.295/-. Plebst began to build subterranean houses and he introduced manufacture of tiles, ventilators and skylights.

At the Jeppo tile factory Pottery and Terracotta was also manufactured, and also models of animals and fruits for schools.

The tile business was an extremely successful venture of the Mission<sup>40</sup> The Euroepan type tile was nonporous and less prone to breakage. They were expensive but light-weight and easily found a profitable market both in India and abroad.<sup>41</sup>

The product of these tile factories included roof tiles, ridge tiles, floor tiles, salt glazed pipes, terracotta products and hourdis. These were also marketed through British trade channels and became extremely popular in the regions.

A new branch of industry was started with the manufacture of rugs and mats out of dyed coir which were in great demand. Tailoring, soap making, smithy, book binding, carpentry were the other ventures.

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40. The Gold medal was awarded to the Basel Mission at the Nagpur Exhibition of 1908 for the production of their South Canara tiles.

41. *B.M. Report*, 1909, p.69.

### **The Basel Mission Mechanical Establishment Workshop**

A workshop was established in 1874 to train fitters, blacksmiths and carpenters. The apprentices were given theoretical and practical training followed by a government examination in these trades.<sup>42</sup>

Thus it provided technical training and produced many skilled artisans. Work included manufacture of fireproof safes and construction of bridges. In 1912, the Government of Madras declared the Basel Mechanical Establishment eligible to supply safes to government institutions.

Brother Huttinger, an engineer, succeeded in constructing a new kind of water lift as had been done in the other districts in the presidency.<sup>43</sup>

He also undertook to put up for government, an iron girder bridge at Feringapet and received a contract for a similar larger bridge elsewhere.<sup>44</sup>

The steady growth of industrial and commercial activities required more capital and to meet this a joint stock company was formed in 1859 under the name of Missions Handels Gesellschaft (Missions Trading

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42. *B.M. Report, 1881*, p.80.

43. *Ibid.*, p.82.

44. *B.M. Report, 1879*, p.89.

Company). In 1882, this was combined with the mercantile branch at Basel and a commission on commerce and industries were formed, and the accounts were apart from the Mission proper. The net profit was paid to the Mission committee as a free contribution. Under the new management, the mission industry grew rapidly and successfully both in terms of production and employment.<sup>45</sup> Work discipline was strictly carried out and the management of the Mission along with their Indian supervisors had a struggle to make the worker regularize his performance. Work at the establishments was hard but regularized, interspersed with punctuality and hours of work being ten in a six day week.<sup>46</sup>

The Catholic Church and economic measures made a lot of changes in South Canara. Just like the Basel Missionaries, the Jesuit Fathers also faced with a similar need to provide employment and occupation for their converts. Mangalore being an important catholic centre, a novitiate was opened in St. Joseph's seminary at Jeppoo to receive and train native Catholics as candidates for the priesthood.<sup>47</sup>

Fr. August Diamanti Jesuit priest who came the Mangalore on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1879 was the spiritual Director of the Seminary. He studied Konkani along with teaching Latin Grammar, Church History and

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45. *Harvest Field*. Mysore: Wesley Publishing house, January, 1887

46. A. Schosser, *A Hundred Years of the Basel Mission*, Mangalore: Basel Mission Books and Tracts Depository, 1915, pp.51-52.

47. *Ibid.*, p.53.

Philosophy to help him in his vocation and work. Beside the seminary and St. Joseph's chapel, Fr. Diamanti built workshops which included a foundry, smithy, a mechanical establishment, carpentry and shoe maker's shops and a statuary shop. Fr. Diamanti was the pioneer and architect of the Jeppoo institutions.

### **The Codialbail Printing Press**

A Printing press was started at Codialbail by Bro-Aloysius Doneda in 1862. It made a very valuable contribution both economically and culturally to the people of Mangalore. It was a small hand press worked by the brother with his hands with a few type cases and sundry material, and four people to help him.

The press expanded with the patronage of a catholic gentlemen of Mangalore and soon gained such success that it secured the patronage of the district and munsif's courts, the municipal council of the district board, local firms and business concerns of private and public.

The Mangalore Magazine, the organ of St. Aloysius college was started by Fr. Moore in 1897, was also printed at this press. Fr. Denis Fernandes took on its editorship in 1908, continuing to do so till 1914. The Codialbail printing press was handed over to the Diocesan Clergy in 1923 and when they were given charge of the Diocese of Mangalore.<sup>48</sup>

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48. *Basel Mission Report, 1893*, K.T.C. Archives, Mangalore, p.24.

Before the industrial awakening in the sphere of modern industry like tile making and manufacture of hosiery and iron goods, the economic life of the district had centered around age old occupations.<sup>49</sup> The age old oil mongers were the earliest to abandon their crude oil pressing business consequent to the introduction of oil mills elsewhere and in Mangalore itself while the Hindustan Oil Mills owned by the Lobo Brothers were the biggest mills. The tile industry was one of the staple crafts in Mangalore of many years and the houses in Mangalore were roofed with rounded tiles first mounded in cylindrical forms and were cut into four segments which was introduced by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century.

The introduction of the modern flat type tile brought about a revolution in the trade and created a demand for Mangalore tiles from place far and near.

The differences in the industry was in its undertaking by the Basel Mission for the protestant Christians, whereas it was the individual efforts and private ownership where the Catholics were concerned. The tile industry was undertake in 1865 by the Basel Missionaries to provide employment for their converts. The tile industry opened markets outside Canara and Bombay. The head quarters of the Central Railway, the Victoria Terminus was the first public building to be roofed with Mangalore tiles.

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49. Hoffmann, *A Brief History of Basel Mission Industries*, Mangalore, 1913, p.14.

The Western India Tile Manufacturers' Association was founded in 1947, registered under the companies act to represent the interests of the factories on the west coast. The Mangalore roofing tiles exported nearly 750 lakhs of tiles during 1949-50.

### **The Coffee Industry**

Another major industry started at the initiative of the British were coffee cultivation and coffee curing. It was Baba Budan, who returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca in the seventeenth century, brought first coffee seeds to India and placed these in his gardens known as Baba Budan Peetha, near Chikmagalur. Mark Gubbon and Levin Bowring, Commissioners of Mysore and Coorg encouraged the cultivation of Coffee, offering free lands and the proximity to the port of Mangalore made it viable.<sup>50</sup> Coffee curing was first taken up by Messers A.J. Saldanha and sons with the establishment of the Bolor Coffee curing works in 1848, close to the port of Mangalore. Messrs P.F. Saldanha and sons, branching off from the parent firm in 1909 founded the highland coffee works at Falnir, Mangalore. The Basel Mission Community started coffee industry in a small scale manner and some of their workers were to be found in the coffee curing works and even in the estates.

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50. Ladislaus, B. Aranha, *Coffee and Christians, Special Issue, 1837*, Mangalore pp.33-35

Coffee curing works were at Chikamangalur Hunsur, Mangalore, Mercara and Mysore with four curing works in Mangalore. The chief auction centers in Karnataka were Chikmangalur, Hunser and Mangalore. There were about 200 planters in Karnataka with holdings of various sizes and they had made significant contribution to philanthropic work and to the growth of the society in areas where plantations and estates were situated.

Cashew nut Industry had put the name of Mangalore on the international trade map. There was a great demand for cashew nuts in America. The first exporters of cashew nut from Mangalore were M/s. Aiman & Arnone in 1931. In 1932 Peirce Leslie produced cashew nut at Jeppoo cashew nut oil were in demand for the plastic industry. Betel nut industry also flourished in South Canara district Karnataka was noted for its forest wealth and saw milling, wood preservation, plywood, matchwood etc. Then came the Mysore paper mills and Sandalwood Oil factories. Those involved in working in the forest areas of South Canara were the Koragars who work with Bamboo and were basket makers. Vast coconut plantations were maintained by the Albuquerque family at Ullal sugarcane plantations on a larger scale were found on the Albuquerque's estates at Ullal, leading to the production of jaggery and sugar.

The Basel Mission had four objectives in Malabar and S. Canara to strengthen the Mission's cause.

1. Philanthropic ie. to promote employment and honest livelihood.
2. Pedagogic ie. to train the converts to habits of honest labour.
3. Civilising whereby the country benefited with a class of artisans, tradesmen etc.
4. A financial objective, to find new sources of revenue for the mission in order that with time they might be associated with other scopes especially in the cause of their mercantile factories.<sup>51</sup>

In 1910, the Missionaries conference in India, in its findings reported that rather than teaching the people 'self help' problems were being solved artificially. Now the new watchword was to help the poor people to 'help themselves'.

Social welfare was also high up on the list of priorities of the Basel Missionaries. The industrial establishment opened a provident fund for the workers. The protestant community had its impact on the economy of south Canara and provided their converts all necessary help towards achieving social welfare. The Basel mission was given the credit for industrializing South Canara, with its far sightedness in seeing the need and feeling the pulse for a stable economic life for their converts irrespective of caste or creed.<sup>52</sup> The Basel Missionaries contributed to the

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51. *Basel Mission Report, 1867*, p.58.

52. *Basel Mission Report for the year 1869*, Mangalore, p.49.

well being of all people and it was really a magnificent task for them to not only bring about a new order in society but also a new social economy to bring about stability and create a resourcefulness among their people.

### **The Educational and Philanthropic Involvement**

The nineteenth century is a great century of the missionary work. It is only in the nineteenth century that there was a great evangelistic awakening in the protestant church for the missionary work. The Basel Missionaries came to south Canara in 1831. These missionaries came from a pietistic background and of western culture. The first three German missionaries belonging to the Basel German Evangelical Mission society who left for India from Portsmouth on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1834 were the Rev. Samuel Hebich, Rev. John Lenher and Rev Christoph Griener. The ship named 'Malabar' carrying these missionaries touched Calicut port on the evening of October 13<sup>th</sup> 1834. Accepting the invitation of Nelson the District Judge of Calicut, the three German missionaries arrived at Calicut on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1834. Although requested by Nelson to remain in Calicut and start work in Calicut area, being under orders to start missionary work in South Canara area they proceeded to Mangalore by a country craft arranged specially for their use by Nelson promising to return to Calicut after starting their work in South Canara.<sup>53</sup>

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53. *Basel Mission Report*, 1878, p.14.

On arrival at Mangalore on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1834 the three German Missionaries were given a warm welcome by Hindely Anderson, the then Sub Judge in Mangalore, who arranged to provide them with all facilities to carryout their work in that area. Anderson helped them in many ways throughout his stay in Mangalore. In those days about 320km-480km east of Mangalore the Wesley and Landon Missionary societies were engaged in evangelical works in places Belgaum, Bangalore, Bellary, etc. The L.M.S. and Wesley missionaries supplied them with tracts and other literature printed in Canarese which were of immense help to the B.G.E.M. Missionaries

The Local People of Mangalore spoke Tulu and Konkan respectively. The Missions were able to introduce social revolution in the community. They dealt very severely with caste system, and the status of women were raised up considerably. Rev. Hebich commenced learning Canarese while Rev. Greener and Rev. Lenher learned Tulu and Konkan respectively.<sup>54</sup>

At Mangalore Rev Hebich started on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1836, the first school to be started by the Basel Mission in that area. Due to the increase in the number of students another school was started in 1837. To assist Rev. Hebich in his work Rev.Dr.H.Moegling and three other missionaries arrived in Mangalore on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1836. In January 1837 Rev. Hebich left for Hubli, Dharwar etc along with Dr. Moegling and worked

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54. *Ibid.*, p.18.

in that area. On his return to Mangalore he came across Thomas Strange the then judge of Tellicherry who happened to be there at Mangalore area as a member of a Commission appointed by the Government to enquire into an agitation by the Coorgies settled in Mangalore.<sup>55</sup>

As per the instruction from Basel a general conference of all B.G.E. Missionaries was convened at Mangalore on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of July 1838. It was decided at the conference that Rev. Dr. H. Moegling to be the Chairman of the Council formed in Mangalore and also be in charge of the Seminary started for training new converts in Evangelical work. Accepting the invitation of the Basel German Evangelical Missionary Society Dr. Gundert and his wife left Thirunelveli for Mangalore on 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1838. Rev. Hebich after visiting Dharwar, Belgaum, Bangalore, Coorg etc got ample opportunity to win over Christ many civilian and military personnel. In the meantime he was invited to go over to Malabar area for evangelical work. The committee at Mangalore therefore decided to send Dr.Gundert and his wife to Tellicerry and work in that area.

***b. Caste and Economic Background of early Basel Mission Christians in South Canara***

**Billava Conversions**

Most of the Basel Mission Christians in South Canara are caste-wise of Billava origin. Billavas are the largest community in the district,

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55. *Ibid.*, p.21.

estimated to be 14 lakhs out of a total population of 24 lakhs. Billavas (bow-men) or Birver are shudras who in the caste hierarchy occupy a lower position, but they are not untouchables. Billava caste is one of the predominant castes in South Canara forming the edifice of Tule history and culture. Billavas are said to be soldiers in ancient times and were good hunters. Billavas therefore in spite of their numerical strength were still socio economically and politically one of the weakest communities in South Canara. Billavas are mostly tenants or farmers and landless labourers working for the landed gentry like Bunts or for the people of higher castes. It can be said that Billavas form the “mass” or the “proletariate” of South Canara.<sup>56</sup>

Billavas also had a stronger urge for alcohol, perhaps partly because of their former soldiers profession. Therefore after they became famous they started to draw toddy out of coconut and palm trees and later also engaged in distillation. Thus a considerable number of Billavas became toddy-drawers for their livelihood.

Like most of the people of other castes in South Canara Billavas are ardent worshippers of innumerable Bhuttias (demon) South Canara is well known for the religious phenomenon of demon worship and various religious ceremonies like Kola (devil dance) Ayana and Nema (annual demon festival) are held in literally hundreds of demon temples in every

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56. Godwin Shiri, *Wholeness in Christ The Legacy of Basel Mission in India*, Mangalore, 1985, p.179.

nook and corner of South Canara. The Billavas have played a major role in the development of Bhutharadana in South Canara.

The Billava priests play the role of those possessed of the Bhutha in the various demon religion ceremonies. It is partly because of this religious rôle of Billavas they are also commonly known as Pujaries (priests) in South Canara. Billavas are also called as Baidye Vaidya (medicine men) because some Billavas are good innative medicine also. There are Billava counterparts in a few other districts of Karnataka. They are called Halepaika, Diva, Namaderi, and Idiga. Like Billavas these caste groups also were traditionally engaged in toddy drawing and the soldier profession.<sup>57</sup>

The first three Basel mission pioneer missionaries namely Hebich, Lehner and Greiner, as soon as they settled down in Mangalore started a Kanarese school in 1836. This was opened for children of all castes with no discrimination which was a revolutionary phenomenon, since access to education was almost entirely reserved for the people of higher castes at that time.

Mangalore then had a population of 30,000. As the work of Basel Mission slowly extended in Mangalore and from there to Kadike, Muliki, Uchilla, Udupi and much later to Karkala to several other stations, it was

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57. *Ibid.*, p.181.

the Billavas who mostly responded to the Gospel than any other communities.

Towards the end of the 1860's and in the early 1870's the Basel Mission work in S. Canara saw a sudden growth through a large number of conversions of Billavas and also of a number of Mogers (Fishermen) and Bunts, and a few from other castes. This development is known as the 'Tulu Movement' in the history of Basel Mission in India. The year 1869 saw an all time highest number of conversions of 503 people in 28 villages around Mulki and Udupi scattered over 24 miles in length and 4 miles in breadth. The large scale accession into Christian faith also did not last long. Within 3-4 years it got slowly reduced, and became a trickle again as in the pre-Tulu movement period. However even long after the Tulu movement receded and the Basel Mission work continued. It was the Billavas who constituted the bulk of the people who came to the Christian faith. The same people thought that the support of the missionaries would be a kind of protection for them from their landlords.<sup>58</sup>

The Mission schools, boarding homes, orphanages and the job opportunities in the Mission industrial concerns were also attractions for a number of enquirers.

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58. *B.G.E.M. Report, 1870*, p.213.

Among the motivations for conversion the dread of demons was interesting as well as significant.

### **The Basel Mission and the Bhuta Cult**

The Mission was engaged with the religion of the inhabitants of South Canara at an early date, above all with the worship of Hindu deities in the great temples and Bhuta cult. Around 1870 the knowledge of cult was apparently prevalent in the society. In the words of Inspector Josenhans “Particularly the lower castes are devoted to Bhuta or demon service, and the Bhuta worshippers seem to be more numerous among the Tulu people ‘than the adherents of the Brahmin religion’.”

According to tradition the Bhutas were partly devils, and partly the spirits of deceased people. The Bhuta temples were insignificant structures. The priests did not belong to the Brahmin caste, but were people from the paddy cultivator and toddy-tapers caste.<sup>59</sup>

In 1891 the Basel Mission Press printed a short description of the Bhuta Service in Tulu. The cult was criticized and change became visible in the attitude of the people. The chief priest in the village of santhur accepted faith and this motivated many to follow suit.

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59. U.P. Upadhyaya, *Coastal Karnataka. Studies in Folkloristic and Linguistic Traditions of Dakshina Kannada Region of the Western Coast of India*, Udipi Karnataka, 1996, pp.192-193.

There were a handful of Brahmin conversions to Christianity. The first of these took place in 1844 when the Brahmin trio – Ananda Rao Kaundinya, Mukunda Rao and Bhagavantha Rao took baptism in Mangalore. Kasundinya's conversion had created an uproar in Mangalore among the Brahmins and Muslims. It was the Anglo Vernacular school of Mangalore which was instrumental in the conversion of Kaundinya and the other two Brahmins.

Kaundinya was sent to Basel for theological training and after his ordination he returned to India in 1851 and worked for many years in the Mangalore seminary as a teacher and later as a pioneer missionary in Coorg. Kaundinya was instrumental in the conversions of a few Brahmins and persons of other castes.<sup>60</sup>

The Basel Mission had done some work among the Dalits. They were referred to a 'Slave Castes' in the missionary records. In Indian Society where caste plays a vital role in life, from the cradle to the tomb, the missionaries were confronted with this question from the very beginning. The Basel Mission did not compromise with caste. In 1836 when the mission started a Kanarese school in Mangalore which was open to the children of all castes, the Brahmins demanded and pleaded for a separate classroom for their children to separate them from Billava children. This was firmly rejected. The Anglo vernacular school of

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60. *Ibid.*, p.197.

Mangalore in the first two three decades had to face grave crisis which arose whenever there were conversions.

The Basel Mission Missionaries made concerned efforts to see that caste did not raise its head in the church. Their relentless efforts against caste and the success they achieved in this regard is a unique achievement.

The B.M. missionaries reported in 1876 that “we think it is good to give an unequivocal testimony that caste is no difficulty in our congregations. There is no problem of inter-dining and intermarriage; from the beginning it is set right. Second and third generations are all mixed up. There are only rare cases of castes feeling. From the beginning of our work in India to the present day we have never allowed this monster to raise its head in our churches and our strict loyalty to the principle of love in this respect has been crowned with success.”<sup>61</sup>

The Basel Mission had succeeded to a great extent in building up a Christian community which was free from caste prejudices and discrimination. The Missions preaching and education tried to spread in their congregations contained a strong emphasis or orientation on oneness in Christ, the equality of all men and women in the sight of God. Dr. Moegling’s booklet *Jathi Vicharane* (Enquiry into caste) published in 1845 was reported to be one such earliest literature against the caste evil.

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61. *B.G.E.M. Report, 1876*, p.40.

The B.M. news journals like Sathyadeepika, Sabhapatra, Christa hitavadi had articles and new items highlighting the caste problem. The impact of these efforts was certainly felt positively on society at large. The missionaries open condemnation of the caste system was a bold attempt in a society which was deeply caste ridden with its discriminating and exploitative structures.

The missionaries wanted to promote certain 'Protestant ethic', with the values of hard work, thriftiness, regularity, dignity of labour, frugality, etc. The orphanages, boarding homes, schools and even the mission industrial concerns often were the means of inculcating these values among Christians.<sup>62</sup>

### **Economic Rehabilitation**

The missionaries were faced with a great challenge as they saw the pathetic economic condition of Christians, partly because of their 'lower caste background and partly because of the deprivation they had to suffer for accepting the Christian faith. Agriculture was preferred by the missionaries to rehabilitate the converts. They wanted their Billava converts to take up some other profession than toddy-tapping. Meanwhile the gift of Balmatta Hill made by Collector Blair in 1840 came in handy to the missionaries. They tried coffee and cocoa plantations and sericulture in Balmatta hill.<sup>63</sup>

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62. Godwin Shiri, *op. cit.*, p.19.

63. *Ibid.*, p.197.

However, the attempts by the Basel Mission to rehabilitate Christians in agriculture did not succeed much. Therefore, the missionaries began to concentrate more on the industrial sector.

In fact as early as from the 1830's itself the missionaries had started small units of tailoring, mat and rug-making, soap making, smithy, binding, carpentry and weaving in a number of mission stations and thus converts are deployed there safely. They also had started a watch making unit in Mangalore in the very early period of Basel Mission in India.

Thus in 1840's and 1850's the Mission compounds in a number of stations were busy centers with Christians engaged in a *variety of trades*. Thus a class of Christian artisans, mechanics and skilled workers began to develop.

A number of Christians who had learnt printing, binding and composing in the B.N. press were able to find jobs in the Government Press and later in the private presses at Mangalore.<sup>64</sup>

Large tile factories and weaving establishments were established in Jeppu and Kudroli of Mangalore and in Malpe, providing employment for hundred of Christians.

With the job opportunities available in the mission establishments in cities and towns a large number of Christians from villages began to

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64. *Ibid.*, p.198.

migrate to Mangalore, Malpe, Udupi and Mulki. With a large number of Christian employed in Mission industrial establishments and also in the press, schools and other institutions of the Mission, the economic condition of the Christian community slowly began to improve.<sup>65</sup>

The industrial concerns of the Basel Mission also provided the infrastructure for the coming of industrialization and modernization in South Canara, and thus played a catalytic role in the dawn of a new era of enlightenment.

### **The Work of the Basel Mission in Coorg**

Coorg or Kodagu is generally known as the 'Scotland of India'. The name Coorg is an anglicized corruption of 'Kodagu' a word said to be derived from the Kannada 'kadu' meaning 'steep' or 'hilly' – Coorg lies at the top of the western ghats and is surrounded by South Canara on the western side, Malabar on the southern side and old Mysore districts on the eastern and northern sides.<sup>66</sup>

This mountainous region, about 26 hours long and half as wide, with two peaks rising above 5,600' is richly irrigated and of a rather even temperature. Out of the beautiful forests and valleys, streams flow running to the western and eastern oceans among others the beneficial

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65. *B.G.E.M. Report, 1869*, p.23.

66. C.L. Furtado, *A Brief History of the Work of the Basel Mission in Coorg from 1853-1914*. Bangalore, UTC, 1964, p.49.

Kaveri, the main river of southern India. The rain last from the end of May until September through the other eight months there is the loveliest weather, except when the strong east winds blow in January, February and March.

The main agricultural products of Coorg are rice, coffee and cardamom. Coffee was brought into Coorg during the time of the native Rajas (kings) and Coorg is one of the chief coffee producing districts in India. Coffee attracted European planters also and the first European Plantation was started in 1854. Crops like ragi, tobacco, sugar cane and cotton are grown in certain localities. Oranges are grown mainly in the Southern Part of Coorg. The climate of Coorg is generally temperate and salubrious. The people of this area have a strong desire and a great aptitude for education. Even from the British time they showed considerable interest in education.

Coorg enters history in the ninth century. In the ninth and tenth centuries the Changalvas and Konglvas, who were feudatory to the Gangas of Talkad in Mysore, ruled some parts of Coorg. The cholas of the Tamil country defeated the Gangas in the eleventh century, and they claim to have conquered Coorg. The Hoysala dynasty which rose to power in the twelfth century in Mysore was successful in driving out the

Cholas from Mysore and the Changalvas of Coorg refused to accept their lordship.<sup>67</sup>

Several battles took place between Mysore and Coorg and finally the Changalvas were defeated. In the fourteenth century the Vijayanagar kingdom replaced the Hoysalas and after the fall of the Vijayanagar kingdom Coorg seems to have been ruled by Chiefs or Nayaks who constantly fought amongst themselves. One of historians states that at the end of sixteenth century Coorg was ruled by Nayaks, a Prince of Ikkeri a neighbouring country belonging to the Bednore dynasty, took advantage of the Chaotic situation. He settled at Haleri near Mercara (Capital of Coorg) as Jangama (Lingayat Priest) and his descendants ruled the country from 1686 to 1834 when Coorg was annexed by the British.

There are four main castes and tribes in Coorg. Some of them have adopted the language, customs and manners of the Coorgs and are sometimes viewed as Coorgs and to some extent are accepted into the Coorg fold. The Holeyas in Coorg constitute the lowest caste in the caste hierarchy. They were formerly the slaves of the Coorg. The Banna and the Panika are the other two low castes with whom the Coorgs come into contact in connection with cult and ritual.<sup>68</sup>

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67. *Ibid.*, p.51.

68. Herrmann Moegling, *A Biography by Dr. Hermann Gundert*, Kerala: D.C.Books, 1997, p.183.

There are three different structural systems in society in Coorg in which every Coorg individual is involved. In the first place he is a member of the domestic group or the patrilineal joint family known as 'Okka'. In the second place every Coorg is the member of a village community which includes members of his own caste and also members of other castes. And in the third place he is also a member of the wide Hindu community.

From 1859 when the Basel Mission adopted the 'Coorg Mission' more and more missionaries were sent to continue the work began by Dr. Moegling who started Coorg Mission. The Basel Mission took it over in 1858.<sup>69</sup> Meglins helped the Bible society in the Kannada with translation work of the bible and the 'Bibliothica Kamitika' earned the appreciation of many and has grown up and the church in Coorg witness for his noble adventure of faith.

Rev. G. Richter joined the Coorg Mission in May 1856. He was an educationalist having undergone training in England in that field, who continued to work in the Mission till October 1863 and joined government services as Principal of the Central English School at Mercara and Inspector of schools in Coorg and had made a very great contribution for the education of Coorgs.<sup>70</sup> Though the natives of Coorg suffered from "intellectual dullness and lacked capacity for higher

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69. *Ibid.*, p.186.

70. *Annual Report of the B.E.M.S. for the year 1853*, Mangalore, p.43.

education', he was convinced that this disability could be remedied by the spread of education. Richter's *Gazetteer of Coorg* (1870) is a brilliant document testifying to his versatile mind and interest. It abounds in information and opinions on the land and people, the Rajas and their exotic ways, the story of Coorg's redemption from the tyranny of the native rule and how its people lived happily thereafter under the benign, enlightened British rule. Occasionally his evangelical sensibilities peer out; but Richter's book is an eloquent vindication of the colonial rule as a necessary agency of civilization and progress in Coorg. His *Ethnological Compendium of Castes and Tribes Found in Coog* (1887) was written in the same mood of a botanist of the Linnean variety (which he was) who would look a plant species – a mood which was none too rare in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its ideological and political assumptions are too significant to be wished away in favour of a neutral, matter-of-fact information about the people of Coorg. But it, by itself, is useful, both as a source of knowledge and as a statement of colonial prejudice.

Nowhere is the transformation of Coorg during the British rule better authenticated than in the entry of capitalism into agriculture, which created coffee plantations and a new socio-economic order.<sup>71</sup> The

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71. The new economic order that was ushered into the region, which included Coorg, is linked with the introduction of coffee plantation. It also coincided with the efforts of the colonial rulers to 'end' slavery and serfdom, as a part of their promise to confer the benefits of an enlightened rule to the people. However, it also yielded an economic benefit to the European planters as the 'released' slaves were promptly sucked into the quicksands of a new plantation slavery, which held

missionary writings on Coorg noticed it, but seemed not inclined to dwell at length on it. But the writings of Robert Elliot contain rich information on the theme, presented in varied autobiographical moods. He was himself a pioneer of coffee planter, who came to India in 1855 while yet eighteen and left the country when he was thirty one, though he continued to frequent India till his death in 1914. He wrote two books, 'Experiences of a Planter in the Jungles of Mysore' (1871) and 'Gold Sport and Coffee Planting in Mysore' (1894). When he wrote his first book he was critical of colonial rule, but he seemed to revise his views later, particularly after a stint as a member of the Mysore Representative Assembly. He became an admirer of British rule and an acerbic critic of the nationalist agitation. He was convinced that the British could give a good administration to the Indians which was accessible to the people, and held that the best possible way to achieve it was to make the District Collector the hub of the administration. Robert Elliot was a perceptive observer, a good raconteur and a man who was intensely aware of the goings-on in the country.

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out its own promise of exploitation. For a study of this kind on the region of Malabar, C.H.Jayasree, "Slavery' and 'Serfdom' in the 19th Century Kerala (with special reference to Malabar)" Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Mangalore University, 1994. Also, Benedicte Hjejle, *Slavery and Agricultural Bondage in South India in the 19th century* (Copenhagen, 1967). For a recent study on the emergence and working of coffee plantations in Coorg K.M. Lokesh, "Coffee Plantations in Coorg during the Colonial Regime (1834-1947): A Socio Economic Study", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Kuvempu University, 1993.

The present volume accommodates slices of the writings of some of these Europeans. They are not obviously of the same size or succulence. Some like Richter have occupied more space in the volume and speak on greater variety of themes than many others do. This is because not all of them are equally elaborate, eloquent or authentic about what they write on Coorg. In fact, by the time Richter wrote 'The Gazetteer of Coorg' (1870) he could profitably harvest from the writings of those who wrote before him and augment them with his own experiences, learning and opinions.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, many aspects of what was to become the familiar image of Coorg are found show-eased in Richter's *Gazetteer*, Coorg had been invented; it was objected, as they say. But it has never been a one-time exuberance. It is part of the process in which the identity and separateness of the region were promoted, established and accepted in the colonial ambience. The mood was destined to survive and get merged into the making of the 'Coorg nationalism' with all its celebratory and deprecatory themes, 'excluding' and 'including' exercises. The process of invention gets invoked continually wherever there are compulsions to do so, and the feeling of contemporaneity and déjà vu that one gets about it is because the producer of history becomes as much its product. It tattoos rather than merely write on the consciousness of society.

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72. Satish Gatti, "*The Furniture of the Empire*": *A Study of the Gazetteers and District Manuals of Coorg, South Kanara and Malabar*, Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation, Mangalore University, 1995.

Dr.Hermann Moegling belonged to an agency of a different conquest. He was a part of an evangelist legion of the Basel Mission which had entered India after the Act of 1833 had at last declared a open-door policy to the purveyors of the Christian truth – a legion which included such brilliant names as Hebich, Weigle, Gundert, Kittel and others. Moegling himself came to Mangalore in 1836 where he launched his missionary activities and later extended them to other districts. His mission in Coorg began in 1852 when he met a Kodaga by name Somaya at Virajpet whom he was to baptize on January 6, 1853, a Stephanas “as the first fruit of a small people hitherto untouched by Christianity.”<sup>73</sup> Moegling’s missionary success in Coorg was very modest, to say the least. But some of the by-products of his evangelical efforts were significant. He established English schools at Madikeri and Virajpet. He reined the Kannada typography and in 1854 got Rajendraname printed. He was a fine and indefatigable scholar in Kannada language and literature which Tuingen University recognized by conferring on him a doctorate. His own activities and experience in Coorg are recorded in his Coorg Memoirs (1955), which betrays his disinclination to suffer the heathen beliefs and practices which he encountered in the region – which he had to overcome before he could vend his wares. He had come as a different sort of a subjugator and his lack of success was reported in a curiously eloquent tone of unacceptable frustration and hopes of a final victory of Truth over Error.

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73. Hermann Gundert, *Herrmann Moegling*. Kottayam, 1997, pp.175-76.

The genius of the Kannada literature Ferdinard Kittel also worked in Coorg. He was mainly devoted for the literature work. His literary works especially the Kannada dictionary which took fourteen years to complete. 'Keshiraja's Shabda Manidarpana and Nagavarnas Prosody even today stand as monumental works. He is acclaimed as one of the greatest Kannada scholars even today.

Mr. F. Hahn arrived in 1860 as a lay missionary and took over the management of the Anandapur farm. During his time a coffee plantations was also started. He continued his work in Coorg till 1866.

Rev. O. Kaufmann who had come to India in 1853 was first stationed at Dharwar. He was transferred to Anandapura in 1861, December Rev. Schnept continued to work Anandapura. The moral life of the Christians in Anandapura had not improved in spite of the efforts made by these missionaries. Anandapura became an outstation of Mercara from 1881 to 1884.<sup>74</sup>

The important feature of the evangelistic work of Coorg was the 'Cooly Mission'. This was first started by Rev. Veil of Mercara in 1879. Funds had to be raised for this special task. Rev. Veil started visiting the coffee plantations raising funds and working among the coolies. The number of coolies in each plantation varied from 60 to 300. The European planters showed considerable sympathy and co-operation in

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74. *Ibid.*, p.44.

this work. Gospel was preached in the mornings and evenings, before and after work. The coolies also took considerable interest in attending and listening to the message of salvation.<sup>75</sup>

The English School started by Hermann Moegling continued to function under the able guidance of Rev. Richter. The Educational Despatch of 1854 of the British Government provided financial support to all the schools including the mission schools.

### **The orphanage**

In 1877, the Coorg mission took a new step forward in its work. An orphanage was opened in Anandapura. The Mysore government sent a number of orphans and promised to meet part of the expenses.

The Mercantile Establishment had been started even before 1868. It was aimed at providing work for the new converts and to make the church self-supporting.

Evangelistic work also was carried with greater effort in this period. The coolly Mission continued its operation in the coffee estates but many planters denied permission to the missionaries and catechists.

The first world War in 1914 brought a great blow to the work of the Basel Mission. The Coorg mission had to be handed over to the

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75. *Ibid.*, p.48.

Wesleyan Mission who kindly took the responsibility of continuing the work.<sup>76</sup>

### **Contribution of the Basel Mission to Kannada Literature**

Basel Mission's printing work and school education gave a helping hand to the production of literature. Before the Basel Mission opened its press in 1842, printing work had already been started in Bellary by the London Missionary Society and in Bangalore by the Wesleyans.

In 1851 Engineer Plebst got the Kannada types in Germany and introduced them in this press, thus bringing about a revolution in the printing process. A steam engine took over the printing work in 1857, a separate binding section was started, types of different sizes and artistic patterns were made diagrams and even leaves in natural colours were printed. Like any other mission, the Basel Mission too gave priority to education.

The impact of school education on literature was vast and varied. To cater to its own needs, many series of primers, readers and books on history, mathematics and other subjects were published. Besides the governments of the Madras and Bombay provinces entrusted the Basel Mission with the work of printing their text books.<sup>77</sup>

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76. *Ibid.*, p.52.

77. *B.M. Report, 1857*, p.26.

As a result, dictionaries and books on grammar, both essential to a learner of the language were published. Ancient Kannada literary works were revised. Kannada terminology was created for technical words occurring in modern science subjects. These text books upheld human values and provided food for thought. Thus from the very beginning, the Basel Mission brought out text books and provided school education with dedication. The Basel Mission missionaries had also undertaken the compilation and publication of books in other European African and Asian languages apart from English and German. But the number of books published in Kannada far exceeded the number of books in any of those languages. In this connection, the names of Dr. Hermann Moegling Weigle,<sup>78</sup> Gundert, Muerth, Kittel, Ziegler Kristanuja Watsa and Chennappa Uttane are held in high esteem for their invaluable contribution to Kannada literature.<sup>79</sup>

The Heibich-Moegling friendship resulted in the publication of a curious book 'Hridaya Darpana' containing pictures on playing cards, depicting the eternal relationship between man and god. Based on the conversion of Anandarya Kaundinya, Moegling wrote 'Eeraru Patrika'. This booklet is considered as the first letter form literature in Kannada. The missionaries generally followed the practice of translating evangelical books from other languages. But Moegling's Jathi Vicharane and Deva Vicharane happen to be original treatises. They are considered

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78. See Appendix I

79. *Ibid.*, p.27.

to be the first literary essays in modern Kannada. The news paper Mangalora Samachara (1843-44) by Moegling came out with the intention of providing general knowledge to the Kannada knowing folk.<sup>80</sup>

Moegling made a collection of the proverbs he came upon during his contact with the common man. He also set about his task of reforming the script. His two memorable works – Coorg Memoirs and Rajendra Nama – give insights into the life of Coorg. He translated Kannada Literary works into German and published them in the Z.D.M.G.Magazine. He also brought out medieval Kannada classics in the ‘Bibliotheca Carnatica’ series. Recognising his inestimable contribution to literature the Tübingen University conferred honorary doctorate degree on him. Thus Moegling was a pioneer in various fields of Kannada literature.

He was successful in translating his new ideas into reality and he paved the way for prose literature in Modern Kannada. He was one of those who laid the foundation of Modern Kannada. There were many others like him.<sup>81</sup>

#### **Contribution of the Basel Mission to Tulu Literature**

The contribution of the German missionaries to the progress and modernization of Indian languages is a well known fact. They worked not

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80. Hermann Moegling, *op. cit.*, p.187.

81 *B.M. Report, 1840*, p.81.

only on the more advanced languages like Tamil, Telugu and Kannada but also on tribal languages and other less known ones which do not possess much of written literature. They made significant contribution to alphabetization, standardization and modernization of those languages so that they could progressively be used in creative writing education and mass media.<sup>82</sup>

Though Tulu was well developed and spoken by a highly advanced and educated community, it had not developed much of classical literature worth the name due to historical reasons. Because Tulu chieftains of the past were under the political influence of the Karnataka rulers and due to the fact that Kannada was the language of administration and creative Expression. Tulu did not get the proper environment required for the production of classical literature.

Lack of script of its own was considered as a reason for this lacuna in Tulu Literature in ancient times. But Tulu did possess a script though it was not popularized through mass media of creative writings.<sup>83</sup> The Tulu Brahmins who migrated to Kerala made a significant contribution to the development of literature and culture in Kerala along with the Nambudiris there. They were also responsible for the evolution of what was then known as Tulu-Malayalam script. Later on Malayalam literature

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82. Rudolf Fisher, *Basel Mission in India*, Mangalore, 1913, p.66.

83. *Ibid.*, p.69.

developed through a modified form of that script whereas Tulu Brahmins continued to use it for writing Sanskrit.

### **'Renaissance' in Tulu Literature**

The 'Renaissance' of Tulu literature began with the advent of the Basel missionaries in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their arrival marked the inauguration of printing and gave a great boost to modern Kannada literature as well as to Tulu literature.<sup>84</sup>

For a language like Tulu which neither possessed a popular script accepted and used by ill people nor a rich heritage of written literature, the efforts of these missionaries acted as a real catalytic agent. The Renaissance of this language and literature, efforts were made in different aspects such as alphabetization standardization and modernization. Since the Tulu speaking area forms a 'speech is land' within the Kannada area and since Kannada is the dominant language used for all communication and education the missionaries thought it fit to use the Kannada script for producing written literature in Tulu. It was they who started printing Tulu works in Kannada script. Their efforts were not merely confined to producing translations of the Hoijy bible and other religious works but also extended to many other Research activities aimed at providing the necessary atmosphere for the 'renaissance' of Tulu literature. Their works can be classified into the following four categories.

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84. *B.M. Report, 1851*, p.80.

1. Translations of many religious works like the New Testament, Gospel of Saint Mathew, Catechism, The Book of Genesis, Daily Prayers, Hymn Book, Tulu Liturgy Hymns for Children, Stories from Bible etc.<sup>85</sup>
2. Linguistic work: Preparation of two lexicons – Tulu-English Dictionary and English Tulu Dictioanry by Rev.A.Maennar. Preparation of a Tulu Grammar Book through the medium of English comprising chapters on phonology, Etymology, and Syntax by Rev. J. Brigel.
3. Research in Tulu Folklore: (i) Transcription of Tulu folk epics and ballads by A.Maenner (ii) a work on spirit worship, namely The Devil Worship of the Tuluvas by A.C.Burnell and (iii) Collection of Tulu Proverbs.
4. Primers for learning Tulu, First Book of Lessons in Tulu, a Kannada Guide to Tulu-English Conversation, etc.<sup>86</sup>

After the alphabetization process, providing a script for the language the Basel Missionaries produced literature in the form of translations. Their linguistic work relating to the more commonly used and widely distributed dialect spoken by the major communities like Bunts, Billavas, and Mongaveeras contributed to the evolution of what may be called the

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85. *Ibid.*, p.82.

86. *Ibid.*, p.83. See Appendix 2..

standard dialect for Tulu. Their work relating to research in Tulu folklore and the preparation of teaching manuals was a right step in the direction of modernization when the language began to be used in written communication and other forms of mass media.

The first important publication of these missionaries was the Tulu translation of the Gospel of St. Mathew in 1842. The priests started their missionary work in Udupi and adopted Kannada script for writing in Tulu. Rev. Camerar translated New Testament into Tulu in 1847 Rev. Amman's 324 page. New Testament was published in 1859. A weekly magazine in Tulu was being published during that time. A religious conference was held in Mangalore in the year 1865 with Tulu as the medium.<sup>87</sup>

Apart from the translations of the bible and other connected religious works, the missionaries also produced many hymns and devotional songs in Tulu. More than two hundred and fifty devotional songs were set to music and sung in the churches. These songs are well known for their literary content as well as the emotional and musical contexts.

The first Tulu grammar book written by Brigel in the year 1872 and the Tulu-English Dictionary published in 1886 by A.Maenner

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87. *Ibid.*, p.84.

became two important reference works on Tulu for students of linguistics.<sup>88</sup>

Rev.A. Maenner had two dictionaries to his credit – the Tulu English Dictionary (1886) and the English Tulu Dictionary (1888). The compilation of Tulu vocables began in 1856 by Rev. G.Camerar who passed away in the year 1858 leaving behind him a manuscript containing about 2000 words. Maennar continued the work started by Camerar by adding new words and phrases from different sources, though he had at that time no idea of publishing the dictionary.

The Government of Madras agreed to finance the printing and the dictionary was published in 1886. Maennar was assisted by the local Munshis like Madhwaraya of Kaup, Sitaram of Mulki and Sarvottam Pai of Mangalore and Israel Aarons of the Basel Mission in compiling the two dictionaries.

One notable aspect of this dictionary is that it employs modified Raman script in addition to the Kannada script in recording Tulu words, retroflex sounds, accent mark above the letter to indicate the special variety of 'e' in Tulu.<sup>89</sup>

Another important feature of this dictionary is that it records the Tulu equivalents of nearly 600 plants found in the Tulu speaking area.

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88.*Ibid*, p. 85.

89. Godwin Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

Considering personnel and other facilities available at that time, this dictionary is a monumental work and the first organized effort in the 'renaissance' of Tulu language.

Rev. Maennar was also interested in the collection, transcription, and translation of the Tulu folk epics and ballads. More than twenty eight paaddanas were published by him A.C. Burnel compiled a monumental work. 'The Devil Worship of the Tuluvas' giving an account of the Bhuta cult practiced with the Paaddanas or the epics relating to the origin and the exploits of the spirits worshipped. The epics are given here in Roman script along with English translation.

The Missionaries pioneering efforts paved the way for the alphabetization, standardization and modernization so much required for the renaissance of literature in Tulu.

The Tulu movements started in the pre-independence period and the renaissance in the second half of this century owe much to the Basel missionaries and their manifold activities in the field of education, printing, linguistic research and the study of folklore.<sup>90</sup>

#### **Basal Mission – Educational Institutions and Missionary activities**

Education was another important work in which the Basel Missionaries engaged themselves. They generally ran three types of

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90. *Ibid*, p.168.

school. The missionaries brought about the uplift of the lowly among the low in Mangalore and in other parts of South Canara. The three types of schools were:<sup>91</sup>

1. Parochial school which were partly elementary schools, partly boarding institutions meant for the education of Christian children or converts. They were trained to become school masters or Evangelists and the study of the bible was important.
2. The Elementary school for non-Christians were started in 1850 when they were taught the three R's and manual instruction was given. The mission society founded Kannada schools at Veppoo, Bolar, Kudroli Mercara Hill and Bocka Patana. A small boarding school for girls of the Christian community was also started and which was later shifted to Light House Hill under the charge of European Lady Missionaries.
3. The English school for higher education was founded at Mangalore.

#### **The Catechist school**

A new pattern of training catechists had been introduced after the visit of India in October in 1856 by Inspector Joseph Josenhans. Kaundinya revived the Balmatta school at Mangalore with the help of

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91. *Centenary Souvenir 1862-1962 of the United Basel Mission Shanthi Church, Mangalore* (ed) I.A. Soans, Mangalore, 1967, p.21.

August Finckh and in 1858 a Preparatory school started for preparing candidates for the Seminary admitting youth between the ages 13 and 18. The four years of study not only included general education but also prepared them for the seminary or the Teachers Training School. Though there was little progress in Mathematics there was remarkable progress in English. The seminary was thus both a training ground and a secondary school preparing students for the matriculation. Instruction was given in the vernacular and not in English, so as to facilitate the work with the people later and so that they should not be alienated from the people whom they would serve.<sup>92</sup>

### **Girls Education**

A girls' school was established in 1900 in the bazaar of Karkal, another taluka of South Canara, by Rev. Fischer. Girls education fulfilled a desire for the uplift of the female sex, which indeed was a commendable effort. The Mission also started two night schools for the apprentice of the weaving mechanical establishments and which was attended by 18 and 12 boys respectively. By 1887, the total number of mission schools was 100 and some new indigenous schools were opened in the different rural districts.<sup>93</sup>

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92. *B.M. Report, 1859*, p.22.

93. *B.M. Report, 1861*, p.14.

The two indigenous Girls school also did not flourish due to the girls students getting married early. Parents were averse to having their daughters educated, marrying them off at the age of 7 or 8. But it was encouraging to see that Brahmin pupils of the English schools were anxious to have their young wives and sisters instructed in reading, writing and in needle work.

The Anglo vernacular school had a strength of 177 in June 1872 but the number was falling as the people were sore about the conversion of two Brahmin youth.<sup>94</sup>

There were also infant schools especially for factory and field workers children based on the kindergarten system. Supervised by the Mission's Education Department. The Missionary Inspector of schools summoned once a year all the teachers of their respective districts to give practical and theoretical instruction. Model teaching was demonstrated by the school inspector and even a methodical plan of instruction of arithmetic was dictated.<sup>95</sup>

Later the high schools in South Canara and in Malabar, and the Malabar Christian college were entrusted to a new Education Society called the Malabar and South Canara Christian Education Society with the Board of Directors as its executive body.

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94. *B.M. Report 1861*, p.18.

95. *B.M. Report, 1862*, p. 17.

That education had meant a great leap forward was clearly noted from the Basel Mission Report of 1868 announcing the inauguration of Reading Rooms open to the public at their outstation at Moolky. Thus Basel mission printing press printed religious books as well as books for school children and mission used its press as a powerful means of social development and stability in the society.<sup>96</sup>

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96. *B.M. Report, 1889*, p.19.

**GODFREY WEIGLE (1839-1855)**

Godfrey Weigle (1839-55) a cousin of Moegling was well versed in languages. An article on the history of Kannada language and literature was published in the Z.D. M.G. Magazine (1848). The credit of publishing the semi-final edition of the Holy Bible (New Testament) in 1854 goes to Godfrey Weigle.

W.G. Wuerth spent most of his time in North Karnataka and came into contact with Veerashaiva religion. He wrote a book comparing Christianity with Veerashaiva religion. His memorable work is 'Prakkavya Malika'. This is the first collection of Kannada poems.

W. Hawk translated German poems into Kannada and thus opened up a new vista of poems in Modern Kannada.<sup>1</sup>

Ferdinand Kittel was a great scholar among the missionaries of the Basel Mission. In the field of language, literature and philosophy, his erudition knew no bounds. His dictionary is a monumental work, a work which will endure as long as Kannada literature survives.

Kittel has wielded his skilful pen in other areas of literature with equal facility. He wrote his learned grammar treatise 'A Grammar of the

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1. *B.M. Report, 1861*, p.84.

Canarese Language (1903). Among his other works of repute, mention must be made of the following; textual criticism of ancient Kannada classics, composition of a small, narrative poem in Kannada 'Kathamala' narrating the life of Jesus Christ and oriented subjects like 'Linga Cult and Sacrifice.'

Frederick Ziegler (1862-1905) was a life long educationist. He wrote books with the view of benefiting the students. Among his many works, 'A practical key to Kannada language can be singled out. Selecting a hundred words from common usage, he has illustrated their idiomatic usage in different sentences.'<sup>2</sup>

The native literary men like Anandaraya Kaudinya translated many German religious books into Kannada. Kaushika Brothers (Jacob and Paul) translated Baba Padamanji's Marathi books into Kannada. T.G. Maben's Loka Vyavahara Bodini and Kannada Vyakarana Bodini serve as pointers to his worldly knowledge and novelty in the treatment of the subjects. Among the missionary men of letters, Chennappa Uttangi is more relevant to us because he has been the very embodiment of the spirit with which the Basel Mission took upon itself the task of enriching Kannada literature. Next to Kittel, Uttangi was the most learned man. His 'Servant of Kannada' had mastered the tenets of the various religions of the world. Only after going deep into the anti Christian arguments, did he

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2. *Ibid.*, p.87.

embark upon writing books such as Bethlahemina Vinanthi, Hindu Samaja Hitachinthaka, Sadhu Sundar Singara Dristantha Darpana on the doctrines of those religions.<sup>3</sup>

Uttangi wrote and lived, bridging the gulf between these two religions. His greater achievement is the editing of Sarvajna's Sayings and rendered as a great service to Kannada literature.

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3. *Ibid.*, p.89.

## Appendix 2

**SOME IMPORTANT TULU PUBLICATIONS OF THE  
BASEL MISSION**

1. Hosa Odambadike (27 books)
2. Haleya Odambadika
3. Utpatti
4. Tuluvinalli Bodhanegalu
5. Tulu Bible Kategalu
6. Tulu Prarthanegalu
7. Tulu Ratnamale
8. Maneya Adarshagalu
9. Lutharana Bodhanegalu
10. Tulu Grammar
11. Tulu English Dictionary
12. English Tulu Dictionary
13. Sahasrardha Tulu Gadagalu
14. Taulava Gatha Manjari
15. Tulu Paaddanolu
16. The Devil worship of the tuluvas
17. Tulu Paathale Dumbuda Pustaka
18. Tulu Ashara Maale
19. Kannada-Tulu-English Bhasha Manjari

Source: *Basel Mission Press*, Mangalore, 1886.

**BASAL MISSION AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

Though the goal of the Basel Mission was conversion of people there were not much direct conversions as such. The Basel Mission held the view that they should not attempt mass conversion. In the schools of Basel Mission almost every community was represented but the bulk of the students were from the Tiya community. This particular community who had no caste inhibitions on them utilized this occasion for English education. The same developments had taken place among the communities like the Billavas in South Kanara.<sup>1</sup> The Mission gave non-Christian pupils free education as well as scholarship for their high school and college studies. Moorkoth Kumaran, speaking on the occasion of the Basel Mission Centenary Celebration in 1934 at Tellicherry said: "I studied as a free scholar here right up to the matriculation class. . . . there are significant number of men who were similarly benefited by me, holding high positions in official and social life."<sup>2</sup>

The rising economic group in the Tiya community utilized the limited educational facilities available and a good number of the matriculation in the region came from that community. They were

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1. G.A Oddie (ed). *Religion in South Asia* Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1991, p.5 2.  
2. Moorkoth Kumaran, *Basel Mission Sangham*. Speech on the occasion of the Celebration of 100th year of Basel Mission in India. Tellicherry, 1934, p.23.

recruited in several services of the government on the basis of merit and this job opportunity gradually led to the emergence of a group of salaried people. The inferior caste-status of the Tiyas, never came in the way of employment under the British Government though in Travancore, the native government put certain restrictions on this community on account of this inferior caste status.

Since caste grievances of an individual who belonged to an inferior community could be removed to a great extent by a job in the government service in Malabar a job in the government service was much desired.<sup>3</sup> The affluent salaried persons under the government services sent their children to Madras, the centre of the presidency, for university education, and many received higher education. Tiyas of Malabar became magistrates, sub-judges and other officials in the government.

Murkot Kunhappa enlists the persons who held high positions in the government service who had studied in the Mission schools. The first Indian Principal of the Victoria College Palghat (1916-1922) was P. Sankunny and a product of the Mission school. P. Kannan kutty who studied in the Basel mission school passed the matriculation as second in the Madras presidency and became a supervisor of school retiring in 1916. Moorkoth Kumaran who was the first Hindu and probably the only one to be appointed as Headmaster of the St. Joseph's European and

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3. P.K.K. Menon, *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala 1885-1938*, Vol. II, Trivandrum, 1972, p.12.

Anglo Indian School Calicut from 1900-1902 at the time when the British Empire was at the height of its power was also, as is evident from his speech quoted above, a student of a Basel Mission school.

During the twentieth century, there were more members in the emerging professional group of this community. Chief Justice C. Krishnan (Madras High Court), chief Justice Kunhiraman (Cochin High Court), Kalandi Ramakrishnan (ICS) and C.K. Lakshmanan (Major General) were some among them. Thus the seeds of English education sown by the Missionaries and nurtured by the Government in the European centers began to grow as a flowery plant and it also bore fruits for the future.<sup>4</sup> According to Murkot Kunhappa the higher caste Brahmins were reluctant to serve under the government unlike them the low caste Thiyas were ready to work and at the same time they were educated as well. This was possible because the Basel Mission provided chances for them to be educated. Hence the ultimate reason behind their progress lays on the Basel Mission educational work.

#### **Female Education**

Female education was promoted by Basel Mission. Julie Gundert opened Boarding Schools for girls in 1839. This school was established at Nettoor in Tellicherry. This was the first girls school of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society in Malabar.<sup>5</sup>

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4. *Ibid.*, p.14.

5. *Basal Mission Report 1883*, p.70.

Julie Gundert was a Swiss missionary lady, she married Hermann Gundert and worked for the education of women till her death. At the time of opening a girls school in Tellicherry by Julie Gundert girls education had ceased to be a novelty. During this time opposition against girls education decreased in Travancore and Cochin. Girls education spread in Malabar with the arrival of the Basel Evangelical Missionaries. Julie Gundert established an English School and a Female Day School in Tellicherry in 1840. In 1841 the number of girls in the English School was 25.<sup>6</sup> In 1842 the total number of scholars in Tellicherry was 165 including girls.

Cannanore was one of the principal military stations of the Madras Presidency. A considerable number of people were Hindus, Christians soldiers of native regiments and servants of Europeans. Samuel Hebig a Basel Evangelical Missionary started work in this place in 1841. He did not have much difficulty in opening schools there and the total number of pupils under instruction in 1842 was 80.<sup>7</sup> In 1842 John Michael Fritz another missionary started work in Calicut and his wife Margret Fritz opened a school for infants. Soon it became a girls school and by 1847 there were 27 girls in this school.<sup>8</sup>

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6. *Basel Mission Report 1886*, p.62.

7. *Basel Mission Report 1842*, p.62.

8. *Malayala Basel Mission Sabhayude Charitra Samkshepam*, Calicut: Vintage Books, 1989, p.97.

When Miss. Carolina Mook, an educational missionary of B.E.M.S. arrived, girls education in Tellicherry was strengthened. She was sent as the first agent for the education of females as school mistress. With the arrival of Miss. Carolina Mook the number of girls scholars increased and in 1845 there were fifteen scholars in the female day school.<sup>9</sup>

The missionaries opened schools for non-Christian girls too. In the year 1846, the average attendance of the day school for Hindu girls in Calicut was thirty five. Another was a Brahmin girls school. It was established in Tellicherry before 1857.

In every station most of the work pertaining to girls education was done by the wives of missionaries and by other lady missionaries. In 1859 Christian Muller settled at Chombala, seven miles south of Tellicherry. Muller started girls schools in this place along with boys schools.<sup>10</sup>

Missionaries tried to improve the standard of the school. But it was hard for them to maintain order and discipline in the school. One missionary wrote: "Order is still a hard lesson to many and regularity both in attendance and in the payment of fees requires again and again to be strictly enforced."<sup>11</sup>

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9. *B.M.R. 1845*, p. 62.

10. *B.M.R. for the year 1858*, p.68.

11. *B.M.R. for the year 1859*, p.23.

A new station was opened in Palghat in 1858, the missionaries established schools in this station also. According to the available statistics in 1859 the number of pupils in the Malabar area increased to 1345 of whom 1187 were boys and 158 were girls.<sup>12</sup>

The Cannanore increasing attention had been paid to the education of the children of converts after the first half of the nineteenth century. Seven boarding schools were established there, three for boys and four for girls. During this period, the missionaries, introduced fee in the school. At first a fee of one 'anna' per mensum was introduced in the school of Cannanore. Most of the parents were willing to pay this amount. Later it was introduced in all other schools.

Later when the number of congregations increased, more schools were opened. Thus in Calicut education expanded to Quilandy, Elathur, Beypore, Manimooly and Malappuram.<sup>13</sup> During this time the Christian schools at Cannanore and Chowva, and the non-christian schools at Chalattu and Mulil made good progress with regard to the number of students and their proficiency.

During the 1860's the Christian girls day school in Palghat was attended by more girls.<sup>14</sup> According to 1913 Annual reports there were

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12. *B.M.R. for the year 1867*, p.6.

13. *B.M.R. for the year 1867*, p.6.

14. *B.M.R. for the year 1870*, p.42.

23 Bible women, 65 school teachers, 100 girls in orphanage, Christian girls 770 and non-Christian girls 1191 in schools. Though it is said that the education among the women was a slow process even among the Tiya, some of the Tiya women had joined the medical profession as doctors. Ayyathan Janaki and Murkoth Madhavi were the first ladies from Malabar who took their degrees in Modern medicine.

Missionaries found out local leaders from their new Christian members to build up good leaders in the community. This was seen in every field of the community, such as presbyters, evangelists, teachers, Bible woman etc. The spirit of concern and service to humanity was transferred into this community also. Along with the missionaries the natives practiced and experienced it and their efforts were recognized by the society. Leprosy Asylum and hospital services, widow houses and concerning spirits, orphanages and upliftment of poor class, hospitals and public health cares, refugee centers and relief funds involvement in natural calamities and epidemic periods all are great witnesses for their public service and social concern.<sup>15</sup> Various funds such as orphanage fund, poor fund widow fund, missionary fund etc reveal Christian spirit of philanthropic activities. These tremendous humanitarian activities done by this small community to the Malabar society is really admirable.

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15. Eva Bell, "Medical Work of the Basel Mission in India" in Godwin Shiri (ed) *Wholeless in Christ The Legacy Basel Mission in India*. Kathri Publication Mangalore, 1885, p.244.

### **Role of Basel Mission and Conversion**

The Basel Mission was one of the prominent Christian mission which had participated in the human resource developmental activities in South India during the 19th century.

The Basel Mission was a pioneering agency in Malabar that eliminated caste rigidity through its various programme preaching the gospel to the non-Christian was the main aim of Basel mission of every mission on Evangelism. Evangelism is the Gospel of Christ, Jesus message to the world in his words, his deeds, his sufferings and as the risen lord.<sup>16</sup>

The participation of natives in this missionary work of hardships with Basel Missionaries was a land mark and appreciable in the evangelization of Malabar.

The first two missionaries Rev. Dr. Hermann Gundert at Nettur and Rev. Samuel Hebich at Cannanore worked together by showing the main pattern of mission that the literature work and personal evangelism<sup>17</sup> and contributed greatly in the formation of a Christian versatile community in Malabar.<sup>17</sup>

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16. Jacques Rossal, "The Basel Mission in India: Perspective and Challenge in Godwin Shiru (ed.) in *Wholeness in Christ. The Legacy of Basel Mission in India*. Mangalore: Kathi Publication, 1885, p.55.

17. Chummar Choendal, *The Missionaries and Malayalam Journalism*, Trichur, 1975, p.25.

Basel Missionaries from the beginning onwards stressed on 'Personal Evangelism' and also on the doctrine "justification by faith" which means that man cannot save himself but is saved alone by God.

Regarding conversion Basel Mission never did mass conversion. But they converted people from different castes and mingled them in the church through various programmes in order to eradicate casteism, to create a casteless Christian community. Whereas in all other missionary churches Indian peculiar catesism prevailed it is to be mentioned that the mission never left out their responsibility to rehabilitate and to provide livelihood to the new converts due to the particular condition of Malabar.

As the missionaries wanted qualitative conversion, the teaching period prior to baptism was too long. Later on, the confirmation classes in every congregation were two years, a compulsory course. Primary school education was compulsory because all converts should be able to read scripture in order to make themselves spiritually well equipped.

In every station of the Basel Mission churches were constructed. This was for the converts to worship God and for giving spiritual classes to Christian children. Temple messages were also a peculiar ministry that was followed by Basel Mission. During the festival time missionaries with native members visited the temple and gospel messages were delivered along with distributing literatures and religious tracts.

The love and concern of the mission revealed the love of God towards humanity and provided a new way of life to the converts as well as that of the non-Christian working under the Basel Mission institutions.

The Basel Mission was a pioneering agency in Malabar that eliminated caste-rigidity through its various programmes. In fact education and conversion were two major historical forces in this region which acted against the traditional and caste-oriented social system. They were even responsible to a great extent in eliminating the feudalistic social relations. As a dynamic movement, spirit of this community permeated throughout the society and so the whole set up of Malabar fell down and a process of reconstruction in the modern way was begun. It was not conversion but a renovation. It was really a transition of the people in Malabar, a transition in structural life.

### **1. Communal Integration and Toleration**

Regarding Malabar there was no larger level communal riots. But due to the dissatisfaction with land tenure and associated practices protest against the British rule rose. Muslim peasants participated in these protest movements. The presence of Missionaries helped to maintain peace among the people. So all the religious groups Hindus, Muslims and Christians lived together and maintained the communal integration even in the midst of social tensions.

## 2. Slavery to freedom

Slavery was very much drastic Malabar Government policy was not in favour of depressed classes. But the Basel Missionaries without ceasing their relations with British Governments influenced the Government and made it clear the way for the freedom of slaves. In 1862 a law was passed against slavery and it was a great transition in the life of the people in Malabar. The fervent ministry of mission and the freedom of life of new community enlightened the mind of people in Malabar and so slavery was removed not only legally but also from the behavioural life in attitude and action.<sup>18</sup>

## 3. Eradication of Casteism and Pollution

Casteism and pollution were social stigmas in the life of Malabar.<sup>19</sup> Polyandry or the plurality of husbands was another social evil which existed in Kerala. The Guruvayur Satyagraha for the granting of temple entry to the Avarnas, the polluted castes was a famous one in Malabar. Kelappan, the Kerala social leader, took the leadership in this. When the slaves were denied the freedom to educate their children, the missionaries dared to admit the slave children in their schools. The freedom of slaves was a matter of great concern for the missionaries. The missionaries

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18. R.J. Hepzi Joy, *History and Development of Education of Women in Kerala*, 1995, Trivandrum, p.189.

19. J.W. Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity and peoples movement in Kerala 1850-1936*, Trivandrum, Seminary Publications, 1984, pp.396-397..

dared to raise their voice for these unfortunate people when they were being bought and sold in the markets. The missionaries fought for the freedom of these people. They tried to create public opinion in favour of their emancipation. Because of their activities slavery was abolished in Travancore and Cochin. Basel Mission also staged a fight in Malabar against casteism and pollution which are religiously inter connected. It was later taken over by the people or a new Christian community which was formed from the result of direct confrontation with new faith.

#### **4. Tradition and Superstition**

Tradition and superstitions were too much in Malabar and people were ruled over by them in their day to day life affairs. The influence of Christianity and Basel Missionaries resulted in tremendous change in their attitude and approaches in tradition and superstition. In short Christian principles and teachings helped the people to open their eyes and to fight against evils and irrelevant traditions and superstitions.<sup>20</sup>

Faith in astrology, omen, sorcery and witchcraft were gradually loosing ground.

#### **5. Priests-Ridden Occupations**

Malabar in the early period was greatly priest ridden country. The Brahmanas who controlled the socio religious life of the people were the

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20. *Ibid.*,p.398.

owners of the land, and also the sole authority of religion. They wielded power even in astrology and astronomy. Since castes and occupations were closely related and occupations divided among castes, the latter were bound to do that duties from birth to death. There were also stratified relationship or castes by birth like master and servant, landowners and labour, patron and client etc. With the advent of industrial revolution brought by the Basel Mission people came out of the traditional duties and to search for a livelihood according to their will and pleasure as there were more economic opportunities than before. Education also was a catalyst of change<sup>21</sup>

## **6. Modern Education**

In the matter of education, a great transition was made in Malabar. In the place of old shacks school building, missionaries built solid airy spacious buildings. In the place of small mats in which the children sat during school and which was woven by their parents from the coconut palm leaves which they brought and took back along with them, the missionaries introduced benches to sit and desks to write. Instead of writing on sand which they brought from home in coconut shells, slates and papers, pencil, pen and ink were given by missionaries. Instead of using recorded lessons on palm leaves for teaching, the printed text books were distributed to teachers and pupils for studies. The books included

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21. *Ibid.*, p.399.

geography, history, elementary science, arithmetic, indigenous and English languages. Rev. Hermann Gundert was the pioneer who introduced these tremendous changes in the education system in Malabar.<sup>22</sup> Apart from these changes, education increased general literacy and qualified people to seek employment.

### 7. Indigenous Identity

Indigenisation is a creative process and indigenisation means a theologically informed endeavour to make the content and expression of Christian theology ministry and life adapted and rooted in a community of different cultural localities.

Basal Mission encouraged indigenous Christianity, which means not to accept Hindu belief and culture but to make Christianity from Indian soil. So they encouraged native participation and Indian leadership for the church. They wanted to form a genuine indigenous character at all levels to acquire “authentic selfhood”.

In questioning many social practices, the Basel Mission did not indulge in condemnation but engaged in dialogues. The Missionaries studied Hinduism, translated their religions books, arranged inter religious dialogues so as to understand each other and contributed greatly for communal harmony in Malabar. Because of the particular multi-

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22. P.B. Santaram, “Indigenization of the church in India: A Biblical Theological Approach” in Samuel Amritham (ed.). *A Vision in Man*, C.L.S.Madras, 1978, p.189.

religious and multi-cultural context they formulated a new set up of Christian community in order to leave them to go forward with a richness of Indian identity as they opened the way by utilizing the local traditional crafts for the welfare of the new community.

### **8. Universal Brotherhood and Priesthood**

Universal Brotherhood and Universal Priesthood are the scriptural understanding formulated in Basel Mission ideals based upon the Lutheran and Calvinistic doctrines and this is the basis of Basel Mission principle of equality.<sup>23</sup>

Both ideas pointed out the sonship and responsibility of man. These two dimensions reinforced the missionary work of Basel Mission. Hence the emphasis was on universal brotherhood and universal priesthood as new dimensions of the mission to the world and this dimension empowered the people in Malabar to witness communal harmony.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century round type tiles (coconut shell type tiles) were used by Malabar and S. Canara society. The Basel Mission tiles manufactured from Mangalore revolutionised the trade market all over India. The middle class society could afford this type of tile for making houses which resulted in the change in the life style of the society.<sup>24</sup>

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23. *Basel Mission Reports for 1883*, p.70.

24. Interview with A. Achuthan, Retired Professor of Civil Engineering, R.E.C. Calicut.

### Medical works of the Basel Mission

Medical Mission was introduced in India by an American Dr. Bacheller in 1840. In 1862 South Kanara District requested to the Home Board at Basel for missionary doctors because at places where medical aid was not available, the missionaries were already helping the people with their limited knowledge which they acquired in the Basel Mission Seminary. In 1866 another appeal was made and 1875 Malabar got a missionary doctor by name E.Leibendorfer. After his arrival a hospital was build at Calicut in 1892. He was the first doctor to introduce vaccination against small pox among the school children and the public alike. His fame brought many patients from the nearby areas like Karaparamba, Feroke, Quilandy and Perambra, etc. Being a Councillor of Calicut Municipality he suggested many improvements for the leprosy hospital near Calicut Beach.<sup>25</sup> Finding it difficult to run this hospital, the councillors entrusted the Leprosy Hospital to Dr. Liben-Dorfer. In 1901 the Chevayur Leprosy Hospital (Calicut) became one of the biggest Leprosy Institutions in Malabar catering to the needs of many patients from far and near. In 1885 Dr.Liben Dorfer left India and entrusted the medical work to Dr. Stokes. In 1892 a well equipped hospital was built in Calicut and a year later a Codacal with all the facilities for major surgical works. There were the only two hospitals at that time rendering medical, surgical and maternity works. At Vaniyamkulam (Palakkad district) the

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25. *Basel Mission Reports*, 1896, p. 89.

Government Hospital was taken over by the Missionaries as per their request to continue the medical work without any break. In 1910 Dr. Slunaduer took great interest for Leprosy work at Chevayur. In 1849 the Chombal Mission work began, Sister Freeda, the missionary lady opened a small dispensary to look mainly into the needs of the women and sick children. In Wynad Rev. Zuber and his wife initiated the medical work by opening a small dispensary at Sultan's Battery among the hill tribes.<sup>26</sup>

In 1905, the Basel Mission brought a huge property at Marole in Mangalore, and built some houses and a dispensary for the treatment of lepers. In 1906 a Leper Asylum was opened with 15 inmates. The lepers were looked after by Mr. Barnabaz, a former school master at Udipi, himself a leprosy patient. The regular medical work of the mission started only after the 1<sup>st</sup> world war. In 1923 a hospital for women and children was established at Udipi.<sup>27</sup> In 1923 new wards were attached and in 1937 a dispensary was opened at Malpe. In 1945 x-ray was installed at the Udipi hospital.<sup>28</sup> This hospital proved to be a great blessing to the Christians as well as the non-Christians of South Canara and neighbouring places. Many other hospitals and dispensaries were started in places like Palakkad and Calicut.<sup>29</sup>

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26. *Basel Mission Reports*, 1896, p. 90.

27. *Report of Basel Mission Hospital Udipi*, Mangalore dated 10-2-1962, p.6.

28. *Report of the Basel Mission Udipi Church for its 75th Jubilee Celebrations*, Udipi, 1929, p.9.

29. *Annual Report of the Basel Mission for the year 1920*, Mangalore 1901, p.61.

## Women's Liberation

Another area where the Basel Mission was instrumental in bringing social change was gender. Basel Mission made efforts with regard to the uplifting of the women in the society.

In Malabar, missionaries also took special care for widows. Widow line attached to churches were built by them in order to give the poor and orphan widows a place to live especially under the security of church authorities. It was only seen in Malabar that a fund was started by the missionaries to care and help them. Widow homes still exist in the church compound and every month they are given money to meet their daily expenses. Gifts such as rice and clothes are given on every Christmas Eve. Education of the widows children are also given special care.<sup>30</sup>

In every church women were organized under "Dorcas Samajam" which meant women's fellowship to come together to share their experiences to learn the word of God, to pray for themselves and others and to discuss the needs and problems of the church in order to help the pastors and missionaries in their spiritual works. Thus women fellowship were greatly helpful to pastors and missionaries in their missionary work.

Of the main social evils, dowry system which was prevalent then in Malabar and which stood as a great social stigma which broke the family relations was abolished from this Christian community by the fervent

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30. *Ibid.*, p.44.

efforts of the Basel Missionaries. As a result of the efforts of Basel Missionaries women's life were enlightened. Quite similar to the modern women's liberation movement, Basel missionaries introduced nearly a hundred years back a silent 'Women's Liberation Movement' into the Society. From it, women gained freedom from their traditional chains, and freedom to employ themselves in important positions.<sup>31</sup>

Women were also employed in large numbers in weaving establishments during the early stages. As per the employment record of the weaving units as on 1877 out of total 392 workers, 216 were women who were all employed in one category thread makers and spool winders. It was these activities that got mechanized when the weaving at Calicut, Cannanore besides Mangalore started using team power. Women however continued to be the mainstay of the embroidery departments of these units.

### **Dress and life Style**

The Dress Revolution is not much stronger as occurred in South Kerala among the 'Nadar Community' as an upper cloth revolt, a religious movement against castes and rulers for long period from 1858 to 1865. But the freedom to wear dress according to the will and pleasure was a courageous status in the society.

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31. *Basel Mission Report for the year 1867*, p.52.

The new dress code introduced by the Basel Mission was probably the western style. It pointed out decency and a puritanical cleanliness. The new western style distinguished the Christian community from other communities and raised them to a higher level. In the place of dressing in an abominable way by the lower castes like Pulayas thereby symbolizing their extremely low status in the society, every convert as soon as he is converted put on a dress peculiar to the Christians.<sup>32</sup>

This is pointed out in a report in Madras Mail I, February 1892 by C.Karunakara Menon a journalist regarding a conversion service at Codacal. He opined that from the dress is worn by the convert people one cannot make out a Dalit convert from another Christian.

Basel Missionaries formally forbade the traditional hairstyles and tufts and wearing of ornaments that were indicative of caste. Traditionally Malabar men used to wear their hair tied in a knot, each caste having its own distinctive way of placing the knot on the head. This was changed. The abolition of using caste identity markers went a long way in the creation of an egalitarian society.

The Basel Missionaries encouraged the converts to choose their ways of making a livelihood strictly on the basis of educational

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32. J.W. Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity and Peoples Movement in Kerala 1850-1936*, Seminar Publications, Trivandrum, 1984, pp.396-397.

qualifications and economic opportunities regardless of traditional notions of pollution attached to certain caste-linked occupations.

Webster says that the converts had no particular caste status, and they entered a new community that assured a new social identity, thereby on the whole changing their life style.<sup>33</sup> This change in their life style affected the social structure of Malabar.

The Basel Mission missionaries not only engaged themselves in socio religious activities but also dared to cross over to the sphere of industry so the improvement of the social status of people on the influence of the Basel Mission is also closely linked with the creation of a technically oriented labour force. The early missionaries wanted to give converts a viable alternative to their traditional means of livelihood.<sup>34</sup> The missionaries then thought of farming as many missionaries themselves came from farming families. In some places fields belonging to the mission had from the beginning been rented to the converts as tenants. The missionaries leased the plots of land and provided them with tools and credit which was helpful to the converts, though it later on created issues between their relationships.

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33. George Thomassen, *Samuel Hebich of India, The Master Fisher of Men*, Cuttack The Orissa Mission Press, 1905, p.35.

34. Henry S. Wilson, "Basel Mission, Industrial Enterprises in S. Canara and Its impact between 1839 and 1914" in *Indian Church History Review*, Vol. XIV, No.2, 1980, p.92.

In several places lands had been rented to the Christian converts. But the annual report of 1882 says that a great number of fields had never been used. Colonisation also made the Christian community easy going, lazy and they always looked upon mission for support. Only in Codacal it lasted for some more years on the request and with the help of Malabar Collector. It was a failure and was discarded by 1880. On the whole this experiment of agricultural operations lost its importance in overall activities of the mission.

Another alternative was industrialization. This enabled many to become part of an industrial labour force. The Basel Mission experiment of a casteless group further accentuated the process of social mobility by offering a chance for the Tiya and Billava castes to seek an existence outside their caste based occupations and became factory workers. Basel mission industries had offered employment not only to converts but also to non-converts.<sup>35</sup> The spread of basic literacy enabled the mission industries to recruit a better educated labour force. Much social mobility was acquired by different segments of society as a result of opportunities provided by the industrial activities.

Basel Mission also undertook many social service activities such as running of educational institutions, printing and publishing houses, hospitals, orphanages and old peoples homes.

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35. *Basel Mission Report for the year 1878.*

Thus it could be stated that the Basel Mission brought about attitudinal changes, changes in social practices, cultural changes and more importantly educational and economic changes.<sup>36</sup>

Potheri Kunhabu's novel *Saraswathivijayam* (1892) brings out some of these changes. It upholds education and emphasise virtues like hard work, thriftiness and condemns social evils. The novel is about attitudinal changes.

## Chapter VIII

### CONCLUSION

The Charter Act of the British Parliament of 1833 making India open for missionary activities enabled the Basel Missionary Society to start their work in Mangalore in 1834 and later in 1839 to commence their work in Malabar.

The early activities of the Basel Mission in Malabar and South Canara can be reviewed in the light of social and political conditions prevalent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The traditional institutions of caste system, feudalistic land ownership and various other social evils were prevalent in the society. Under such circumstances the status of an individual was determined by his or her caste position. The higher castes enjoyed all the rights and privileges while the lower castes were deprived of them. The British occupation and assumption of the political control of Malabar in 1792, created conflicts in the traditional society. However the British were reluctant to bring about immediate changes in the social system.

During the advent of the Basel Missionaries large sections of the people were living in a degraded caste position. Slavery united with caste restrictions formed an effective barricade against mobility. This inhibited missionary activities. The missionaries who saw these social evils believed that they could bring social changes only through educating the people. The Basel Mission's involvement in education in Malabar

brought out changes in the prevalent educational and socio economic realms. The missionaries were able to bring about changes in the attitude towards caste, among the converts. They did not encourage caste rivalries to prevail among the converts. The absence of caste problem among the Basel mission congregations was to a great extent due to the strong anti caste stand adopted by the mission.

While reviewing the activities of the Basel Mission it can be seen that they co-ordinated both evangelism and social work and invested their energies to bring about the upliftment of the lower castes.

The impact of the Basel mission educational work was not only felt by Christians alone, but also had a far reaching impact on those who were outside the church. Among them it was the Tiya community who benefited much by the educational work. The Basel Mission gave them opportunities in the field of education, through which they could take up employment and better their social and economic position.

Primary education provided by the Basel Mission equally benefited the Basel Mission Christians and the non-Christians. But this was not so in the case of higher education provided by the Basel Mission. While laying special emphasis on the religious and spiritual matters, the Basel mission also took the secular aspects of life seriously. The mission worked intensively in the fields of education, literature, medicine, industry and agriculture. It was the educational policy of the Basel Mission that was responsible for the high literacy rate among its converts.

Its contribution to the Kannada, Malayalam and Tulu literature is laudable and in fact without peer. Even before the Gandhian Revolution it had opened schools for the uplift of Dalits. The Mission opened dispensaries and hospitals including clinics for lepers and gave special attention to the health problems of women and children.

The concern of the Basel Mission for the poor and needy became evident in the establishment of a number of orphanages, and widows homes on the one hand, and in the organization of industries in order to provide them with jobs on the other. The missionaries were also the pioneers to start female education in Malabar. Elementary education was made compulsory for the female converts. Side by side other castes like Thiyyas also went for education in the mission schools. This encouragement given for female education led some Tiyya ladies to go for higher education.

The spread of educational facilities made the lower sections rapidly advance in the social scale. New areas of employment were thrown open for them. The Thiyyas of Malabar were the most potential community who went for English education in the Basel Mission schools. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century several official posts became a sort of monopoly for the Thiyya community. The status of the Thiyya community improved by the close association with the administration and also with the missionaries. Schools and industries started by the Mission led various castes like Thiyyas and Dalits to achieve a process of social mobility and

seek an existence outside their caste based occupations. Those who gave up their traditional caste professions were rehabilitated with honour through the new opportunities and employment provided by the mission. This resulted in a transition from caste professions like toddy-tapping, sheparding and other traditional occupations into workers, labourers, professionals, etc.

The educational activities of the missionaries led to the import of printing technology to Malabar. The Basel Mission printed a number of booklets and tracts for the purpose of evangelism as well as to breed new converts. Simultaneously a large number of literary materials were written and compiled by the missionaries in various branch of history, geography, astronomy, etc which helped the spread of modern education in S. Canara and Kereala. The name of Dr.Hermann Gundert who compiled dictionaries, collected proverbs and wrote various text books should be specially mentioned here. The missionaries also did valuable service for the growth of Malayalam language. They introduced a modern curriculum and even wrote textbooks in vernacular languages. These measures helped to widen the area of interaction among the people of different social background.

Various journals also appeared in Malayalam during this time. Two journals like Rajyasamacharam and the Paschimodayam were published by the mission. The legacy of these publications was that it led to the growth of nationalist newspapers in this region in the later period.

The industrial establishment which the Basel Mission operated was a unique mode of missionary work in the nineteenth century India. In the earlier days a person willing to change his religion had to make heavy sacrifices. He was forced to abandon his professional trade, ancestral property and also his kith and kin. Naturally the missionaries were compelled to shoulder the additional responsibility by providing a suitable means of livelihood for the converts. As a result numerous industrial establishments like weaving, tile making carpentry and mechanical workshops were started. Employment in the industry gave them a steady income which boosted their economic resources.

The two most important industries of the mission was tile making and weaving. These two industrial establishments provided jobs for a large number of converts and also the natives. The traditional pattern of tile making – undertaken by a particular caste – was improved and contemporary know-how was introduced in its manufacture. Bullock-power which was previously used in the tile factories was replaced to steam power. As a result the tiles manufactured by the mission were much advanced than the traditional ones. The mission introduced new patent in this field. This in turn brought about changes in architectural styles.

A greater specialization of labour was involved in the process introduced by the Basel Mission. Therefore Basel Mission's entry into industrial activity resulted in not only technical upgradation of production

process but also in specialization of the labour process. The most important tile factories were at Jeppo, Kudroli, Calicut, Palakkad, Codacal etc. The Government encouraged the manufacture of these tiles. At first only flat roofing tiles were made at Jeppoo. Later ridge tiles both plain and ornamental, skylights and ventilators, hanging all tiles and terracotta ware began to be made. Hourdies began to be used for flooring in two storied buildings instead of the traditional wooden plants. This was an improvement. The products of the BMI were appreciated by architects and builders.

The products of these factories were sold through the Indian states and exported to countries like Africa, Burma, Ceylon, Iraq and Persian Gulf. The weaving establishments also provided work for a large number of converts. The most important of these weaving establishments were at Cannanore and Calicut. While smaller branches were set up in Chombala, Tellicherry and Codakkal. In many respects these factories differed from the traditional forms of cotton weaving. Pitlooms were improved and new imported technology was used.

The series of technical changes that were brought about included introduction of Fly shuttle and dyeing techniques, use of jacquard loom to weave intricate designs and patterns, use of power in certain operations like winding of thread and introduction of new materials. Moreover, these Basel Mission industries also showed greater capacity to introduce new products in the market.

Modern industrial units that were established by the Basel Mission catered to an international demand. The Basel Mission's industries catered to the highly competitive international market by achieving product specialization and continuous technological improvements.

Basel Mission's entry into weaving industry, was in the form of penetration of capital into traditional industry, thereby transforming technology, organization of production etc.

One of the important impacts of Basel Mission industries was that it established a marketing channel within the country and outside. Demand for the products of weaving industry came from mainly European residing in India as well as the emerging urban middle class who tended to imitate the Europeans in dress and manners. Market for the tile industry and weaving materials came mainly from the metropolitan cities in the country as well as from government organizations like the army, the railways, and post and telegraph and later from IA and Taj group of hotels.

With the establishment of modern factory system it was seen that the evils of factory labour also crept into Basel Mission industries. The various acts and administrative rules which the state ensure for the workmen like minimum standards of health, safety and comfort inside the factory were neglected by the managers of the factories. This was seen mostly in the weaving factories. By the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a high rate of pulmonary tuberculosis was seen among the labourers at

Cannanore. This may have been due to the insanitary conditions under which many of the labourers had to work. The weaving establishments did not possess adequate arrangements for the elimination of dust which was very harmful to health.

Apart from these, the mission also undertook social services like providing medical assistance to the needy. Organised medical assistance did not exist in Malabar in the earlier times and western medicine was practically neglected. In this respect the services rendered by the mission was valuable. They brought new medicines available at that time in Germany and utilized them for charitable purposes. The medical work also enabled the missionaries to maintain good contacts with the people in the villages.

By the beginning of the 20th century the conditions in Malabar began to take an eventful turn. In the wake of the increasing conversions, the educated Hindus realized the glaring inequalities prevailing within their fold. Thus operating in a period of transition the activities of the Missionaries prompted in a way new socio-religious movements. Along with this the nationalist activities also developed in Malabar.

Towards the end of 1860's and in the early 1870's the Basel Mission work in South Canara saw a sudden growth through a large number of conversions of Billavas and also of a number of Fisherman and Bunts, and few from other castes. This development is known as the 'Tulu movement' in the history of Basel Mission India.

Large tile factories were established in Jeppu and Kudroli of Mangalore and in Malpe, providing employment to hundreds of people. With the job opportunities available in Mission establishments in cities and towns, a large number of Christians from villages began to migrate to Mangalore, Malpe, Udupi and Mulki. There is no doubt that the philanthropic and the pedagogical objectives which the Basel Mission had while starting its industrial establishments had begun to yield fruit.

The industrial concerns of the Basel mission also provided the infrastructure for the coming of industrialization and modernization in South Canara and thus played a catalytic role in the dawn of a new era of enlightenment.

The Basel Missionaries provided an impulse towards social reform in the west coast of India similar in many respects to that supplied by individuals and by voluntary societies in Europe in the early nineteenth century. Conversions came very largely from the lowest castes, but the effect of the missionaries work were felt among the higher castes in various ways; particularly in the field of social development.

The increasingly important part played by Indians themselves in the new reforming movements also meant that the exclusive reliance upon external influences which characterized the pioneer stage of development was steadily replaced by an intermixture of indigenous ideas with foreign theories and methods. Then, it was possible for the

missionaries to make fuller use of their position, midway between the Government and its Indian subjects to foster the most valuable features of Indian civilization and to mingle them judiciously with their teachings. The early Basel Missionaries, through their educational work as well as through their attacks on caste ridden Hinduism, helped to release forces which helped in the modernization of the traditional society.

Through schools, industries and medical works they aimed at producing a real change in the lives and thought of the people. The Basel Missionaries showed a renewed concern for the welfare of the people, and social service became much more prominent in their activities.

The social activities of the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Sunday schools, student volunteer movements were vigorously promoted. An impressive and diversified educational plant, from the primary to college stage, was built up. Industrial and agricultural training was introduced into mission schools and some specific institutions were founded for this purpose. The sacrifices made by some missionaries for the cause of heroic. As fighters against calamity and human suffering, the Basel missionaries engaged in welfare and social reform activities. They established widow homes. Orphanages and temperance reform associations.

The Basel Mission reduced the evils of child marriage, caste system, intemperance and extravagance among their Christian converts. However while underlying the limitations of the Basel mission one cannot ignore the contribution of the Basel Mission to the educational

work in Malabar and South Canara society which had a long lasting impact on the society as a whole and on the lower castes in particular. They were the harbingers of 'renaissance' and social change in Malabar and South Canara in the nineteenth century.

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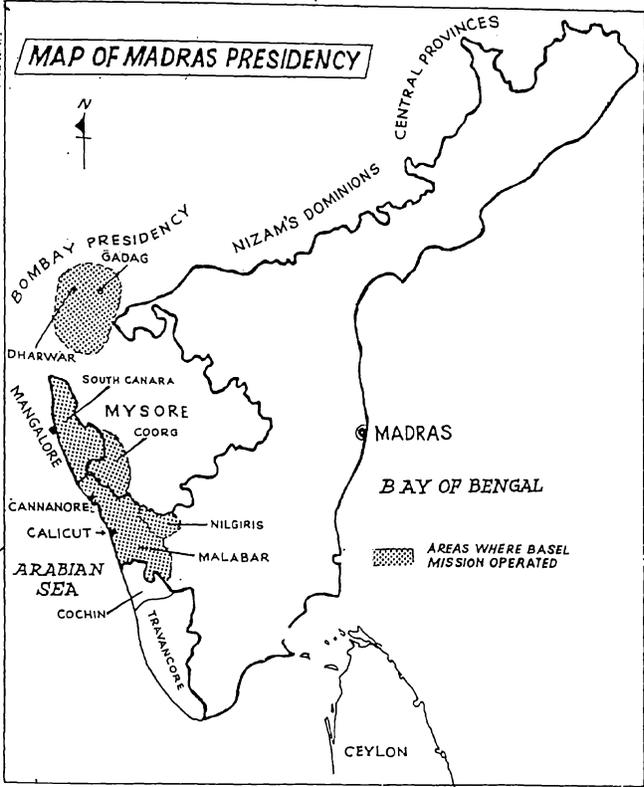
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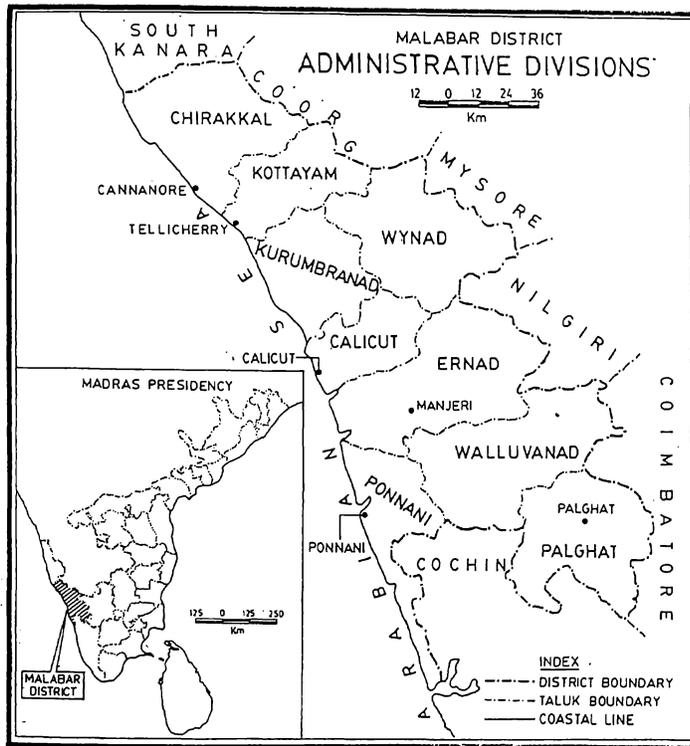
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**Interviews**

1. Vijayan. HRD Manager, Comtrust, Calicut
2. Sunil Geroge, HRD Executive, Comtrust, Calicut
3. Dr.A. Achuthan, Professor, Civil Engineering Dept. R.E.C. Calicut.

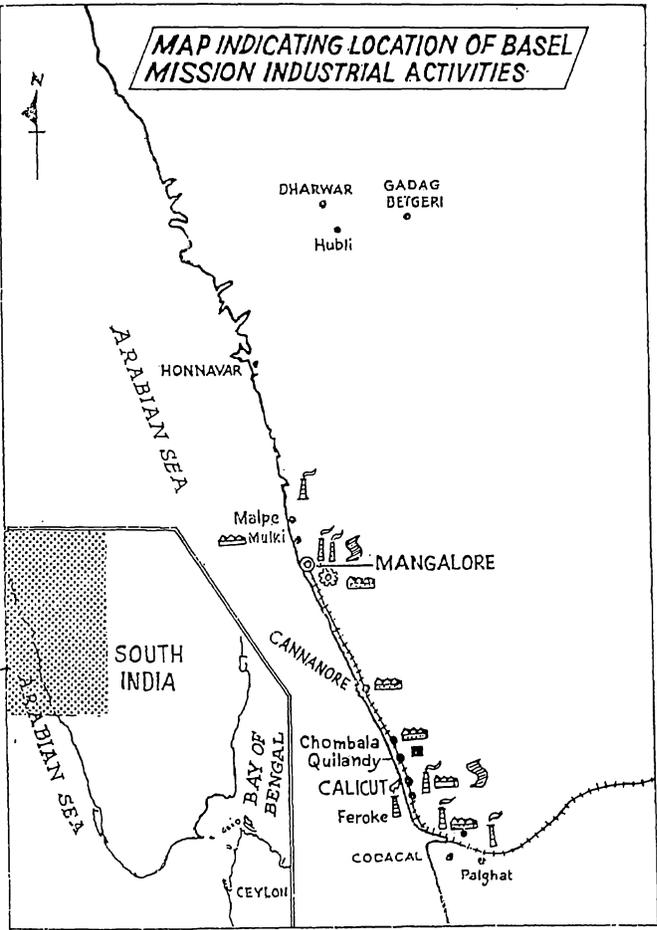
# MAPS



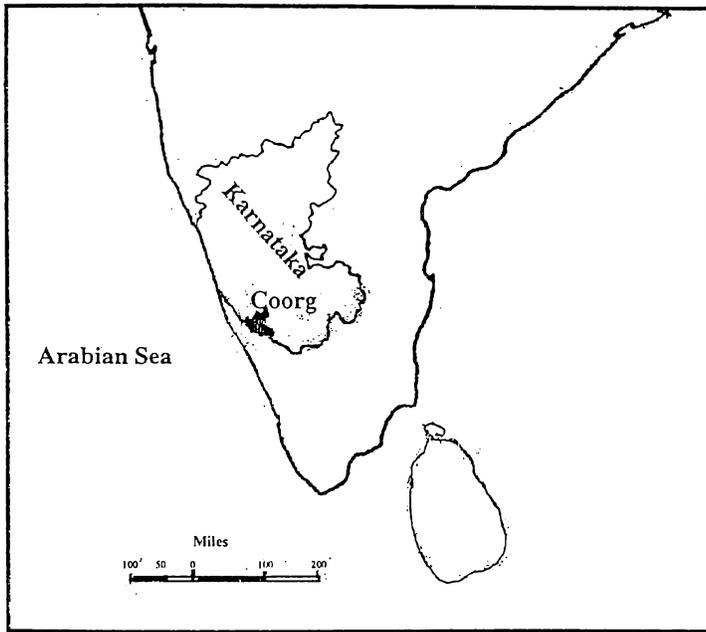




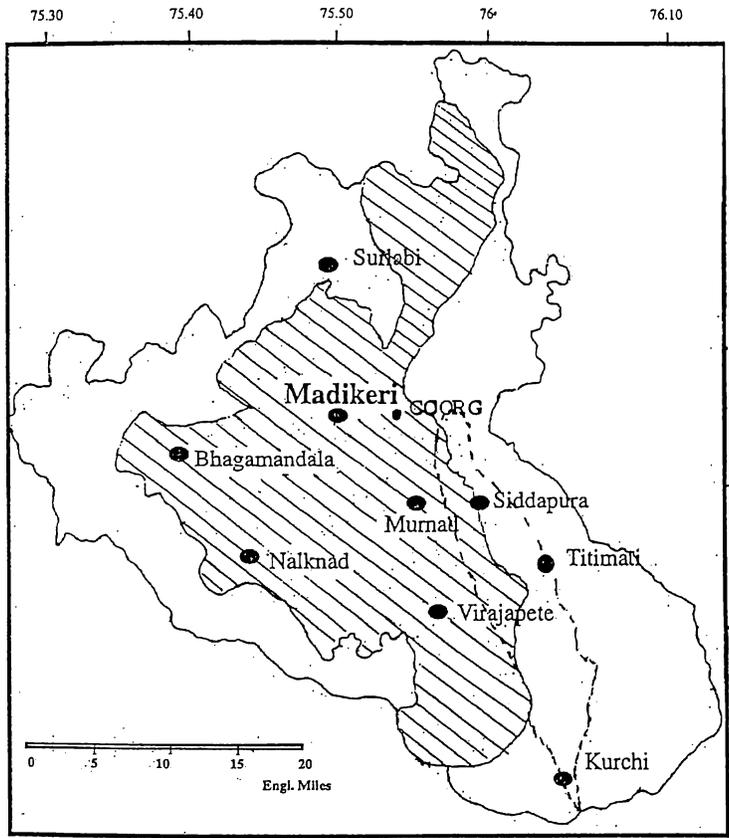
**MAP INDICATING LOCATION OF BASEL MISSION INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES**



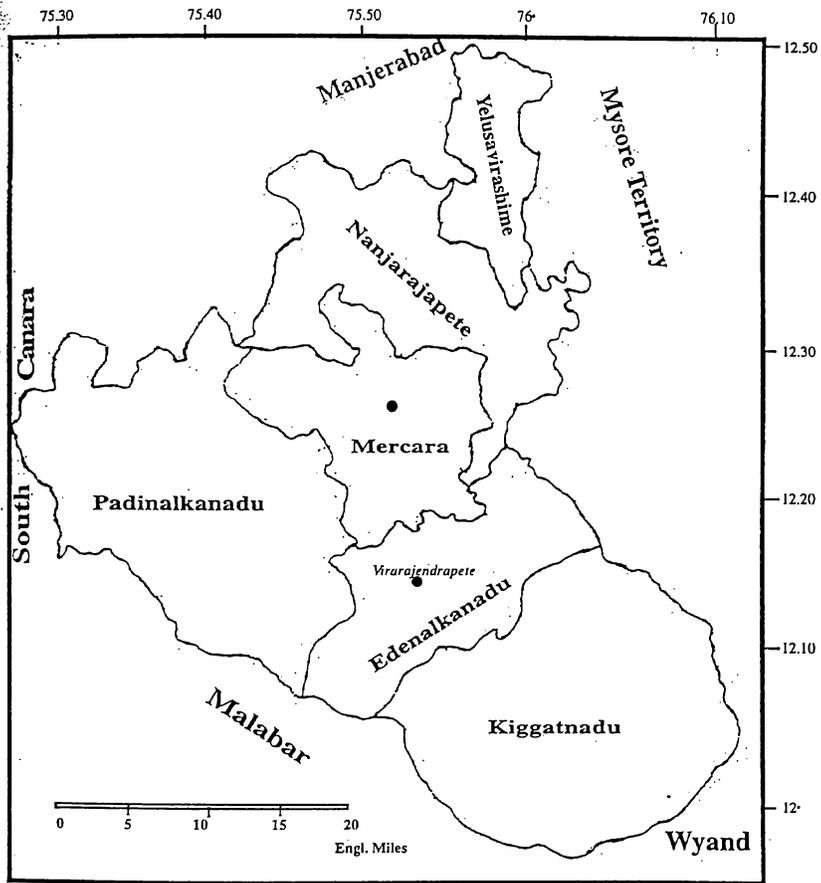
-  TILE FACTORY
-  MECHANICAL ESTABLISHMENT
-  WEAVING FACTORY
-  TRADING BRANCH
-  DYE HOUSE



Position of Coorg in South India



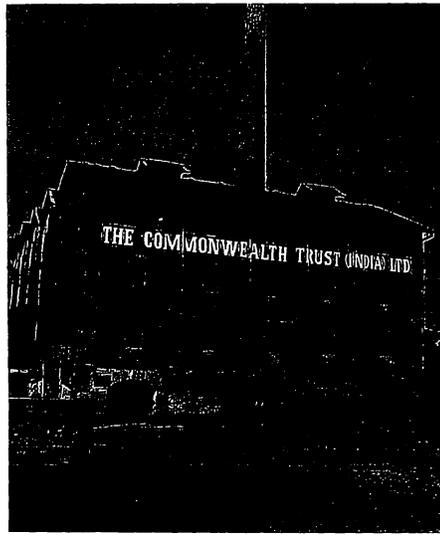
-  Extent of Coffee Cultivation in 1870 - COORG
-  The Bamboo District



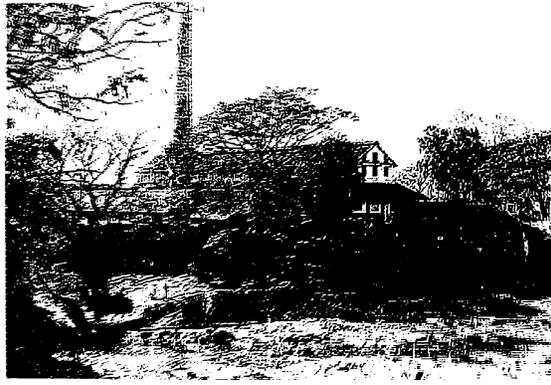
Administrative Divisions (Taluks) in 1870

## PHOTOS

1. Feroke Tile Factory
2. Olavakkot Tile Factory
3. Jeppoo Tile Factory
4. Textile Catalogue
5. Trademark design
6. Commonwealth Trust India (Ltd) Calicut (front view)
7. Commonwealth Trust India (Ltd) Calicut (side view)
8. Commonwealth Bungalow
9. Basel Mission Church, Melparamba (1910) (front view)
10. Basel Mission Church, Melparamba (1910) (side view)



1. FEROKE TILE FACTORY  
(Modern Mechanised Unit)



2. OLAVAKOT BASEL MISSION TILE FACTORY  
PALAKKAD DISTRICT



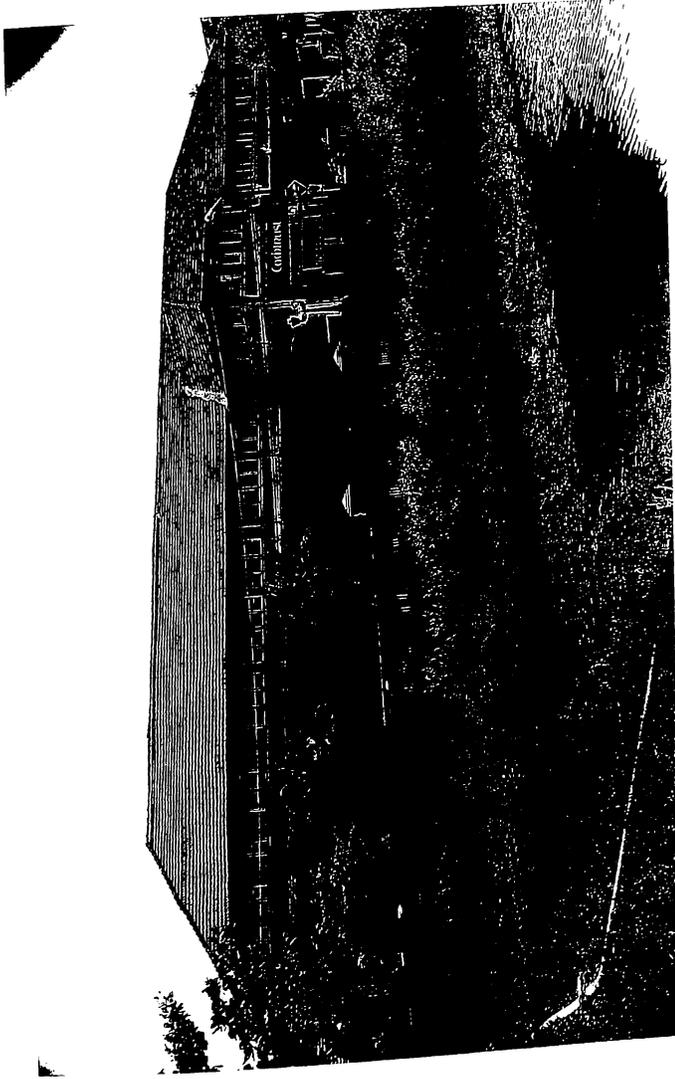
3. THE FACTORY AT JEPPO  
NEAR: MANGALORE



4. COVER OF TEXTILE CATALOGUE FROM THE 1940'S



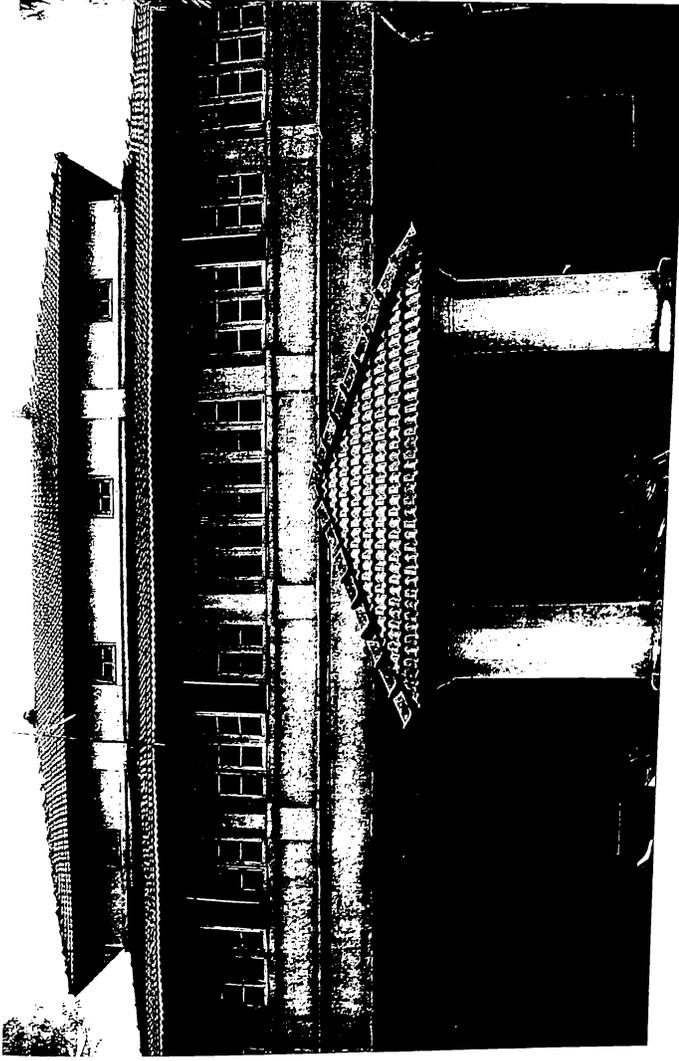
5. Trademark designed by  
Mr G H Hodgson  
in the early 1920's



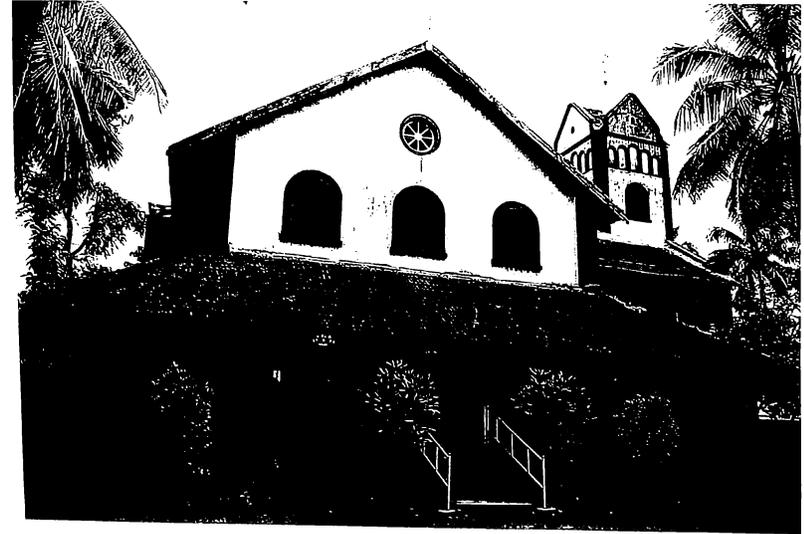
6. COMMONWEALTH TRUST INDIA (LTD)  
CALICUT  
(Front View)



7. COMMONWEALTH TRUST INDIA (LTD)  
CALICUT  
(Side View)

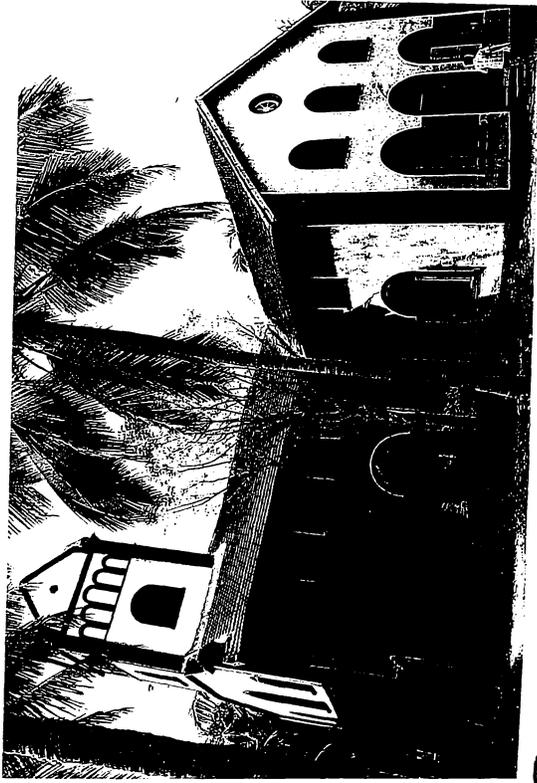


8. COMMONWEALTH BUNGALOW  
CALICUT



9. BASEL MISSION CHURCH  
MELPARAMBA PALAKKAD (1910)  
(Front View)

Terracotta Tile and Brick Work



10. BASEL MISSION CHURCH  
MELPARAMBA, PALAKKAD (1910)  
(Side View)



TERRACOTTA TILE AND BRICK WORK