CONCLUSION

Chapter VIII

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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 19th 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 extend 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 Thiyya 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 19th 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 Jeppo. 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 20th 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.