

BASEL MISSION INDUSTRIES IN MALABAR & SOUTH CANARA: 1834-1914
A Study of its Social and Economic Impact

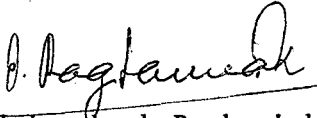
DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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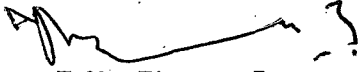
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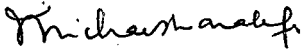
I hereby affirm that the research for this dissertation titled "Basel Mission Industries in Malabar and South Canara: 1834-1914, A Study of Its Social and Economic Impact" being submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy was carried out entirely by me at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum.

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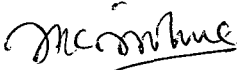

Jaiprakash Raghaviah

Certified that this dissertation is a bonafide work of Sri Jaiprakash Raghaviah and has not been considered for the award of any other degree by any University.


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C O N T E N T S

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- Jaiprakash Raghaviah

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KEY TO APPENDIX-I

<u>Serial Number in the Map</u>	<u>Name of the Station</u>	<u>Year of Establish- ment</u>
1.	Mangalore	1834
2.	Mulki	1837
3.	Dharwar	1837
4.	Hubli	1837
5.	Guledgud	1839
6.	Cannanore	1841
7.	Tellicherry	1841
8.	Calicut	1842
9.	Keity	1846
10.	Chombala	1849
11.	Betgeri	1853
12.	Honnavar	1854
13.	Bijapur	1855
14.	Anandpur	1856
15.	Codacal	1857
16.	Palghat	1858
17.	Kotageri	1867
18.	Mercara	1870
19.	Karkala	1872
20.	Coondapoor	1876
21.	Vaniyamkulam	1886
22.	Kasargod	1886
23.	Puthur	1900
24.	Manjeri	1907

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, or Basel Mission¹, a missionary organization established in Basel, Switzerland, started operating in the erstwhile Madras Presidency from 1834 onwards. During the period ending with the outbreak of the First World War, the Mission undertook a number of economic activities. They started with experiments in traditional crafts like weaving and also in agriculture and later turned into modern crafts like watch making, book binding, and printing. The Mission was active in the field of trade too. These activities eventually culminated in the establishment of, for the first time, modern industrial units in weaving and tile making in Malabar and South Canara districts. These economic activities were in addition to the very obvious and sizeable religious and social activities the Mission undertook. These industrial activities came to an end in 1920 when they were taken over by the British Indian Government, under the provisions of the Enemy Trading Act 1916.

This phenomenon of pioneering industrial activities, initiated by a missionary society itself is significant enough to engage the attention of students of economic history of the region. Many missionary groups which had operated in India had experimented with some economic activities or other. Their intentions included the rehabilitation of converts, increasing the social and economic status of the converts, and propagation of 'christian' values through the instilling of industrial discipline. In Kerala itself, we have the example of the London Missionary Society (LMS) which was active in South Travancore region having initiated lace making and weaving units on predominantly small scale basis. But Basel Mission was unique in the sense it ventured into commercial and economic activities from the very beginning in a planned and deliberate manner. These activities formed an integral part of the Mission's perspectives on evangelisation to such an extent that industrial activities were identified as core of the missionary activity. The success and failure of each line of economic activity tended to give rise to other types of activities. In the process, religious conversion became a source through which labour was mobilised. The market for the products of these industries also expanded beyond the boundaries of the region.

The first question that rises from this scenario relates to the dominant ideology or world view which prompted the Mission to take up industrial activity as part and parcel of their evangelisation activities. In this context, it is imperative to look at the promptings of the Calvinist ideology which has been linked up with the economic activities of capitalist nature in other contexts and societies².

Similarly, a detailed empirical understanding of the industrial activities as they were planned and executed becomes pertinent to the study. The apparent differences between industrial activities in terms of capital investment, labour utilization etc. will give us a better understanding of the conditions of transfer of technology, restrictions on local market formation and also the link between these activities and the objectives of the sponsors.

Another set of questions which are intended to be studied here relates to the social and economic impact of the various economic activities particularly of the industrial activities of the Mission. The economy and society of Malabar and South Canara during the nineteenth century is often characterised by the existence of various institutional barriers to development³. Among them are the rigid caste system carried to extremes by pollution at

sight, concentration of land in the hands of a few joint families, which had a debilitating effect on individual initiative etc. In such circumstances, Basel Mission's activities particularly their Industrial activities are generally credited with succeeding in creating a casteless society of converts. Their efforts also seemed to have instilled a fair amount of individual initiative and social mobility, though once again restricted largely to the converts.

The fact that effects of their activities were restricted largely to the converts raises questions about their spread effect in a traditional society. The apparent conclusion from facts available is that the effects of Basel Mission's interventions were restricted to a small number of persons who came into direct contact with the Mission.

In another section, where the economic impact of Basel Mission industries are looked at, it seems that even by 1947 when India became independent, the industrial activities of Malabar remained strong precisely in those areas initiated by the Basel Mission. This prompts us to look at the eventual influence of the type of industrial activities chosen by the Mission. The specific role played by Basel Mission in the area of transfer of technology is

to be studied in this context. This line of enquiry becomes important when we consider that the Basel Mission industries were the pioneering modern industrial activities in Malabar and South Canara. Here again, we tend to see that while the areas chosen for industrial activities and transfer of technology persisted in large economy of the region, the whole activity taken together also suffered from lack of spread effect.

The reasons for the limitation of spread effect, both in terms of social and economic impact of the Basel Mission's industrial activities are to be sought in the limiting character of the traditional society which persisted even under colonial rule. This character is highlighted in the final section in relation to the highly restricted spread effect of the Mission's industrial activities.

Notes and References

1. As early as 1780, the German Society for Promotion of Christianity was founded in Basel by the Puritans and the Pietists of the South German state of Wuttenberg. The Basel Mission Seminary was established on 26th of August, 1816. The Mission which was an offspring of these started operating in Mangalore, in South Canara district of Madras Presidency from 1834. Name of Basel Mission is given differently in different Reports of the Mission itself, they are :

1846 Report - German Evangelical Society

1866 Report - Basel Evangelical Missionary Society

1869 Report - Basel German Evangelical Society

Hereafter such reports are referred as RBM - i.e. as eg. RBM - 1846.

2. Max Weber, Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism George Allen and Unwin, 1976. All further references to this book are from the same edition.

3. Thomas W. Shea.Jr : 'Barriers to Economic Development in Traditional Societies, Malabar, A Case Study', in Journal of Economic History, Vol.XIX, No.4, December 1959, pp.405-22.

CHAPTER 2

BASEL MISSION : ORIGINS AND WORLD VIEW

During the nineteenth century, a number of Protestant Christian Missionary organizations were formed in Europe¹. These missions generally followed paths of colonial expansion and established centres of activity at various European colonies². Basel Mission was one of such missionary organizations. But Basel Mission was unique in its approach towards industrial activities³. Such uniqueness raised questions relating to the dominant ideology or world view of the Mission which sustained such activities. It also calls for an understanding of the social origins of the Mission.

Basically all these Protestant Christian missionary organizations derived their inspiration from the Pietist⁴ movement which had flourished in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The emphasis of the Pietist movement was (i) on personal salvation through acceptance of christianity, (ii) on christian restructuring of the world. The latter one emanated from the understanding of the European civilisation as something superior

because it had the knowledge of Christ. Information about distant countries brought about by colonialism further strengthened the belief that these societies of "heathens living in darkness" will have to be civilised on the basis of christian understanding. Pietist movement was first centered in University of Halle in Germany⁵. It spread eventually to other centres of learning like University of Basel. Influence of the Pietist Movement became very strong in Basel. A Pietist society called the German Christian Society was formed in Basel in 1730⁶. It was due to the initiative of some of the members of the above society that Basel Mission was formed in 1816⁷.

Another influence on the Protestant Churches in Europe was the theology of John Calvin⁸, who was one of the important leaders of Reformation Movement in Europe during the Sixteenth Century. As R.H.Tawney had observed, "the influence of Calvinism was not simple, but complex, and extended beyond the churches which could properly be called as Calvinist"⁹. It was Max Weber who first propounded the idea that Calvinist ethics was instrumental in supplying the moral energy and drive for the capitalist enterprise in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries¹⁰. Since we have related the activities of the Basel Mission to the setting up of capitalist enterprises,

the basic precept of Calvinist ethics has to be explored in detail. We will follow the line of reasoning of Weber in this case.

Calvinism and Capitalist Enterprise

The basic understanding of Calvinism is that the whole world of economic order is one not alien to the life of the spirit. World existed for the glorification of God and for that purpose alone. But God requires social achievements, because He wills that social life is organized according to His commandments¹¹.

At the centre of Calvinist ideology is the doctrine of predestination¹². This doctrine states that only a small portion of men are chosen for eternal grace by the superior wisdom of God. The chosen Christian is in the world only to increase God's glory by fulfilling God's commandments to the best of his ability. But God requires not just individual actions but social achievements. Calvin saw labour not as individual action but as part of a unified system¹³.

The question remains as to whether there was any infallible criteria by which the membership to the elect few which is a small group of persons predestined for

salvation, is known. Calvin saw good works, that is, organized labour not as a means of salvation but as an indispensable sign of having achieved salvation.

"In its extreme inhumanity", Weber comments, "this doctrine must above all have had one consequence for the life of a generation which surrendered to its magnificent consistency a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness".¹⁴ This was because a person does not know whether he is chosen for salvation and has to reassure himself by constant good work. Weber holds that from this inner torment, capitalist spirit was born.

Calvinism is associated with an outlook of a very specific kind; the continual accumulation of wealth for its own sake rather than for the material rewards it can serve to bring. This, according to Weber, is the spirit of capitalism.

The essence of Calvinist ideology as it got transformed to social policy may be summarised as follows:

Calvinism is associated with 'this worldly asceticism' as¹⁵ against the 'other worldly asceticism' or renouncement of the world. In this sense, according to Weber, "it substituted the spiritual aristocracy of the monks outside and above the world by the spiritual aristocracy

of the saints"¹⁶. (Here the term saints is used to describe the predestined souls). This religion demanded of the believer not celibacy of the monks, nor poverty, but elimination of all enjoyment of unearned wealth and income. The clear and uniform goal of this asceticism was discipline and methodical organization of conduct. As Weber saw, the typical representative of this worldly asceticism, was the man of 'vocation' or 'professional' and its unique result was the rational organization of social relationships.

Calvinism emphasised rational organization of labour. By this it meant "routinised, calculated administration with continuously functioning enterprise"¹⁷. Calvinism emphasises upon labour as something good in itself.

Weber's exposition of Calvinism gave rise to wider polemic on the subject. But it is not intended here to follow the entire course of arguments that arose out of Weber's publication of his thesis. The controversy continues to rage even now. Important among the criticisms of Weber's thesis are that,

(1) He mistakes the nature of casual connection between Puritanism¹⁸ and modern capitalism.

- (ii) Countries have experienced rapid economic development without possessing anything akin to 'Protestant Ethic'.
- (iii) Weber's assertion of connection between Puritanism and modern capitalism is based on unsatisfactory empirical evidence.

Even when such criticisms are taken into account, at least a casual link between the Protestant Ethic and the rise of Capitalism remains intact in its generalisations. Here we are trying to argue on the basis of evidences that the link is found more than casual at least in the case of Basel Mission. This is not to deny the reluctance of the mission to accept at the level of perception, any clear link with Calvinism. For instance, the Basel Mission was started as a non-denominational missionary society to which all Protestant churches in Europe could have affiliations. At one stage, it was even declared that "It is not intended to give the minds of future missionaries the stamp of Luther, Calvin or Zwingli; but to endear Christ to their heart and establish His truth".¹⁹ At the same time, it may be remembered that the city of Basel where the Mission was established was also a major Calvinist centre. Calvin and Zwingli had lived and worked and recruited a large number of followers in that city²⁰.

Logically, the influence of Calvinism must have been high on later Christian organizations formed there.

Well after the Religious Reformation in Europe, Basel was the Centre of religious revival of the Pietist movement²¹. Both the influences of these two movements were strong in this region. The base of the Basel Mission was the churches in Switzerland and Germany. These churches which supported it were greatly influenced by both Pietist ideology as well as Calvinism.

The city of Basel was also an important centre of trade, being located on one of the main trade routes of France, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany²². Here, forward trading and banking had flourished during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries supported by a system of unified currencies²³. This factor i.e. the influence of trade and industry had a very important role in the making of the Basel Mission. For instance we see that while the Mission was an offspring of 'Wuttenberg Pietism', a protestant fundaminealist minority movement in South Western Germany, it had as members largely urbanised manufacturers, petty commercial business entrepreneurs and craftsmen²⁴.

It is in this context that we have to discuss the world view of the Mission as it operated in Indian conditions.

World View of the Basel Mission

When Basel Mission was established it had intentions only to train missionaries for other missionary organizations²⁵. In fact, some of the earliest missionaries trained by the Mission College served in other missionary organizations including the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Church Missionary Society (CMS), both operating in other parts of Kerala²⁶. Training in some crafts formed part of the training programme for missionaries²⁷. But the Mission did not have intention to initiate industrial activities. The missionaries were asked to study the language and tradition of the people with whom they worked, in order to understand them better. A further responsibility of the Mission was to teach them field and garden work, in order to develop financial independence. The missionaries were also asked to develop a deep affection and love for their work and for the people.

This perspective formed on the basis of training missionaries underwent a change after 1852 (a period we have categorised as Middle Phase in the subsequent section) which started with the taking over by Joseph Josenans as Chief Inspector and the establishment of a separate Industrial Commission. While the setting up of industrial

establishments became part of their over all strategy, the influence of Calvinist ideology and a German ethos to work predominated over and above this strategy. The idea of pray and work gave way to the notion that praying is working and working is praying.²⁸ As a consequence, economic activities of the mission were not a support of the mission, but was considered to be the mission itself.

The world view that emerged in the process, becomes visible in various statements and activities of the missionaries. For example, missionaries observed that "even acquisition of working capacity and loyalty has a missionising influence on human nature"²⁹. The importance attached to industrial labour is further emphasised by the daily routine in factories established by the Mission. Work in factories started and ended with a prayer. The applicants for conversion³⁰ were sent to the Mission factories to prove their seriousness of aspiration for conversion by hand and honest labour. As Basel Missionary Frohnmeyer expressed it:

"I consider it to be one of the great advantages of these (industrial) institutions that they can offer an opportunity to test the sincerity of probationers"³¹

Such statements are indicative of the fact that during the later stages of the Mission's work in India, Calvinist influence was strong in their world view.

To sum up, two distinct influences can be seen in the perspective as it got formulated in the Basel Mission. The initial influence was that of the Pietist movement. The motivation that sustained the industrial activities later appears to be from the Calvinist ideology.

Overview of Missionary Activities

Basel Mission started taking up direct missionary activities in India from 1834 onwards. The first missionaries landed at Calicut in October 1834, but they proceeded to Mangalore, which became the centre of religious activities of the Mission. The expansion of activities as indicated by the opening of mission centres are given in chronological order in Table 2.1.

As seen in the table as well as the following Map, their activities were confined mainly to coastal areas in Malabar and South Canara district of Madras Presidency, with the possible exception of a few places in Bombay Presidency, (Hubli, Gujiedgud, Betgeri, Dharwar).

Table 2.1 : Expansion of Activities of Basel Mission in India : Year and Place of Establishment of Mission Stations in India

Year	Place	State (Present)
1834	Mangalore	Karnataka
1837	Mulki	"
1837	Dharwar	"
1837	Hubli	"
1839	Guiedgud	"
1841	Cannanore	Kerala
1841	Tellicherry	"
1842	Calicut*	"
1846	Kaity	Tamil Nadu
1849	Chombala	Kerala
1853	Betgeri	Karnataka
1854	Honavar	"
1855	Bijapur	
1856	Anandpur	
1857	Codacal +	Kerala
1858	Palghat	"
1867	Kotagiri	Tamil Nadu
1870	Mercara	Karnataka
1872	Karkala	"
1876	Coondapoor	"
1886	Vaniyamkulam	Kerala
1886	Kasargod	"
1900	Puthur	Karnataka
1907	Manjeri	Kerala

Source: Compiled from various Reports of the Basel Missions (RBM)

+ Had a sub-station at Paraperi

* Had sub-stations at Elathur and Quilandy

Note: Date of establishment of the stations at Udipi, Basrur and Kalhatti not available.

Economic activities (industrial and commercial) of the mission were confined to the coastal areas only. While no official policy proclamations are available to explain this, one possible explanation could be limitations set by the transportation systems, which were important for such activities.

Methods and Dimensions of Conversion

The following table gives the dimensions of conversion upto the period 1914 which is the final year of reference of this study.

Calvinist theology lays emphasis on individual salvation. The chosen individual has to prove his selection through his activities in life. This would deny the possibility for mass conversion. Many observers of Basel Mission have highlighted the fact that there have not been instances of mass conversions³². In this aspect the work of Basel Mission sharply contrasts with that of Catholic missionaries who had converted groups of fishermen in South Kerala regions en masse³³.

Basel Missionaries had also demanded that every convert be made literate and competent enough to read the Bible. A person accepting faith also had to make an

Table 2.2 : Tabular view of stations and strength of Churches of Basel Mission

Station	Strength of churches as on 1--1--1914	Total
<u>Canara & Coorg</u>		
Mangalore	3630	
Mulki	1152	
Udipi	2270	
Karkal	432	
Basrur	163	
Kasargode	256	
Puthur	79	
Mercara	130	
Anandpur	219	
Honavar	110	8441
<u>S.Mahratta</u>		
Dharwar	282	
Hubli	665	
Betgeri	672	
Guiedgud	655	
Bijapur	156	2430
<u>Malabar</u>		
Cannanore	1615	
Tellicherry	649	
Chombala	549	
Calicut	2735	
Manjeri	121	
Codacal	1255	
Vaniyamkulam	241	
Palghat	430	7595
<u>Nilgiris</u>		
Kaity	751	
Kalhatti	121	
Kotagiri	424	1296
Total		19762

Source: RBM, 1914.

individual pronouncement of his faith. Basel Mission's efforts in promoting literacy had the basic objective that every convert should be made competent enough to read the Bible. It also ipso facto served another purpose of supplying a labour force of superior quality for the industrial undertakings started by them.

Constitution of the Missionary Society

The influence of Calvinist ideology can be observed in other areas of the Mission's Constitution and activities. For instance, the constitution of the missionary society itself as well as the order in Churches or church-communities established by the Mission may be taken into consideration. An interesting aspect observed in the constitution of the society was that from the beginning it had a large lay element in it³⁴. Historical developments that led to the establishment of this particular society is important in this context. Faced by an impending threat from Napoleon's armies, a group of citizens of Basel, which included merchants, a professor of philosophy and a minister of the church gathered together and pledged to establish a missionary organisation. The first president of the Society, Herr Carl Sarasin was a leading businessman of Basel. The management of the mission in Basel rested in the hands of a Home Committee which had a large number of lay persons.

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In the Churches³⁵ established by the Basel Mission also, management and general administration were largely vested in the hands of 'elders' or elected members of the parish³⁶. This is largely a Presbyterian³⁷ system adopted by the reformed churches in Europe. But it was adopted by the Basel Mission in India also. The underlying implication, as reflected in the composition of the Home Board³⁸ as well as the parishes established by the Mission is that the man of action as represented by the 'elder' in the church should be the prime mover of the activities of churches, an idea which is Calvinistic at its roots.³⁹ In the parishes or churches established by Basel Mission, this usually gave rise to a curious situation of the supervisor or master weaver of the mission factory being elected as 'elder' in the church. It had the implication of the supervisor being presented as the model worker, therefore also as a good christian. This approach to employment enabled the Mission authorities indirect means of controlling labour by the use of a model worker.

Attitude to Industrial Labour

Calvinist influence is more specifically seen in the attitudes of the Mission towards factory labour. Apart from immediate need of giving employment for converts, missionaries found factory labour as a civilising



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influence. It was based on the tenet that (as quoted above) even acquisition of working capacity and loyalty has a missionising influence on human nature. When the Mission entered into labour recruitment, the whole bundle of specifically Western Christian virtues which the missionaries wanted to impart was expressed by the Mission as follows: "Loyalty in word and deed, loyalty in fulfilling duties to oneself and to others, awareness of the value of time, circumspection and looking forwards, understanding and acquisition of what is new and changing are found so seldom in heathens, for he sees nothing of them, and hears nothing of them, and an entire generation may be needed till those more external christian achievements may emerge as quite visible and effective fruits of first conversion".⁴⁰

It is not surprising that baptismal candidates were first sent to work in factories to test their sincerity of purpose as mentioned earlier. Missionaries often referred to the industrial activity of Basel Mission as the "centre and crown" of their work. In this aspect, the Mission had to enter into frequent controversies and arguments with missionaries of other organisations. One may safely conclude that though the Basel Mission apparently did not accept Calvinist ideology formally, the source of inspirations for their entrepreneurship may be traced to Calvinist roots.

Notes and References

1. C.B.Firth: An Introduction to Church History, Madras, 1960, Chapter IX, pp.145-64.
2. Ibid. pp.145-6.
3. According to the Encyclopaedia of Missions, there were different points in the make-up of Basel Mission which make it exceptional. Among them is the professional management of industrial activities that were provided by an Industrial Commission which enabled planned development of industries.

For further reading on the topic, See Edwin Munsell Bliss (ed), Encyclopaedia of Missions Vol.I, New York 1890, p.138.
4. "A Movement in Protestantism seeking a return to vital evangelical christianity as over against the intellectualism and formalism of the 17th century Protestant Orthodoxy (is known as Pietist Movement).... Pietism spread through Germany, Scandinavia and Switzerland. The new spirituality which it engendered found expression in Francke's philanthropic institutions, the establishment of Protestant foreign missions etc...!" Vergilie's Fern: An Encyclopaedia of Religion, The Philosophical Library, New York, 1945, p.585. See also Williston Walker : A History of the Christian Church, Clark, Edinburg, 1976, (3rd Edn), Chapter V, p.444 and 49.
5. The Pietist movement originated in the University of Halle, founded by Spencer, Francke, and Christian Thomasius - See *ibid.*
6. Bliss (ed) op.cit.p.137

7. For further details, see : A.Schosser: "A Short Survey of Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel", Harvest Field, Wesleyan Mission Press, 1915,p.373-378.

8. John Calvin (1509-1564) lived in Geneva; was a leader of the Reformation Movement and preached ethics as established in the concept that the ability to live the christian law is the evidence of probable election. His leading works were Sleep of the Soul, (Orleans, 1534) and the Institutes, (Basel, 1536). See also Owen Chadwick, The Reformation, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1965, pp.76-96.

9. R.H.Tawney : Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, Pelican, Middlesex, 1975, p.121.

10. Max Weber, Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism George Allan and Unwin, London, 1976.

11. Ibid., p.108.

12. "The doctrine of predestination is implied in the doctrine of salvation by divine grace alone. It is affirmed that man cannot save himself by reliance upon powers (also religious potentialities) inherent in him but that he is only redeemed by the initiative of the gracious merciful God; it must also be said that his eternal destiny is determined by God" V.Fern, op.cit., p.603.

13. According to Max Weber, (op.cit., p.117) "The God of Calvinism demanded of its believers not single good works but a life of good works combined into a unified system".

14. Ibid., p.104.
15. Weber frequently uses the expressions 'other worldly asceticism' and 'this worldly asceticism'. By 'other worldly asceticism' he means asceticism directed to escape the encumbrances of material world. By 'this worldly asceticism' he means asceticism directed towards rational mastery of this world itself.
16. Max Weber, op.cit.,p.121.
17. Ibid.,p.3
18. "The doctrine of Puritans, a sect originally so called because they wanted to purify English Protestantism by removing all traces of Roman Catholic forms and ceremonies. It emphasised the Bible instead of tradition or reason as the chief source of authority. Puritan theology became almost purely Calvinistic". V. Ferm, op.cit., p.628.
19. RBM, 1846, p.5
20. Bliss (ed), op.cit.,p.137.
21. Ibid.
22. Benjamin Haggot Beckhart, Banking Systems, Times of India Press, Bombay, 1970. It is also mentioned here that a number of banks arose in Basel on philanthropic motives.
23. A system of exchange parity between currencies in Europe. This system of exchange parity, based on gold standard facilitated trading between the European countries. Shepard B. Clough, The Economic Development of Western Civilisation, Mc.Grew Hill, New York, 1959.

24. Rudolph A. Fischer: 'Christianisation and Social Mobility in 19th Century South Kanara and Malabar: A First Look at the Basel Mission Experience', Unpublished Monograph, Basel Mission Archives, Basel, as referred to in K.K.N.Kurup: "The Heritage of Hermann Gundert" Paper presented at the World Malayalam Conference, Berlin, October, 1986.

25. Sebastin R.Furtado: 'Church Revival-A Study Based on the History and Experience of the Basel Mission Church in South Kanara', Unpublished B.D.thesis, Karnataka Theological Research Institute, Mangalore, 1980,p.2

26. See R.N.Yesudas, A People's Revolt in Travancore, Kerala Historical Society, Trivandrum 1975, Eira Dalton, The Baker Family in India. CMS Press, Kottayam, 1963.

27. E.M.Bliss : (ed) Op.cit.,p.138.

28. H.S. Wilson, 'Basel Mission's Industrial Enterprise in South Canara and Its Impact between 1834-1914', Unpublished manuscript, United Theological College, Bangalore 1979.

29. Report of the Industrial Commission (RIC here onwards) p.7, Basel Mission Archives. 1854, quoted by Rudolph Fischer, Die Basler Missionindustrie in Indian 1850-1913, (German) Verlag Reihe W Zurich, 1978,p.33.(This portion was translated by Dr.Bernard Fenn, Reader in German, University of Kerala).

30. L.Johannes Frohnmeyer, Industrial Mission, Basel Mission Press, Mangalore,1893, p.11.

31. Ibid.

32. E.J.Edona, 'Economic Conditions of Protestant Christians in Malabar with special reference to Basel Mission' (unpublished monograph) Calicut, 1940.
33. Duncan B Forrester, Caste and Christianity, Curgon Press, London, 1980, p.11.
34. Non-ordained members or members who are not priests.
35. Here by the word churches, it is meant Parishes
36. "In Protestant churches the term elder refers commonly to 'ruling elders' chosen by and out of congregations for spiritual oversight and possessing in general church affairs authority equal to that of ministers". V.Ferm, op cit.,p.246.
37. "A Church is presbyterian when it acknowledges in its polity no higher office than that of the 'presbyter' or elder and when its highest courts therefore are composed of presbyters" (V.Ferm, op.cit.,p.605).
38. Controlling body or executive committee based in Basel. Regarding composition of Home Board of Basel Mission it is said that, All authority rests in the hands of its committee of private christian gentlemen.....and has from the first had a large lay element" E.M.Bliss(ed), op.cit.,p.138.
39. "Presbyterian churches are united into a common system of theology usually designated as Calvinistic"(V.Firm, Ibid.) Calvinism speaks of universal priesthood. By this it is meant that every individual predestined for salvation (or chosen by God for salvation as revealed through his good works is a priest by himself.John Calvin. A Compend of the Institutes of the Christian Religion, Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, Philadelphia, 1939. (Reprint)
40. RIC. 1856 op.cit., p.4

CHAPTER 3

BASEL MISSION INDUSTRIES : AN OVERVIEW

In the foregoing chapter, the dominant ideology or the world view of the Basel Mission was discussed. A dominant world view per se need not initiate purposeful economic activities. On the other hand, the world view interacting with a set of objective conditions can create a series of positive reactions. In the case of Basel Mission operating in nineteenth century Malabar and South Canara, such reactions led to the setting up of industrial enterprises.

Objective conditions which interacted with a favourable world view in the case of Basel Mission may be summarized as follows:

- (i) The social background of the missionaries, which were another motive for industrial activities.
- (ii) The caste stratification of the nineteenth century Malabar and South Canara society which were taken as a challenge to the evangelical spirit of the Mission.

Motivations Behind Initiation of Economic Activities

On numerous occasions, the Basel Mission had officially held that caste rigidity and the consequent social ostracism and the loss of traditional jobs for converts forced them to initiate economic activities. Thus, for example H. Hofmann, who was General Agent of the Basel Mission Industries explained that

"Caste prejudices in those early days was 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 and pecuniary help from their relatives and friends, and were hence wholly dependent for their livelihood on the missionaries. These pathetic and difficult circumstances actuated the pioneer missionaries to devise ways and means to find employments for their first converts who might thus find some means of livelihood, and so the Basel Mission Industries came into existence"¹

In a statement of another missionary, it is said that,

"The real difficulty in this respect begins after baptism. In that part of India, where we have been sent to work, some native customs make things really worse than they usually are. There is the "Marumakkattayam" or inheritance in the female line, in consequence of which even converts, who were in possession of something, will in most cases be deprived of every thing. Very often, the former way of life is out of question if it is heathenish, so some new way must be found out. Outside of the Mission the difficulties are almost insurmountable. The caste feeling, still very strong in those parts of India prevents them from working amongst Non-Christians"²

There are two arguments involved in the above quotations. The first one relates to break-up of kinship

ties upon conversion and second relates to the loss of occupations. These possibilities were further aggravated by the refusal to undertake mass conversions by the Basel Missionaries³. In cases of mass conversions, the danger of break-up of kinship ties and caste occupations would have been very much less.

Missionary as well as non-missionary sources have indicated that 'Thiya' and 'Billava' castes constituted majority of their converts⁴. Fischer, in his examination of church records relating to Codacal parish in South Malabar gives the following evidence relating to the caste background of converts, as shown in Table 3.1. As can be seen from Table 3.1, even though converts were drawn predominantly from lower castes, there were also a small number of upper caste converts like Nayars. Nayars, followed matrilineal system of joint families. In the case of Thiya who constituted the majority of converts in Malabar, at least the sections from North Malabar as a rule followed matrilineal system of family organization⁵ as well as Billavas of South Canara who followed a similar tradition⁶. In the case of joint families, conversion and consequent expulsion from joint families would have certainly resulted in the loss of even subsistence claim from the family resources. Within the customary rules which governed such

Table 3.1 : Caste Background of Converts of Codacal Parish as on 17-12-1893

Caste	Number	Percentage to total
Nayar	22	4.9
Chetti	13	2.9
Thiya	206	45.5
Carpenter	11	2.4
Goldsmith	8	1.8
Vettuvan	1	-
Cheruman	128	28.4
Vannan	33	7.3
Kaniyan	15	3.3
Unspecified	16	3.5
Total	453	100.00

Source: Rudolf Fischer : The Basel Mission Industries, 1850-1913, (German), Verlag Reihe W.Zurich, 178, p.112)

family organization, division of joint family property on individual basis was not allowed⁷.

The Cherumas who constituted a quarter of the converts were virtually agrestic slaves tied to the land of the janmis. They constituted one of the lowest castes considered polluting and subjected to rather inhuman conditions of life. As a contemporary source expressed it,

"Acceptance of Christianity besides conferring boons upon these races also considerably enhances their freedom of movement from place to place which is otherwise beset with great obstacles"⁹

However realisation of such freedom for the Cherumas automatically necessitated seeking alternative gainful occupations from their traditional occupation of paddy labour. The Janmis who held total control over their employment could have denied them work in such circumstances. To the missionaries, industrial employment of their converts was a necessary step in their Christian concept of emancipation..

We do not have sufficient information as to how conversion would have affected the service conditions of barbers, washerman, astrologers etc. At least in the case of some of them, the missionaries themselves objected to their pursuing their traditional trade on the basis of their own concept of ethics and christian practices¹⁰. Some work were declared to be "witch doctoring" and "wine making" and therefore not Christian enough to be pursued by converts.

Social Background of Missionaries

Many writers on and observers of missionary groups in India during the nineteenth century have focussed attention on the social background of individual missionaries

or groups of missionaries and identified it as a motivating factor for the movements for social upliftment they initiated. As Forrester observes generally many of these missionaries came from the "class of skilled mechanics and artisans and tradesmen with an almost innate desire to better standards and with a deep distrust of hierarchies".¹¹ This was the case with Basel Mission also. As Encyclopaedia of Missions notes:

"It will be seen that Basel Mission is doing a unique work in encouraging earnest christian young men of humbler classes in Europe to enter upon missionary life".¹²

To these missionaries, their participation in the missionary activity was an expression of "far and wider development and part of the social emancipation of underprivileged class".¹³

In the case of Basel missionaries, technical orientation was further emphasised by their training at Mission College at Basel where acquiring technical skills in a specific trade, formed part of the overall training.¹⁴

Caste Stratification

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. It were hierarchies created on the basis of a value system unalterable by human action which 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 unapproachability 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.¹⁵

Evolution of Industrial Activities

During the 80 years spanning from 1834 to 1914, we find a distinct evolution of the missionary interest in the economic activities. Broadly, three distinct phases can be observed in the evolution of industrial activity of the Basel Mission in Malabar and South Canara. These may be chronologically placed as under:

Early Phase	1834-1852
Middle Phase	1852-1882
Final Phase	1882-1914

Early Phase - 1834-1852: Early Experiments in Industry and Agriculture

The Early Phase begins with the arrival of missionaries in the Malabar coast in 1834. In 1846, the Industrial Commission was established. In 1852, it was placed under

a separate treasury within the Mission. This event was an important nodal point in the organisation of missionary industrial activities. This effectively marked the end of the first phase.

Initially, the missionaries organised various industrial activities, mainly based on local crafts. During this period, the mission also undertook its efforts to rehabilitate converts in agriculture. Both experiments were later found to be not successful. This early phase of industrial activities was characterised by the initiatives undertaken by the industrial missionaries on their own. The organisation of industrial activities was also marked by a high level of decentralisation.

During the Middle Phase, 1852-1882, industrial activities became increasingly under the central control of the Industrial Commission. This period is characterised by the establishment of factory type of production organisation. Handloom weaving establishments at various centres were set up; beginning with Mangalore. The first tile factory, printing press using typographical technique and mechanical workshop were also established at Mangalore during this period. It is during this period that handloom industries reached viable levels of growth.

The surpluses so generated were reinvested in further industrial activity. The phase also witnessed considerable diversifications of trading activity of the mission.

The Final phase starts from 1882 when the Industrial Commission was amalgamated with the missionary joint-stock company viz. Mission Handlung's Gesellschaft or Mission Trading Company. It enabled higher capital investment and expansion of industrial activities in Malabar coast. However in 1914 with the outbreak of the First World War, the missionary involvement in the industrial activities came to an end.

Earliest experiments of the missionaries were in the field of agriculture. One of the first missionaries of Basel Mission, Samuel Hebuch made an unsuccessful attempt to establish a coffee plantation at Balmatta Hill in Mangalore. Again, in 1842, the missionaries purchased 2620 acres of paddy fields near Mangalore to create an agricultural settlement for the converts. The land was leased out to the converts for cultivation¹⁶. This experiment also did not succeed, and the Mission noted that the colonisation of the converts in their agricultural centres made converts "easy going, lazy and they always looked upon mission for support. So the agriculture settlements

proved a partial failure since very few took interest in cultivating the land as their own lands".¹⁷

Apart from the above experiment at Mangalore, the Mission purchased land in many other centres for leasing out for cultivation to converts. The experience appears to have been the same as in Mangalore as is evident in the following statement:

"A great number of fields have however never been used in this wise and were in the course of years more and more recognised as an incumbrance to mission work as the management caused much labour and vexation".¹⁸

The fact that most converts who came from 'Billava' caste who are not traditionally cultivators of paddy, but menders of coconut and garden lands, might have contributed to the failure of these agrarian enterprises.

The agricultural operation rapidly lost its importance in the overall economic activities of the Mission. However, in Codacal, the Mission continued to be involved in agrarian experiments. On the request of the then Malabar Collector, the Mission agreed to manage a colony of Nayadis that had been established at the former's initiative. The Mission started an orphanage (at Paraperi near Codacal) and later on an agricultural school. Here the missionaries also obtained on lease some land, reclaimed it and sub-leased

it to the converts for cultivation¹⁹.

Side by side with the agricultural experiment, the Basel Missionaries attempted to rehabilitate converts in certain traditional crafts like weaving and carpentry by engaging native craftsmen to train the converts. The industrial school which the missionaries started in 1846 in Mangalore was their first attempt in this line²⁰. It is obvious from the subsequent industrial activities of the Basel Mission that the task of settling converts in traditional occupations and native crafts was not met with great success. The social environment might not have supported entry of new artisans in professions traditionally handled by certain castes.

An attempt was also made by missionaries to manufacture sugar out of toddy. For this, they employed converts majority of whom came from the 'Thiya' or 'Billava' castes whose occupation was mending of coconut trees and related activities like toddy tapping. The moral objection of the missionaries towards toddy drinking could have been a motivating factor behind this experiment. This attempt was also not found viable. The high cost of firewood for the operation was the official reason stated, for its failure.

One line of traditional activity which the Mission was able to operate with some success was the carpentry workshop at Calicut ^{Calicut} was already a centre of timber industry. Initially the workshop was supervised by a native master carpenter. In 1852, a trained carpenter from Germany was brought to take charge of the carpentry workshop. The workshop was also meant to train the converts in the profession. This enterprise was initially successful, but faced considerable competition from the local craftsmen. The workshop was subsequently handed over to its foreman who was a christian convert²¹.

The failure of initial attempts in industrial activities convinced the Mission that competition with native craftsmen in their own trade could not be successful. They felt that "christians cannot live on the wages of indigenous labourers who are not wholly dependent upon their handicrafts"²². Further, as expressed by a missionary source in 1893:

"Even the native industry in many branches (for instance in weaving) struggles for existence and is dying gradually. This is chiefly due to the English colonial system, at the bottom of which we see the anxiety that English productions should have a great run in the colonies. The country is overflowed with cheap English weaving, all formerly done by native industry".²³

The above realisation had considerable impact upon the future industrial involvement of the Basel Mission. The futile effort to train up converts in traditional artisan crafts was eventually given up. Later emphasis was on innovation and upgradation of technology. There was also increasing concentration of production in larger establishments.

The failures of the early experiments were subsequently explained by Karl Pfeiderer who was for many years head of the Industrial Mission, in the following manner:

"We were gradually convinced that we had to reckon with facts and that, as in other countries, so in India, the days of the small tradesmen were numbered. The single individual cannot go against the general competition and it was only the system of improved machinery and combined labour by which success could be attained"²⁴

Middle Phase 1852-1882

Following the failures of early experiments, Chief Inspector and Secretary to the Home Board of Basel Mission visited its establishments in Malabar and South Canara in 1851. He came to the conclusion that the Mission should continue its industrial activities more professionally, so as to ensure success. With such a view, he recommended

certain changes in the organisation and management of the enterprises. Following his recommendations, the Industrial Commission which had existed in the Mission from 1846 was reconstituted with a separate treasury, though it continued to be a part of the Basel Missionary Society. The new commission was placed under professional management of christian merchants. As a result of these changes, industrial activities of the Mission got a direction and thrust. Weaving was the activity that engaged the attention of the Industrial Commission at first.

With a view to technically improving the weaving industry, Industrial Commission sent to Mangalore one Johannes Haller who was a qualified master weaver. Haller, after studying the local pit looms, first introduced the fly shuttle. Fly shuttle could have improved the productivity of weavers from 50 per cent to 200 per cent depending upon the width of the cloth²⁵. The new innovation made the handloom establishments opened by the mission competitive with the local industry based on traditional looms.

Use of fly shuttle was also propagated by the Government of Madras during the Third quarter of Nineteenth century. Salvation Army, a foreign missionary organisation

which operated in Madras Presidency, also took interest in propagating the weaving technique among its converts who were weavers by profession²⁶. As the new technology got diffused, the Mission's hand loom production began to face severe competition. By 1900-10, the weaving units of the Mission were facing a tough situation. As a result, the weaving units turned to jacquard weaving, another technique introduced by the Mission to the Malabar coast.

Another notable invention of Haller was the invention of the dye of 'khaki' colour from the bark of the semicarpus tree. Cloth of this colour was ordered first for the police force of Mangalore and later for the Indian army²⁷. It was indeed a recognition of pioneering work of Basel Mission. Establishment of a dye house at Quilandy, enabled the mission industries to diversify the colour combinations to meet demand of various sorts.

As can be seen from Table 3.2, all weaving factories of Basel Mission were established before 1882. After 1882, the Mission did not open any new factories, but only expanded and modernised the existing ones. Upto the end of the middle phase, the weaving and the attendant process were entirely manually undertaken.

The putting out system was attempted only in the first stages when the Mission was attempting to organise

weaving as cottage industry. Once the factories were established, work was given out only in order to take care of the excess demand of certain times.

Table 3.2 : Growth of Weaving Industry in Malabar and South Canara under Basel Mission

Nature of Industry	Place of Establishment	Dist- rict	Year of estab- lishment
Weaving	Mangalore	S.Canara	1851
	Moolky (branch of Mangalore)	S.Canara	1853
	Cannanore	Malabar	1852
	Tellicherry	"	around 1860
	Chombala (Branch of Cannanore)	" "	1860
	Calicut	"	1859
	Codacal (branch of Calicut)		1860
Dye House	Quilandy		1880

Source: Various Reports of the Basel Mission

Introduction of weaving with jacquard looms²⁸ and mercerised yarn²⁹ for production of furnishing material with intricate designs required expert supervision. It could be done only in factories. The new technology tended to reinforce the factory system. Steam engines were introduced in the factories at Mangalore, Calicut and Cannanore for twisting and winding of yarn and in dye works before the turn of the century, but the actual weaving continued to be done by hand. Powerloom was introduced only in 1911.

A later development was introduction of mechanised knitting. Thus, Basel Mission factories were first to manufacture banians and stockinette material. Embroidery departments were attached to the major factories supervised by European women. Tailoring departments were also started in the factories.

A certain degree of specialisation was achieved in various weaving units for meeting different kinds of demand. Mangalore factory specialised in the production of superior mererised linen, stockinette material and hosiery. Cannanore factory specialised in producing checked material or material with design of continuous lines or checks.

The nature of products manufactured is broadly indicative of their market. While local market which existed initially might have been negligible or non-existent, the market for products of weaving industries extended throughout the Indian empire, which included Burma and Ceylon. As it is noted, travelling agents were also sent out from Calicut, throughout India, Burma, and Ceylon for the purpose of widely advertising and selling products³⁰. The demand for the products appears to have been from the Europeans working in India as well as the Indian elite.

These materials were also exported. Certain varieties like twill cotton shirting material called "Abyssenian shifting" was sold largely in the Australian market³¹.

The overall marketing strategy in the weaving activities of the Basel Mission appears to have been concentrating on a selected exclusive market where competition from other local products as well as from imported English products did not exist. In such a select market, profit margins also must have been high enough for the weaving industries to sustain growth.

Basel Mission also established the first tile factories -- at Jeppo, in Mangalore and in Calicut in Malabar. Since tile industry was the mainstay of Basel Mission's industrial activity during the Final Phase (1882-1914), we shall discuss it later. We shall now briefly note three other activities that evolved during the second phase. viz., mechanical repairing and fabrication, printing and book binding, and trading activities.

A mechanical workshop was established by the Industrial Commission in Mangalore in 1871³². The mechanical workshop was originally intended to meet the increasing demand for repair of machinery for the weaving and tile factories. Its functions got considerably widened in later years. It trained a large number of apprentices

and mechanics. Many of them were able to find employment outside the industrial set up of the mission. Later, it took up civil and mechanical engineering consultancy works for various organizations including government. Lastly, it undertook manufacture of some light engineering articles like safes, water pumps, lamp posts, and small carts.

The printing and book-binding which Basel Mission took up were mainly related to religious and educational activities. Though predominantly meant for publication of educational and religious books and tracts, this unit undertook a number of job orders, for various organizations, including printing of Bibles for Bible Society of India, and won considerable praise for the craftsmanship.³³

The book binding establishment which was connected to the press had employed 30 people. The ownership of this establishment was later passed on to the foreman, who was a Christian convert.

Trading activities of Basel Mission were undertaken under the leadership of Trade Commission which had existed in the Mission side by side with the Industrial Commission. In 1859, the activities of Trade Commission were taken over by the newly formed Joint Stock Company of Missions

Handlungs Gasellschaft (Mission Trading Company) organised to undertake the international trade operations connected with the Mission.

Trading activities in the Malabar coast by Basel Mission assumed a different role during the second period. Initially, as the Basel Mission was expanding its religious and secular activities, the Trade Commission and later on, from 1859, Mission Trading Company, took upon itself the task of supplying the necessary articles for establishment of mission stations. When weaving industry started growing from 1854 onwards, the task of securing the imported yarn was also entrusted to the trading company. Besides, the Mission Trading Company also conducted highly profitable trade with Africa (Gold Coast).

According to an agreement reached between Trading Company and the Industrial Commission, the sale of the products of the factories was entrusted to the trading company for which purpose it established 'shops' in Bangalore and Ootacamund.

The Mission claimed that the objective of conducting trade was not merely to assist mission activities by their profit. It was also meant to teach the "heathens" real Christian way of dealing in social and economic matters.

It was also intended by delivery of cheap goods," to produce in the heathen an impression favourable to christianity and preparing for it"³⁴ Even at a later period, the missionaries boasted that in their trading establishments, even children could be sent to purchase things without being cheated.

In other words, from an initial focus on the trading activities to supply the provisions for mission stations and missionaries, it broadened subsequently to supplying many provisions to European and British nationals working in India. The establishment of shops at Bangalore and Ooty points in this direction.

In 1854, the Trade Commission attempted to market in Europe arrowroot (starch flour) produced by the poor congregations in Malabar. Demand for arrow root in Europe was insufficient. Subsequently, the company tried to make inroads into coffee trade by purchasing machines for purifying and dressing coffee beans. Basel headquarters was not in agreement with the idea of speculation in coffee³⁵. Hence the trading company undertook activities such as being commission agents for larger coffee traders. For sometime, the company even considered buying of a coffee plantation at Anandpore and had a trading branch in Mercara.

Profits in coffee trade could not be sustained much longer. In the face of "competition of almost European dimensions", the company found itself compelled to limit its activities in some of the trading branches. From this period onwards, until 1882, trading activities of the Mission were confined to arranging for the purchase of raw materials for the various industries and marketing of their products.³⁶ In 1882, the Industrial Commission was merged with the Mission Trading Company. Thereafter, the industries established by the Mission were managed by Mission Trading Company. Under this agreement, the company after paying a dividend of 5% to its shareholders, paid the balance of profits to the Mission³⁷. The Equity Capital of Mission Trading Company consisted of 300 shares of 100 pound sterling, of which 120 shares were held by the Basel Mission Society. The executive of this company which came to manage the Basel Mission industrial enterprises consisted of 6 directors, two of whom were chosen by the Missionary Society while their officials placed in Basel consisted of two managers and a technical assistant.³⁸

Final Phase: 1882-1914

The amalgamated Industrial Commission and the Mission Trading Company enabled the Mission to overcome its main difficulty in industrial expansion, giving it an entry into the capital markets in Europe. This was possible

because the trading company incorporated as a Joint Stock Company in Basel, had direct access to European capital market. It also must have given the industries access to a part of the trading surplus. It enabled expansion of investment in a new line of industry, tile, which was relatively capital intensive.

The manufacture of tiles was a centuries' old profession, traditionally undertaken by the potter caste in Southern India. One of the early observers of the society of Malabar, a Portugese traveller, Duarte Barbosa who visited the coast during the period 1510-31 makes the following observation on potters:

"Their business is to work at baked clay and tiles covering houses with which the temples and royal buildings are roofed and by law no other persons may roof their houses except with palm branches".³⁹

Not much change occurred in this state of affairs till the end of eighteenth century. By nineteenth century, however, the public works like the construction of public offices, railway stations etc. were creating a market for tiles. The traditional tile was handicapped in exploiting this new demand. The problem with the use of traditional tiles was that it required a heavy superstructure which was costly. Thus the stage was set for the rapid expansion of the Basel Mission's machine made roofing tiles.

Much of the credit for starting the new activity in tiles goes to Basel Missionary George Plebst.⁴⁰ Plebst, a mechanical engineer by training had first worked on the conversion of the Mission Press from a lithographical one to a typographical one. He returned to Germany to study the technique of tile making which included the treatment of clay, the technique of glazing, the construction of kiln and roasting process. On his return to Mangalore in 1864, with the help of an efficient master potter, he built his own kiln and made experiments in it, which were successful beyond all expectations. Raw material for manufacture of tiles, 'felspar' was found abundantly on the banks of river Netravati in Mangalore. Consequently, in 1865, the first tile factory was started at Jeppo, Mangalore, employing two workers and bullock power and producing 360 tiles daily. The growth of this unit was phenomenal. In 1871, the factory which was by then modernised employed 60 workers and made 2,09,000 pieces annually. By 1873, the tile factory paid back its entire investment. In 1880, this unit had employed 131 workers and produced 10 lakhs tiles a year.

In 1881, the bullock power was replaced by steam engines. The further technical change effected in this factory was conversion of the existing kiln to a gas firing kiln for obtaining uniform temperature for producing other

ceramic articles like salt glazed tiles and terracotta ware. While other units of Basel Mission specialised on mass produced articles, Jeppo factory continued to manufacture specialised products and remained an experimental centre for product development.

The following Table 3.3 gives a chronological list of the tile factories established by the Basel Mission.

Table 3.3. Establishment of Tile Factories of Basel Mission in Chronological Order

Place	District	Year of Establishment
Jeppo (Mangalore)	S.Canara	1865
Calicut	Malabar	1873
Kudroli (Mangalore)	S.Canara	1882
Malpe	S.Canara	1886
Codacal	Malabar	1887
Palghat.	Malabar	1887
Feroke	Malabar	1905

Source: Various Reports of the Basel Mission

Initially, the factories produced flat tiles, as different from the curved and grooved types which are at present being used, for roofing. Subsequently, the factories

built ridge tiles, both plane and ornamental, skylights and ventilators, ridge and hip terminals, finials of various kind, grooved sphere tiles, hanging wall tiles, ceiling tiles of many different designs, hourdis or ceiling slabs, common and ornamental clay flooring tiles, chimney bricks, salt glazed stones, earthenware, drainage pipes, terracotta vases, flower pots, architectural terracotta ware etc. The products of these factories received high praise and won many awards in industrial exhibitions.

The market of tiles covered the entire British Empire and the Mission made use of the trade channels that existed within the British empire. Tiles were exported to British East Africa, Aden, and Basra. They were also exported in large quantities to the Strait Settlements, Sumatra, British Borneo and even to Australia⁴¹. From these, it is evident that the Basel Mission exploited the trade channels within the British empire extensively. Tiles were also exported to German colonies in Africa as revealed by a statement of the agent of the Basel Mission⁴².

Thus at the out break of World War, the Basel Mission altogether employed around 3600 workers, details of which are available in the following Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 : Dimensions of Industrial Activity -- Comparison of Employment in Weaving and Tile Units

Establishments	Centres	Employment		
		Members of the Mission	Others	Total
Mercantile Mission	Mangalore(S.Canara)	14	-	14
Branches	Mercara(S.Canara)	5	1	6
Mechanical Establishment	Mangalore(S.Canara)	92	7	99
Weaving Factories	Calicut(Malabar)	616	15	631
Branch	Codacal(Malabar)	42	-	42
Branch	Cannanore(")	454	8	462
Branch	Chombala (")	88	-	88
Branch	Tellichery(")	71	-	71
Branch	Mangalore(S.Canara)	160	-	160
Branch	Moolky	12	-	12
Sub Total for Weaving Establishments		1443	23	1466
Tile Factories	Jeppo(S.Canara)	259	122	381
	Kudroli(")	231	211	442
	Malpe (")	82	9	91
	Calicut(Malabar)	131	126	257
	Feroke(Malabar)	65	252	317
	Codacal(")	234	48	282
	Palghat (")	123	155	278
Sub Total for tile Factories		1125	923	2048
Grand Total		2679	954	3633

Source: RBM 1913, p.20

The above table also gives an important comparison of composition of labour force into converts and non converts in weaving and tile factories. As it is evident, in weaving industries 98 per cent ^{of} employees are converts while in

tile factories the share of converts is about 55 per cent only. The apparent reason could have been that tile factories would have to be located in areas which have availability of raw material and transportation facilities. In such areas, labour recruitment would have followed availability than the preference for converts. On the other hand, labour in a weaving factory is a skilled occupation. Meanwhile, it may be remembered that in a tile factory work was predominantly of the nature of casual work. There was a greater incidence of casual work in the tile factory which was reflected in the composition of cost in relation to payment on account of labour and staff.

We are able to get an insight into the cost structure of these industrial units from profit and loss statements, for the years 1877 and 1878. The units included in the profit and loss statements consist of 3 weaving factories and 3 tile factories. Figures for the 2 years have been averaged to make them more representative.

The important comparisons that emerge from the Table 3.4 are that

1. Share of interest on loans points to the higher incidence of loan capital in the tile enterprises. The larger fixed investment required for tile industry is also indicated by significantly

higher depreciation rates.

2. The share of payment on account of labour and staff was lower for tile factories in comparison with weaving units.

3. Share of profits was lower for tile factories.

Table 3.5: Comparison of Cost Structure -- Weaving and Tile Industries

	Percentage share in total value of production	
	Weaving factories	Tile factories
1. Raw Materials	44.0	48.9
2. Payment on account of labour and staff	25.3	18.8
3. Business expenses	6.9	5.8
4. Interest paid on capital	3.9	7.5
5. Maintenance allowance of supervisor	5.5	5.5
6. Depreciation	2.6	9.9
7. Profits	11.8	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Compiled from the Profit and Loss Statements for 1877, 1878 of the Basel Mission Industries in India.

On the second point, we may add further that the average wages in tile factories were lower than in the weaving factories. The average earning of tile factory workers is Rs.1.46 less than their counterparts in weaving industry.

Table 3.6: Employment and Wages, 1877-78

Line of Manufacture	No. of work-ers	Total yearly wages	Average yearly wages	Average Monthly wages
Tile factories	132	7415	56.17	4.68
Weaving factories	380	27999	73.68	6.14

Source : Compiled from the Profit and Loss Statements for 1877, 1878 of the Basel Mission Industries in India

Fischer observes that upto 1882, Weaving and tile factories of Basel Mission paid at higher wage scales than were prevalent locally or in other branches of industry. After 1882, real wages in the mission factories suffered a general erosion, mainly after the integration of mission industry with Mission Trading Company, and it was considered that payment of wages higher than the market levels was not compatible with healthy business principles. Christians and non-christians received the same wages for the same .

work. But christians received additional benefits in terms of subsidised housing and rice donations and relief in emergencies. The conditions of work were also same for all the workers: 9-10 hours a day and six days a week.

The industrial expansion of the integrated Mission Trading Company in India came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of First World War. It is understood that the Basel Mission Industries had considerable plans for expansion in certain lines particularly in the field of dyeing at the time when their activities abruptly got suspended.

Outbreak of the First World War and the Cessation of Activities of the Basel Mission Industries in India

At the time of outbreak of the First World War, there were 13 industrial undertakings of the company in operation in India. When the war broke out, German nationals working in the company were interned, but the company was permitted to function, with the managers from Switzerland. The company itself was registered in Switzerland which was a neutral country and hence claimed neutrality. In 1916, through an agreement with the British Government, control of the Indian business of the company was placed in the hands of the House of J.P.Werner and Co. which was

a company domiciled in London⁴³. In the same year an ordinance, Enemy Trading Act of 1916 was issued by the Governor General in Council to prohibit and control trading by hostile foreigners. The Madras Chamber of Commerce immediately approached the Government of the Presidency of Madras for winding up the operations of the Company. It is evident that the fast growth of the company had challenged the British commercial interests in India.

The intervention of the Swiss government was not successful in changing the attitude of the British Indian government. Government was convinced that the Basel Mission had a predominantly German character. However, this intervention succeeded in delaying the process of sale of factories which was proposed earlier, till the end of the war. On 22nd May 1919, six months after the armistice on the basis of an ordinance issued by the Governor General, the entire assets of the company in India were sequestered by the Custodian of Enemy Property. Under the direction of controlling officer, an inventory of possessions was drawn up. Their total value, after deduction of liabilities to the tune of approximately £ 1100 was estimated at about £ 4,00,000.

In 1920, the Custodian of Enemy Property was instructed to transfer the properties vested with them to a group of trustees called the Mission Trust of Madras. In the same year, the Governor General in Council passed another indenture for transferring these properties from Mission

Trust of Madras to Commonwealth Trust Limited, a company which was formed in England primarily for the purpose of taking over the business, previously carried on by the Mission Trading Company. This set up continues to date. The industries did not expand any further under the new set-up. The trust was at best interested in retaining its status quo. In the absence of further development work, some of the units had to be sold off⁴⁴. At present, only 4 tile factories, two in Calicut and two in Mangalore and a weaving factory at Calicut are managed by the Commonwealth Trust Ltd.

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29. Mercerised yarn refers to yarn treated under tension. With caustic alkali to give greater strength and lustre.
30. H.Hofmann op.cit., p.83.
31. Basel Mission Industries, 1859-1959, op.cit.p.264.
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33. "In 1873 the Madras Mail gave the Mission Press the testimonial that it made the most beautiful printings in the Madras Presidency and the journal " Athenenaem" in London observed shamefacedly.....that the Englishmen had been defeated in their own area by foreigners" -- Ibid.p.259.
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CHAPTER 4

THE SOCIAL IMPACT ON BASEL MISSION INDUSTRIES

In the last chapter, an attempt was made to trace the evolution of industrial activities by the Basel Mission. The social origins of individual missionaries which had a role in initiating industrial activities, were also briefly touched upon. Moreover, it was found that the social and economic conditions in Malabar and South Canara prompted them to initiate some of their economic activities. These endeavours therefore would have had reciprocal social impact.

We should however begin with a note of caution. Industrial activities were only a part of the overall Basel Mission's activities, though they formed a very important part. Basel Mission also undertook many social service activities like running of educational institutions, printing and publishing, running of hospitals, orphanages and old peoples homes. The Mission itself saw both the economic as well as the other activities as serving a wider "missionising" goal¹. These activities were also closely interlinked.

For example, the spread of basic literacy enabled the Mission industries to recruit a better educated labour force.

To assess the social impact of industrial activities, the following two areas may be looked at in particular :

- (i) The impact it had on the caste system in Malabar and South Canara, and
- (ii) Social mobility acquired by different segments of society as a result of opportunities provided by the industrial activities.

As it would be observed in the subsequent sections, these two aspects are not exclusive but they are closely inter-linked, and therefore cannot be viewed in isolation.

Caste and Conversion:

Many observers of the activities of missionary groups in India during the nineteenth century have observed that Basel Mission converts did not retain their caste identities². It is equally important to understand that such a synthesis was achieved by the Basel Mission Community in a relatively short time span. The Mission itself

had noted with satisfaction as early as 1893 that "caste feeling amongst Christians is a thing perfectly unknown among us".³

In order to perceive the significance of the above achievement and to relate the impact of such an achievement to the societies of Malabar and South Canara, it is necessary to place this in a wider background. The wider background as we see here is the activities and attitudes of other missionary groups in relation to the caste problem. The achievements of Basel Mission may be compared with the activities of the two other major missionary groups that operated in Kerala.

The Catholic missionary groups that had worked in India during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had accepted ^{caste} / factor as a part of the existing social order and therefore did not perceive it as a hindrance, or as something inconsistent with christianity. Moreover, since the activities of these groups resulted in mass conversion, it did not result in loss of occupation for the converts. The most obvious example is the mass conversion of 'Paravar' fishermen in Kanyakumari area as mentioned earlier⁴.

The different attitudes of the later Protestant missionary groups towards caste could be attributed to the

relatively smaller scale of mass conversion. It could also be attributed to the influence of Pietist movement in Europe which held a view of evangelism as a "historical process which necessarily involved Christian reshaping of society"⁵.

However, within the different missionary groups, attitudes differed. Forrester notes that by eighteen fifties, most missionary groups had arrived at a general view of caste as "a great evil which must be ruthlessly uprooted from the church"⁶. While such a general view existed, it was further noted that "the missionary objections to caste were of various kinds, theological, ethical and strategic. There were situations when caste was not seen as a significant obstacle to the spread of gospel; and situations where caste was tolerated"⁷.

In Kerala, during the nineteenth century, among the various missionary groups which operated, there were two major organisations i.e. the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) and the London Missionary Society (LMS)⁸. The experiences of the above groups were different from that of Basel Mission. The LMS predominantly operated in South Travancore and adjoining regions and converted mainly people from the Nadar community, the equivalent of

Thiya community in Malabar. There was also a portion of converts from the castes of agrestic slaves. This society also started a number of economic activities, but did not achieve the level of professionalisation of the Basel Mission⁹. Conversion did not raise the material status of the converts of LMs, though it gave them access to missionary sponsored educational institutions, freedom from caste oppression and to some extent, ability to choose their future¹⁰. While the converts had to fight for a higher status in society as in the case of the 'Breast cloth Controversy'¹¹. Within the converts' community, to a large extent, a social synthesis was not achieved. More or less, their relationship with other communities was still permeated by caste insignia, terminology etc. There was even the widespread use of Nadar caste suffix to the names of christian converts.

The CMS which operated mainly in Central Travancore region, initially tried to take the non-catholic Syrian Church in its fold. After a break with the Syrian Church¹² the Society turned to converting lower castes, predominantly Ezhavas and Pulayas. The consequence of such conversion was that,

"By 1880s, there were some 16,000 CMS Christians of whom more than a half were of Pulaya Stock and roughly a quarter were Syrians. The remainder were mainly from Ezhavas and other low castes".¹²

The result of the above pattern was expressed by a contemporary observer as thus :

"The slave converts form a separate body with whom the rest of the Christians have no social intercourse"¹³.

Basel Mission's success in eradicating caste barriers can partly be ascribed to the relatively smaller portion of upper caste converts, at least in Malabar¹⁴, and partly to the impersonal industrial environment created by them, under which converts from different castes worked side by side, performed similar type of work and received the same wages. The strong stand the Mission took against caste and the intermarriages the missionaries arranged between converts with different caste backgrounds must have further facilitated such a synthesis. It must also have shattered the concept of caste related occupation.

What is significant from the point of social impact is the powerful demonstration effect of the Basel Mission experiment of creating a casteless group of persons. They were coming from different caste backgrounds but were also living and working together, in the caste stratified environment of Malabar and South Canara society. Such a powerful demonstration would have naturally resulted in the eventual challenging by the lower castes, of caste restrictions

Effecting Social Mobility

In chapter III, it was pointed out that 'Thiya' and 'Billava' castes constituted a majority of Basel Mission converts. Among these castes, latter half of nineteenth century was a period of social upheaval. The Thiya Community in Malabar had earlier drawn the benefits of British connection in obtaining English education, and thereby entering into government jobs. This was made easy by the peculiar position of Thiyas in the caste hierarchy and their traditional attitudes which were rather cosmopolitan. During this period, social reformers like Sree Narayana Guru had also emerged within the caste in neighbouring Travancore¹⁵.

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 Holey caste in South Canara, they had nothing to lose by conversion. Being a polluting caste, they had to keep certain distances 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.

Still another aspect of social mobility is location of new avenues of employment. Basel Mission industries had offered employment not only to converts but also to non-converts. According to the statistics of employment, as on 1913, out of a total number of 3,633 employees in Basel Mission factories, 954 persons (twenty six per cent) were non converts¹⁶. A part of the above number were candidates for conversion; yet, this signifies that Basel Mission factories were an avenue of employment for people who desired to seek escape from caste stratified society.

Basel Mission industries employed large number of women. As on 1877, the weaving mills had employed 216 women out of a total labour force of 392. These women were employed in the category of "spool Winders and thread makers"¹⁷ Though this activity got mechanised during the

later years, tailoring shops and embroidery shops, opened in weaving factories, predominantly employed women. In terms of the actual dimensions of the women's employment, this does not appear to be significant, but the demonstration effect of such employment is significant in a traditional society.

Spread of Literacy

The basic objective the Basel Mission had in spreading of literacy was that every convert should be able to read the Bible. As a Basel missionary expressed it:

"We have no real primary education, an education not aiming at a literary career but containing the elements of knowledge for everybody. What is called primary education with us are 4 or 5 standards of a curriculum laid down for a course of instruction ending with a B.A. degree"¹⁸

In order to serve the above objective, the Mission established a large number of primary schools. Every parish and every factory had schools attached to it. In later years, Basel Mission established the Malabar Christian College, a premier institution of higher learning in Malabar region.

Many Basel missionaries have contributed to the enrichment of the language by compiling lexicons and books

on grammar. Most important among these was the English Malayalam lexicon compiled by Dr. Herman Gundert¹⁹ which is still being widely used. Apart from the above, the Basel Mission Press in Mangalore printed and published text books for schools.

Another notable contribution of the Mission in the literary and educational fields was the publication of pioneer journals in Malayalam. These journals are 'Rajyasamacharam' and 'Paschimodayam' and were published from Tellicherry from 1847 using a lithographical press. Both the papers were published simultaneously but with contents some-what varied. The former one carried mainly "gospel news" and contained stories from the Bible, fables, stories relating to the activities of other missionary groups, stories about conversion, etc. From the point of view of social significance 'Paschimodayam' is more important. The objectives of this paper were described in one of its early issues as follows:

"Apart from the sciences and arts which are known here, there are many sciences and arts known in the west. There are great differences between these two. In order to make these things (sciences and arts of the west) understandable to the Malayalis, we are bringing out portions from selected areas as under".²⁰

The areas covered by this paper were astronomy, geography, Kerala history and folklore. This paper was edited by Herman Gundert and his assistant F.Muller and published from Tellicherry.

The Basel Mission also published a paper 'Vrithanthapatrika'²¹ in Kannada. The lead given by Basel missionaries was carried on later by the CMS which brought out a newspaper "Gnananikshepam"²² under the editorship of CMS missionary Benjamin Baily. It was closer to the modern concept of a newspaper.

It is possible now to sum up the social impact of Basel Mission industries on the basis of these evidences. First of all, it created a group of converts who had almost totally discarded their previous caste affinities. The impact of this on the larger society was by way of a powerful demonstration effect. Secondly, it raised the social status of the converts who predominantly belonged to the lower castes. Operating in an environment of social transition, it gave a thrust to the social movements of the time, though not seriously intended. In a caste stratified society, it gave avenues for higher level employment to lower caste persons though to a limited extent. Moreover, their other activities such as opening of educational institutions and issuing of journals did help to widen the area of interaction between persons of different backgrounds.

Notes and References

1. The term missionising refers to not just a change in religion, but a change in attitudes. For example, in one of the first RIC 1854, it is stated that "even acquisition of working capacity and loyalty has a missionising effect on human labour". By this, it is meant acquiring habits like regularity of work, punctuality, fulfillment of allotted duties etc.
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21. Ibid.p.58.

22. Ibid.,p.73.

CHAPTER 5

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BASEL MISSION INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES

Industrial activities of the Basel Mission were the pioneering efforts in modern manufacturing in both Malabar and South Canara. Even before British Colonial capital turned its interest towards establishing manufacturing units in India¹ a christian missionary group which originated in Southern Germany or Switzerland² started investing in these lines. We have already seen how and when such activities developed in Malabar and South Canara. Now let us look at the influence such activities had on the course of the economic life of the region.

First of all, being the pioneering modern manufacturing effort, it qualitatively upgraded some of the traditional manufacturing processes. While on the one hand, the capacity for production in these sectors grew, it could also have had adverse effect on the traditional producers. These industrial efforts in normal circumstances led to unemployment among them. Moreover, like any modern manufacturing unit, it could have found its own markets and created its own demand patterns. Such intervention logically

could have worked towards the dichotomy between the objectives of industrial production and the felt needs of the society. As some sort of compensation, a new labour force emerges, working for a wage, without any control over the means of production and disciplined according to new concepts of time and duty. As an inevitable process of industrial growth, this could have resulted in the transfer and adoption of new technology. All these factors are to be looked at in this Chapter.

Reorganization of the Production Process and the Effect on Traditional Artisans

One direct impact of the introduction of Basel Mission manufacturing activities was the general upgradation of traditional processes. For instance, let us look at weaving wherein the Mission introduced modern manufacturing processes.

The western coastal areas climatically are temperate zones and therefore not subjected to extreme in temperature. As a result, the requirement of cloth was also limited. Traditionally men and women wore single piece garments³, usually white with a dash of colour or a boarder. Secondly, Malabar and South Canara were not cotton growing areas. Therefore localisation of production

aimed towards exports also did not exist. Therefore, only very little weaving could have been done traditionally in the districts of Malabar and South Canara⁴.

Therefore, traditional weaving could have existed only at two levels :

- (i) Weavers producing superior type of garments for predominantly urban or richer consumers
- (ii) Largely rural weavers who produced coarse garments.

While urban weavers depended mostly on their profession for income, rural weavers had only a seasonal demand for their produce. Another factor was that there was not much difference in the capital intensity of both type of weaving. The difference was basically in the manual dexterity⁵. Both the categories of weavers operated in a limited market. The rural weavers, in order to compensate for the seasonal nature of their employment sought pieces of land for cultivation on lease, unless provided for by the village community⁶.

Various records of the Nineteenth century speak of the existence of both types of weaving. Travellers who visited the coast during the sixteenth century like Duarte Barboza described the weaving castes, 'chaliyas', located in different parts of the district⁷. Sources relating

to the nineteenth century and early twentieth century also confirm existence of settlements of chaliya weavers in almost every district⁸, of the region. The chaliyas used pit looms to weave coarse garments. In the missionary sources, there are occasional references about urban weavers⁹. We do not however have adequate insight relating to how the production by both these types of weavers were incorporated within a wider market.

Any discussion on qualitative upgradation of a traditional industry like weaving has to take into account the state of the industry; and should relate technical upgradation with growth. A detailed study is required to understand the state of handloom industry in Madras Presidency during the latter half of the nineteenth century when Basel Mission was expanding its handloom industries. For example, the Industry Investigation Census of Madras Presidency for the year 1911, was of the view that the number of weavers in the Presidency in recent years had not declined. Nevertheless further statements on the matter are highly revealing. It is stated that,

"Owing to the stress of competition they (weavers) turn out a larger amount of finished goods than was formerly the case; that is to say the majority of them have to work harder to make a bare living "10

The District Gazeteer of Malabar and Anjengo(1908)

also describes a similar picture. It is said that,

"Chaliyans or weavers especially have been hit by the introduction of machine made goods from Europe but they still struggle without thought of improving their time honoured methods or deserting their hereditary trade for more remunerative employment"¹¹

Further substantiating the generally retrogressive condition of the weavers it is said that,

"The Chaliyans are thus reduced to supply only the lower castes with clothes and to weaving coarse towels. They are miserably poor and with antiquated looms the whole family including women and children have to work the whole day to make a living".¹²

It is in the above context that qualitative upgradation of weaving as attempted by Basel Mission assumes importance. The series of technical changes that were undertaken included introduction of fly shuttle, introduction of 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 material 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 factory production. 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 powerloom one. The other factories increasingly turned into jacquard weaving¹³.

Tile industry presents a slightly different picture. In the traditional industry, the tiles were produced by potter's wheel. The curved pattern was obtained by first making a cylindrical design and then cutting it. The processes in the qualitative upgradation essentially involved subdividing the process previously handled by the potter all by himself into different processes like mixing of clay, cutting blocks, pressing to shape, drying and burning. Activities involved in mixing of the clay as well as pressing were mechanised first.

In weaving as well as tile making as it was done traditionally, the specialisation of labour was limited by the extent of market which was mainly local. A greater specialisation 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 specialisation 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 weaved goods would have adversely affected the traditional weavers. How extensively was such effect cannot be determined on the basis of the data that is available to us.

We have seen the impact of Basel Mission industries in terms of opening up a traditional economy, by widening the export market for the products. In the traditional industries of weaving and tile making we described the process as entry of capital. Karl Marx has explained the process as under:

"By decomposition of handicrafts, by specialisation 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 organisation of labour in society and thereby develops at the same time new productive forces in the society".¹⁴

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

By the middle of the nineteenth century, from all available accounts, traditional weaving industry in Malabar and in South Canara was on the decline. This was partly due to large scale introduction of cotton piece goods. The traditional weavers on the other hand are described as a class which is unwilling to change from the time honoured practices, even in the face of a decline in demand. Fall in income below a subsistence level will throw the weaver out of profession, as an agricultural labourer. We do not have sufficient information whether the latter process has taken place. In the previous caste background of converts as seen in Table 3.1, chaliya caste ^{does} not figure. We had argued in Chapter III that Basel Mission industries produced primarily for an export market. But one of the products which the Basel Mission industries successfully marketed locally was the towels. For this reason the mission itself was ridiculed as 'towel mission' by other missionaries. This product must have been competitive with the locally made towels known as "Thuvarth".¹⁵ This must have affected the demand for the products of traditional weavers.

In tile manufacture, the introduction of machine made tiles virtually skimmed off the potential market for tiles which came from the large scale demand for public works. The caste restrictions regarding use of tiles also appear to have been relaxed by then.

Therefore, there are strong indications to believe that an increased demand which could have been catered to by the traditional production process was denied to them by the entry of the Basel mission. This also meant further deprivation for the traditional artisans of the region. The comparatively heavier infrastructure required to hold the heavier traditional tiles etc. could have been reduced if the technological innovations available to the Basel Mission industries were also made available to the traditional producers. This was never the case. Secondly, the compensating recruitment from the traditional weaving and pottering castes to the Basel Mission factories, from available records seems to have been meagre. Therefore, the total effect of an entry from a comparatively more organized and modern entrepreneurial group in the manufacturing process of both Malabar and South Canara was economically depressing. This had wider implications for the growth of purchasing power in one section of the working

people, and their eventual seeking of refuge in agricultural sector.

Market, Marketing Channels and Demand Pattern

A traditional economy like that of Malabar and South Canara can be said to be remaining in a static equilibrium by means of production primarily aimed to meet the society's wants. Exchange was to a limited degree and was confined to certain commodities.

The Basel Mission industries were different from the traditional industries in one significant aspect which was the pattern of demand the industries were catering to. Demand for traditional industries was confined to the respective regions. Traditional industry operates on technologically inferior foundations, because of the limitations of the market. Modern industry, on the other hand caters to a wider market. An industry catering to local market has to face seasonality in demand, but since the economy itself exists in a static equilibrium, the demand is generally constant or increases only marginally. The marginal increase does not require any change in the organization of production or for that matter technology. The division of labour and specialisation is limited ^{by} the extent of market.

The industrial activity of the Basel Mission introduced a new factor in the above relations. After the initial attempts to market the products of weaving industries in the nearby locality, the Basel missionaries realised that a wider market was necessary to sustain the growth of their weaving units. This was achieved by technical transformation and qualitative upgradation of industry. The dress requirements of the population of Malabar and South Canara were limited to white garments produced by local weavers. The more affluent classes used imported Lancashire mull cloth. Basel Mission industries did not produce any of these. Even yarn used particularly the mercerised yarn used by the weaving industry of Basel Mission was imported. Most of their products were exported. Therefore, the factors that were common in the weaving industry of Basel Mission and the traditional weaving industry were the labour content. In tile industry also, local market was limited. Most of the Basel Mission products were for export.

Modern industrial units that were established by the Basel Mission catered to an international demand. This means that the demand for the products could vary considerably depending upon situations. To remain competitive in an international market, a modern industry has to technolo-

gically upgrade itself frequently and innovate to produce new commodities. The industry must also exist on a technologically superior foundation and achieve a higher level of specialisation and division of labour. The industry should also show a greater resilience and dynamism to cater to international demand.

Basel Mission's industries catered to the highly competitive international market by achieving product specialisation and continuous technological improvements. They also used steam power in the process. 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. Within the country, demand for the products of weaving industry came ^{from} mainly Europeans residing in India as well as the emerging urban middle class who tended to imitate the Europeans in dress and manners. It appears that some local competition emerged in this market. As a result, Basel Mission's weaving industries increasingly turned to jacquard weaving¹⁶. Similarly, market for the tile industry came mainly from the metropolitan cities in the country as well as from

government organizations like railways and post and telegraph.

The weaving industries that came up in Cannanore during inter war years and the tile units that were established in Mangalore also followed the same path as that of Basel Mission industries. Tiles were exported to Bombay from where they were re-exported to other parts of the country. In weaving, as the Basel Mission concentrate on international market during the post 1882 period, there was an emerging national demand for these products. The weaving industry came up in Cannanore to cater to this demand. It is interesting to note that long before the products of these factories were directly exported by them, products were purchased and exported by the traders in Bombay¹⁷.

As a result, we can see an increasing dichotomy between the genuine requirements of the society in which these industrial enterprises were situated and the production pattern of these enterprises. As in the case of modern manufacturing in traditional economies elsewhere, the Basel Mission industries in Malabar and South Canara also had a highly retrogressive effect on the perspective of industrial purpose catering to the

felt needs of the immediate society.

Transfer of Technology

In Chapter III while discussing evolution of industrial activity of Basel Mission we had briefly referred to some of the technologies introduced by the Mission. The following exhibit is an attempt towards schematically presenting these in relation to the existing technology, in weaving and tile making.

From the exhibit below, a picture of the new technologies introduced by the Basel Mission can be obtained. As it is evident here, in the case of weaving, it was improvement on the existing technology. Almost all the new technologies introduced by Basel Mission industries were adopted by the handloom industry that came up in Cannanore subsequently. What the industry did not produce was certain very specialised products like twill cotton fabrics. Even this can be attributed to the fact that for some of such very specialised products market was also limited.

In the case of tile making, a greater lag appears to have existed in adoption of new technologies. For example,

as early as 1880s, the Basel Mission tile factories had started using steam power in mixing of clay. The tile factories which came up in Trichur in 1930s, (which can be called as the first indigenous factories) on the other hand used bullock power, and a technology which was comparable to that of the first factory established by the Basel Mission¹⁸. While non availability of sufficient capital could be an explanation, an alternative explanation is that only simpler technologies were absorbed in indigenous factory production.

Regarding printing and book binding, the technologies are relatively simple. Basel Mission preferred to hand over the above activity previously handed by them to a convert. On the whole, the general impact made by the Basel Mission industrial efforts in terms of transfer of technology is undeniable.

A technically oriented labour force plays a pivotal role in absorbing and transferring new technologies. In the present context, the technically oriented labour force consisted mainly of converts who were labourers in the Basel Mission factories. It is important to note how this labour force differed in their make up from traditional labour force.

Industry	Traditional Technology	Technologies introduced by Mission	Was adopted in later years or not
Weaving	Pit Loom	Frame Loom	Adopted
	Ordinary Shuttle	Fly Shuttle	"
	Non existent	Jacquard Weaving	"
	Very limited dyeing was done	Improvised dyeing using different coloured dyes	"
	Not used	Khakki dye	"
	Not used	Use of mercerised yarn	"
	Limited to a few products	New products like twill cotton etc.	Some were produced; but not all varieties produced by Basel Mission
	Not in existence	Introduction of hosiery	Hosiery articles started to be produced in Tellicherry, Cannanore area in 1930s.
	Not in existence	Powerloom	Use of power as well as use of power looms cannot be treated as a fallout of German technology. Powerlooms were introduced in some factories later.
Tile-making	Testing by experience	Selection of clay by scientific testing	Adopted
	Manual	Mixing of clay using machine process	Adopted
	Traditional tiles manufactured by potters did not use presses	Pressing to shape using presses	Adopted

Industry	Traditional Technology	Technologies introduced by Basel Mission	Was adopted in later years or not
Tile making	Traditional kilns, Breakages heavy	Roasting process using a continuously firing kiln	Adopted
		Use of steam power for operation	Machine power was adopted in later years
Mechanical Establishment	Not in existence	Trades of fitters, welders, mechanics, etc. skills in machine drawing	These trades are useful for a number of activi- ties
Printing and Book-binding	Not in existence	Typographical printing	Was adopted
	Open binding, calico binding etc.	Not in existence	Adopted

The converts came from all classes and sections of society including sections to whom even traditional education was deprived. The insistence of the Basel Mission on basic literacy resulted in the uniform level of primary education imparted to these converts. Skills of various types were imparted to converts who had this basic education. What is argued here is that all converts who were labourers had a uniform minimum level of basic education¹⁹.

Work in the factories of Basel Mission demanded adherence to strict standards like punctuality, fulfillment of allotted duties and other standards of discipline. The missionaries had considered these as basically "missionising" influences. Moreover, since the Mission had control of religious, social and economic life of the converts, these values could be instilled with some force.

Operation of even simple machinery requires some understanding of the basics of the machine. In this sense, all the work force in the mission factories had some understanding of machinery. The Mechanical Establishment of the Basel Mission however made more deliberate attempt to impart technical knowledge. Many of the products produced by the establishment were custom built, for which a certain amount of skills in machine drawing was required. Such

skills were imparted through night schools conducted by the establishment²⁰. It is not surprising that a large number of trainees from the Mechanical Establishment got employed in Bombay which had a better industrial base. The trainees from this establishment are said to have contributed to the development of road transport in South Canara during nineteen twenties and thirties by providing fitters and mechanics.

While Basel Mission industries imparted basic technical knowledge and operating skills of machinery, wider management perspectives or higher technical knowledge was not imparted. This affected adversely the vertical mobility of the converts within the industries. For example, the workers could only expect to rise up to the level of supervisors or 'Maistrys'. All factory managers were Europeans. This appears to be part of deliberate policy²¹. Mission's attitude in this respect is further revealed in the following Report of the Industrial Commission for 1856, which notes:

"We should not ignore the fact that a converted Hindu is not by far a European, not forget that our civilization created by the Gospel and existing since one and a half millenia is a gift of special divine grace, which confers on us also manufacturing skills of an unusually great advantage"²²

^{to}
Altogether it is seen that Basel Mission industrial activities helped substantially in the field of transfer of technology though impaired by their own racist attitudes. A not too inconsiderate amount of technical know-how was available to the general population of Malabar and South Canara. The Basel Missionaries also contributed in terms of imparting educational skills which were helpful in the diffusion of the newly available technical know-how. As a result, there was systematic application of these new technical knowledge in later indigenous industrial activities.

Accounting and Managerial Practices

Apart from the technological knowledge which was transferred across cultures, there were also human resources management and accounting practices which got introduced to the people of Malabar and South Canara as a result of the activities of the Basel Mission. The modern factory organization itself was a product of the Industrial Revolution. Specifics of such practices were introduced into this region by the Basel Mission industries. Such practices including recruitment, training, disciplining and a higher degree of specialisation of labour²³, were fundamentally different from the practices of traditional manufacturing.

A high degree of professionalisation of jobs as well as a greater sensitivity of managers to varied factors, particularly to subtle changes in demand pattern in the market were all hallmarks of this new type of industrial organization. An alternate form of production relation, aimed at higher productivity and labour, no more caste based, emerged as a result of Basel Mission's activities. From the statement that Basel Mission industries were pioneer industrial units in this region, it is meant that they provided the model which were used by later indigenous industrial enterprises.

Similarly capital accounting which was pointed out by Max Weber as an indication of capitalist industry was also for the first time introduced into this region by Basel Mission. Initial attempts of the Basel Mission to establish economic activities were financed as grants. For example, investments in early paddy cultivation efforts were treated as outright grants. When Industrial Commission was established, it was part of the Mission. However after 1852 when the Industrial Commission was separated to be placed under its own treasury, a certain amount of capital accounting practice entered the scene. The capital for establishing the weaving and tile units was treated as a loan from the Industrial Commission²⁴. Considerations of rate of returns on alternative investments also entered

the picture from then on. They found that the rate of return on tile industry was higher. Therefore, they invested more in tile industries. As a joint stock company, it had greater resources to invest. The equity capital of the company consisted of 300 shares of £100 of which 120 were held by the Mission. By this time, the company was conducting a profitable trade with Africa. The expansion of industrial activities of the Mission especially after 1882 was facilitated by the amalgamation of the Industrial Commission with the Mission Trading Company in Basel.²⁵ The Company could raise funds from stock markets as well. The trading surplus also found its way into industrial investment. The company paid a dividend of 5 per cent to its shareholders, rest of the profits were handed over^{to} the Mission. Such changes in the financing pattern of the industries created different sets of accounting practices as well. Though all of them were not applicable for later entrepreneurs of the region, some of them were adopted by them.

On the whole, it is seen that by substantially reorganizing the production process, the Basel Mission while increasing productivity also caused further deprivation of traditional artisan community of the region. Similarly in their search for markets for their industrial products they created their own demand which diverted the objectives of industrial production away from the

basic needs of the community. Yet, their efforts did result in substantial transfer of technology and of new managerial and accounting practices to Malabar and South Canara.

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Notes and References

1. E.N.Komorov: 'Colonial Exploitation and Economic Development, Some Problems of the Economic History of India under Colonial Rule', in Proceedings of Second International Conference of Economic History, Mouton and Co., Paris, 1965 and Irfan Habib: 'Colonisation of the Indian Economy'. 1757-1900', in Social Scientist, Vol.III, No.8, March, 1975.
2. The city of Basel after which the missionary society was known was part of the Swiss confederation. Nevertheless, majority of the churches affiliated to this society were from southern Germany. This explains the changes in nomenclature from time to time. This was also the reason given by the British Indian Government to stop the industrial activities of this mission under the Enemy Trading Order 1916, when the First World War with Germany started.
3. William Logan Manual of the Malabar District Vol.I Government Press, Madras, 1906, Chapter II, pp.154-79. For Details regarding dress worn by different castes and tribes in Malabar and South Canara, also, see Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Government Press, Madras, 1909.
4. "In spite of the fact that Calico takes its name from Calicut, weaving is not an industry of much importance in Malabar" C.A. Innes (ed), Gazateer of Malabar and Anjengo Districts Vol.I. Government Press, Madras, 1908, p.252. The position must have been slightly different in adjoining South Canara. The erstwhile South Mahratta districts included centres of cotton production as well as hand weaving like Betgeri and Guedgud. Due to this geographical nearness, there could be a greater extent of weaving done in South Canara than in Malabar.

5. Dharma Kumar: "South India" Section 4 of Chapter III, in Dharma Kumar and Tapan Ray Chaudhari (ed): The Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol.II, Orient Longman, Bombay ,1984 p.356.
6. D.R.Gadgil : Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times Oxford University Press, London,1946(1924);p.11
7. "There is another set of gentiles, still lower, whom they call chalien, who are weavers, and hence no other business except to weave clothes of cotton and some of silk which are of little value and are used by common people" Duarte Barboza: A Description of Coasts of East Africa and Malabar, Haklyut Society, London (Reprint) 1970,p.136.
8. C.A.Innes (ed)., op.cit. p.252. In South Canara, there was a spatial concentration, of weavers in some villages. There were more references about "Weaver's Village" from missionary sources. See Rudolph Fischer: Die Basler Mission Industries in Indien 1850-1913 (German) Verlag Reihe W; Zurich, 1978, p.79.
9. Ibid.
- 10.Census of India 1911, Vol.XII (Madras) Part I, p.208
- 11.C.A.Innes, op.cit., p.252.
- 12.Ibid.
- 13.For a detailed account, See Chapter III.
- 14.Karl Marx, Capital Vol. Progress Publishers, Moscow, p.344

15. This is per se not an observation that there was large scale substitution of traditional 'Thuvarthu' towel by towels produced by the Mission. Rather, it is an indication that towels produced by the Mission had a wider acceptance within the country, including the districts of Malabar and South Canara.
16. Rudolph Fischer op.cit.p.87.
17. L.Johannes Frohnmeyer, 'Industrial Mission', Basel Mission Press, Mangalore, 1893, p.1.
18. The evolution as well as structure of the tile industry located in Trichur is discussed in detail in John Thomas Chirayath, A Study of Tile Industry in Kerala, Industry Study Series, Trivandrum, 1969. p.13, 23-25.
19. As on 1913, the Mission operated 211 primary schools and had 20,320 students on rolls. BM 1913, p.55, also see Chapter II.
20. RIC 1856, p.6 and RIC 1854, p.7, as quoted by Fischer, op.cit.p.33.
21. Basel Mission Industries 1859-1959, p.270.
22. Frohnmeyer : op.cit.p.13.
23. Aspects relating to the recruiting and disciplining of labour force of Basel Mission industries are discussed in depth in Rudolph Fischer op.cit.
24. D. Robson, "Basel Mission Industries", Harvest Field, Vol.XIV No.7, July, Wesleyan Press, Mysore, 1903.
25. Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing sections we argued that it was the synergistic effect of a number of factors that resulted in the initiation of industrial activity by the Basel Mission. Among these factors were the influence of Calvinist ideology in shaping the world view of the Mission and the individual social background of the missionaries. They interacted with the objective conditions prevailing in the Malabar and South Canara society in the Nineteenth century. The Society of the region was caste-stratified with several institutional barriers to development. Basel Mission had operated in other parts of the world, like Ghana, Borneo and China. In all these regions they operated in some craft or industry; but their industrial base was strongest in the western coast of India indicating that objective conditions for such investment existed more in this region. While the caste-stratified society of Malabar and its stagnant economy posed a challenge to the evangelical ideas of the Missionaries, conversion proved to be a viable means for recruiting and disciplining of an industrial

labour force. The world view of the Mission as it got emerged conceived religious and industrial activities as one. In other words, the industrial activities of the Mission are considered not only to be a supportive activity but as mission work in itself.

Evolving under the context of such a unique world view, Mission's involvement with the economic activities progressively increased. Starting with early experiments in agriculture and in crafts, over a period of eighty years, (1834-1974) the industrial activity of the Mission got stabilised in two lines of manufacture, namely weaving and tile making; both of which had existed as traditional crafts earlier. Basel Mission's entry into these traditional crafts was achieved by progressively transforming the industry technologically and effecting changes in production and distribution.

In the case of weaving such transformation was a real achievement. In the colonial background, the traditional hand weaving was on the decline in the face of large scale import of cotton finished goods. Basel Mission's handloom industries could not compete with the imported mill made fabrics. Apart from the cost factors involved, this would have brought about a certain colonial antipathy and resistance

At the same time the hand loom products of Basel Mission industries could not have competed largely against the native handloom industry because of the higher cost factor involved. Success in weaving was achieved by technologically improving handloom industry, achieving a wider product mix and producing sophisticated articles for a narrow market in India and abroad. Technological improvements were achieved by the introduction of fly shuttle, improvement in dyeing techniques, use of jacquard looms and introduction of new items like hosiery. To achieve production of these more sophisticated items, closer supervision was required. Therefore, factory system came to stay. Despite the technical improvements as well as changes in production and expansion of market, the Mission's handloom industry's growth was in some ways limited. This is evident from the fact that after the year 1900, the mills increasingly turned into jacquard weaving. One of the units was also converted to power loom.

Rapid progress was achieved by the Mission in tile manufacture after 1882. The initial capital outlay for tile industry is higher compared to handloom, which is capable of a horizontal expansion by increasing loomage. Amalgamation of the Industrial commission, a branch of the Mission which supervised the industrial activity.

of the Mission with a joint stock company viz. the Missions Handlungs Gesselschaft or Mission Trading Company, facilitated such a growth. This also resulted in the transfer of the latest technology. Like weaving industry of the Basel Mission, the tile factories also catered to an outside market, operating mainly through British trade channels. In some ways tile industry was an extraction industry, comparable to plantation industry, but existing on technically superior foundations. Printing and book binding as well as operation of a mechanical engineering establishment were the other industrial activities of the Basel Mission.

Establishment of the large industries involved recruiting and disciplining of a sufficiently large labour force. The labour force itself consisted mainly of converts with different caste backgrounds. In fact, it was the expulsion of converts from the traditional caste related occupations that prompted the Basel missionaries to initiate economic activities. The social engineering effected here was in creating a casteless group of converts. This was achieved by the spread of basic literacy, intermarriages of converts with different caste backgrounds, (taken up under the initiative of missionaries) and the factory environment under which the converts

worked. The Basel Mission succeeded in this area of social engineering only among those who directly came into their contact. ^{To} the persons belonging to Thiya and Cheruma castes who contributed the majority of converts, conversion offered scope for social mobility, chances of obtaining basic literacy, and to shed the vestiges of the caste system like untouchability and unseeability.

The underlying concern of this study is in assessing the spread effects of the industrial activities of the Basel Mission. In Chapter IV, we discussed the social impact of the Basel Mission industries. The social impact was in the area of effecting social mobility, in a caste stratified society and obliterating caste consciousness. On the other side it was also pointed out that the extent of conversion of Basel Mission was small. As on 1914, the total number of converts were less than 20,000¹. The direct social impact was primarily among the converts who were a microcosm of the society of Malabar and South Canara. The real impact was by way of a demonstration effect which could in turn make the depressed castes more strongly challenge the existing authoritarian structure. Meanwhile the economic impact of the Mission industries was in the areas of transfer of technology, creation of a skilled labour force and diversification of the economy.

Though we may find a number of instances on which social and economic impact of the Basel Mission was felt in Malabar and South Canara society, it is also found that such impact was limited. For instance, the industrial activity of the Basel Mission did not lead to subsequent waves of industrial activity in the region. This forces us to seek the reasons for the limited level of impact. We attribute this to the state of economy and society of Malabar and South Canara. Here, we identify the following aspects as determinants to the spread of both social and economic impact of the Basel Mission industries :

- (i) Land Tenures and joint family
- (ii) Lack of social mobility
- (iii) Colonial Domination

Land Tenures and joint family system

Schematically we could relate caste hierarchy and agrarian hierarchy in Malabar and South Canara districts at the advent of the British as given in the following format². This is only an abstraction of a much more complex reality. Within that, there existed several tenancies which were of course merged within a few and simplified categories:

Occupation	Tenure	Caste
Priests, Rulers and Administrative officials	Janmom (ownership) Rights in land South Canara; Mulavargadar	Brahmins, Rajas Aristocratic Nayars, Brahmins, Bunts
Militia, In charge of Law and Order, Petty officials	Kanom (Superior lease) rights	Nayars and Nambiars, Bunts
Petty Producers, Traders, Artisans, Dry land labour	Verumpattom (Inferior lease) Rights, South Canara: Chelugeni	Nonaristocratic Nayars, Ezhavas, Christians and Muslims, Billavas
Wet-land labour	Agricultural labour	Ezhavas, Pulayas, Cherumas, Hole-yas

and

Source: T.M. Thomas Issac / P.K. Michael Tharakan, "Sree Narayana Movement in Travancore 1888-1939, A study of Social Basis and Ideological Reproduction", Working paper No.214, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, 1986, p.5.

In Malabar and in South Canara the position each community occupied in agrarian hierarchical order corresponded to its position in social or caste hierarchy. In terms of tenurial relation however, as long as each group paid rent, fixity of tenure was available for the holders of different tenancies. In the transfer of ownership the purchaser had to recognize the inferior rights that existed³.

In their interpretation of land tenures in Malabar, the British interpreted Janmom as absolute ownership in the Roman sense of 'dominium', Kanam as a mortgage and Verumpattom as tenancy at will⁴. The settlement that was made by the British was part of the Ryotwari system. The revenue was collected from ryots or the cultivators⁵.

This also led to concentration of land holding. As T.C. Varghese says, "The population of Malabar in 1861 is estimated to have been about 1.71 million, of which possibly two thirds were dependent on land. Out of the 1.15 million comprising of agricultural population the jannies (i.e. the land owners) numbered only 24,714; of them 829 were classified as principal farmers and 250 were religious institutions. All the jannies together account for less than 2 per cent of the agricultural population. To these jannies constituting an insignificant minority of agricultural population belonged practically every right and interest connected with land in Malabar"⁶.

In such unevenly distributed land ownership system, the actual cultivators, whether Kanam holders or Verumpattom holders did not enjoy fixity of tenure. This worked back as a disincentive for accumulation. The tenants being burdened with rent appropriation did not go in for much reinvestment in agricultural production. This worked as a

preventive for the initial spread of market for industrial goods.

Controlling units of land ownership in Malabar was the 'Tharawad'⁷. Following table which relates to the year 1882 gives details of break up of the controlling houses or 'Tharawads' in North and South Malabar.

Table 6.1. Land Holdings in Malabar Tharawads and Devaswams, 1882

Nature of land holdings	No. of Monopoly Houses		
	North Malabar	South Malabar	Total
Dewaswams	12	34	46
Namboodiri Houses	44	86	130
Moosad's Houses	-	8	8
Nedungadi's Houses	17	41	58
Nayar Tharawads	63	60	123
Total	136	229	365

Source: T.C.Varghese, Agrarian change and Economic consequences, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1970.

Here it is important to observe the differences between the two districts of Malabar and South Canara. The equivalent of Janmies, called Mulevargadars in South Canara

were fewer in number . Therefore the British had to recognize the equivalent of Kanom tenure holders called Muleganidars as land owners or proprietors. There are indications that a greater proportion of owners or Muleganidars were directly involved with agriculture⁸. Within Malabar there were intraregional differences such as in Northern Malabar. Even among low castes like Thiyas and other non-Hindu communities like Moplabs, matrilineal system of inheritance was the prevalent mode⁹. In South Canara district, the Bunts as well as Billava castes were organised in joint families¹⁰.

Thus , we see that the units of control of land was almost wholly vested with the joint family Tharawads in Malabar. These joint families were indivisible family units managed by 'Karanavans'¹¹ In 1813, the provincial court of Western division, Calicut, decided that Marumakkathayam law did not admit division of family property and that decision was confirmed by the Sadr Court in A.S. 28 of 1814¹².

The prosperity of joint families depended upon the efficiency of 'Karanavans'. In cases the 'karanavans were incompetent and spendthrifts there was no easy way of removal.

"There are cases which go to the length of saying that a spendthrift and incompetent person may be excluded from the post of manager. But it is difficult to see how such matters could be settled otherwise than by suit for the Karanavan's removal"¹³

The position of joint families is further illustrated by Herbert Wigram, who says that :

"In Malabar and Canara where the property is indissoluble, the members of the family may be said rather to have rights out of property rather than rights to the property. The Head of the family is entitled to its entire possession and is absolute in its management. The junior members have only a right to maintenance and residence. They cannot call for an account except as incident to the prayer for the removal of the manager for misconduct nor claim any specific sphere of income nor even require that their maintenance or fair outlay should be in proportion to their income. An absolute discretion in this respect is vested in the manager"¹⁴

In the nineteenth century many of such joint families had grown into unwieldy size with concomittant evils. Such joint families discouraged enterprise, while they offered security and subsistance to its members. This type of family organization also discouraged enterprise among members, since division of property was not allowed. Along with this there was also the tendency to spend large sums of

money on social functions and such other things purely for upholding the status of joint families. In short, concentration of land ownership and therefore wealth in such social organization proved to be an institutional barrier to development.

The system of land relations and social organization of joint families offered considerable disincentives to agricultural development and therefore commercialisation in agriculture. Through out the nineteenth century, land utilisation in Malabar was poor. For example, during the first quarter of nineteenth century the total cultivable area was 5 million acres out of which only 0.58 million acres were cultivated¹⁵.

Population of Malabar tended to increase though in an uneven manner as may be seen from Table 6.2.

Such an increasing population is usually a result of a fall in the death rate. Increasing population in certain circumstances can lead to increases in the intensity of production, innovations in the technique of production resulting in increase in agricultural production etc. Malabar was a rice importing region for centuries preceding the nineteenth century. In an environment where considerable structural barriers to economic development existed, an increase in population did not seem to have had such an effect.

Table 6.2: Population Increase in Malabar, 1802-1901

Year	Population	Percentage increase over previous years
1802	4,65,594	
1807	7,07,556	+51.9
1821	9,07,575	+28.3
1837	11,65,791	+28.4
1851	15,14,909	+29.9
1861	17,09,081	+12.8
1871	22,61,250	+32.3
1881	23,65,035	+ 4.6
1891	26,52,565	+12.2
1901	27,90,281	+ 5.0

Source: William Logan, Malabar District Manual
Vol.II, Government Press, Madras, 1906, p.82

Social Mobility

We observed earlier that in Malabar and in South Canara, agrarian hierarchical order closely followed the caste hierarchy. This apparent coincidence between agrarian and social hierarchy mutually reinforced each other by making it doubly difficult for persons belonging to the bottom rungs to change the structural determinants.

The caste system that evolved in Kerala had acquired an extra ferocity and inflexibility which was lacking in other parts of the country¹⁶. It was carried to grotesque limits of untouchability and unseeability and had developed into a system of extreme social discrimination. In such a situation, the relatively lower castes who formed the majority of the population would have found it difficult to acquire sophisticated technological skills; and even if they managed to have these, to find investment funds to set up industries.

While discussing the social impact of the Basel Mission industries we had observed that conversion as well as employment in Mission industries raised the social status of converts and also resulted in a certain social mobility. We also observed that due to the limited extent of conversion and employment, such social mobility was mostly confined to a few; and at best had only a demonstration effect. There are reasons why the demonstration effect did not disseminate among the larger population. The reasons are to be sought in the social factors that we have enumerated above, which relates to caste stratified society. In a caste stratified society, people of the lower castes cannot go up the social ladder without any "big push". Acquiring

Lastly even if the new skills were acquired by some persons belonging to the lower castes, converting them to building up an enterprise involved further conflict with the caste ridden society. They would have found the necessary investible funds beyond their reach. All the factors mentioned here were disincentives for the wider spread of social mobility.

Colonial Domination

While discussing the evolution of industrial activity and while discussing the economic impact, we had pointed out that the Basel Mission avoided competition with the imported products and existed primarily by identifying a 'niche market' or an area where British colonial capital was not interested. . . These industrial activities were dovetailed with the British Colonial market and has used the British trade channels. As long as the Basel Mission's industrial activity was limited and did not come into conflict with the British Colonial capital, this worked well. Beyond a certain stage, the industrial expansion of the Basel Mission would have had to come into conflict with British colonial interest. There are indications that at least during the final years it raised such a concern.

When the first World War broke out, initially the British Government had permitted the Basel Mission industries to continue to function. But eventually the Madras Chamber of Commerce pressed the government to take over these industries. This means that there was potential conflict between the interest of the British capital and that of Basel Mission. This finally led to the close down of Basel Mission industries. Even otherwise their industrial activities were physically limited since they had to operate within the restricting and overarching presence and interests of the British Colonial capital.

Differences between Malabar and South Canara

All these have to be taken under consideration within the context of differences that existed between Malabar and South Canara districts. It has been already suggested that though these two districts were parallel in terms of social organization, the society of South Canara appeared to be less caste stratified and its economy less stagnant than that of Malabar. The faster pace with which the industry got localised was pointed out as an indication in this direction. While only a more detailed enquiry could prove this point, it would be nevertheless important to point out some of the more obvious differences.

Historically, South Canara was under different influences. Under the Vijayanagar empire, the district was ruled by Jain Chieftains¹⁷. Partly due to these reasons and also partly due to reasons which will have to be probed deeper, the influences of Brahminism, was rather weak there. The equivalent of Nambudiries, characterised by their economic and social domination did not exist¹⁸. This was the reason why, the British, while they recognised Janmies of Malabar as absolute owners of the land, found it difficult to recognize the South Canara equivalent, 'Mularan-gardars' as owners. As T.C. Varghese notes :

"When the British annexed the area (South Canara) they recognized the Janmom right to the few 'mulawargadars' (claimants of superior rights) who were still in the country. In the rest of the lands, the British recognised the proprietary right of 'Bunts' (muleganidars) who were in control of them at the time"¹⁹

As Manual of South Canara further notes:

"The Bants (Bunts), however may be said to be the landowning and cultivating class par excellence, both on account of their numerical preponderance in the capacity, and their almost complete abstention from all other professions and occupations"²⁰

The manual further observes that there were also Jains, Christians and Brahmins as land owners²¹.

All these point to a society with greater social communication. The fact that South Canara was a rice exporting region during the nineteenth century while adjoining Malabar district was a rice importing region is perhaps an indication that South Canara district was less stagnant than Malabar²².

Though the Basel Mission started industrial activity in South Canara, greater spread took place in Malabar. More number of weaving and tile units were established in Malabar. Perhaps the reasons for this would have been the relative ease in mobilising labour.

The above observations are of a tentative nature and are suggested as an area for future enquiry.

Even barring the differences that existed between Malabar and South Canara, there existed several other inhibiting factors, constraining spread effect of Basel Mission industries and other economic activities. Their efforts at social engineering as well as efforts in creating industrial enterprises had both to contend with the several negative social factors from the point of view of modernization and capitalist growth. What is more surprising is that this Christian evangelical society succeeded at least to this extent and to such period to prosper with their industrial activities in such hostile circumstances.

Notes and References

1. The total membership of all parishes of Basel Mission in India was 19,762 as on 1-1-1914. RBM 1914, p.14.
2. For a wider and authoritative discussion on land tenures in Malabar, See William Logan, Manual of Malabar Districts Vol.I, Government Press, Madras, 1906, Chapter IV Section (A) Land Tenures, p.602-26.
3. T.M.Thomas Issac and P.K.Michael Tharakan, "Sree Narayana Movement in Travancore 1888-1939 : A Study of Social Basis and Ideological Reproduction", Working paper No.214, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, 1986, p.5.
4. T.C.Varghese, Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1970, p.29.
5. "Even after the company took over the full responsibility of collection from the Rajas in 1806, land revenue continued to be collected from the holders of plots and not from the jammies who were recognized as the sole legal proprietors of the whole land. Hence the ryotwari scheme of assessment were only continuation of the old system; because the new scheme also recognized an intermediary class between the government and the actual cultivator as the owners of the land and left them a share of agricultural produce" See Ibid.p.27
6. Ibid.p.39
7. For a schematic explanation of matrilineal form of organization See, William Logan : op.cit.pp.154-56.

8. Mulaganidars were predominantly Bunts ; who are described as "cultivators par excellance". See : J.Sturrock, Manual of South Canara District Vol.I.Government Press, Mangalore, 1984, p.194.
9. Herbert Wigram, Malabar Law and Custom, Higginbotham and Co., Madras, 1900, p.236.
10. Edgar Thurston : Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol.I A and B, Part II, Government Press, Madras 1909, p.243-46.
11. A legal definition of Karanavan is given by Wigram as under: "The senior male member in a Malabar family is by law the Karanavan and as such the natural guardian of every member within the family. He alone can sue and be sued as representative of the family". Wigram, op.cit., p.52.
12. Wigram, op.cit.p.52.
13. Ibid.p.55.
14. Mayne's Hindu Law (5th edition) as quoted by Wigram, Ibid.p.54.
15. This observation is made by Ward and Conner in A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar, 1826, Madras, 1906, as quoted by TC Varghese, op.cit.p.27.
16. T.M.T.Issac and P.K.M. Tharakan: op.cit.p.6,
17. A brief account of the history of South Canara is given in J.Sturrock, op.cit, Chapter II, p.54-93. For a wider historical perspective of Karnataka, See: Muthanna : Karnataka, History, Administration and Culture, published by the author, Bangalore.

18. J.Sturrock : op.cit.p.54-93

19. T.C.Varghese : op.cit.p.53.

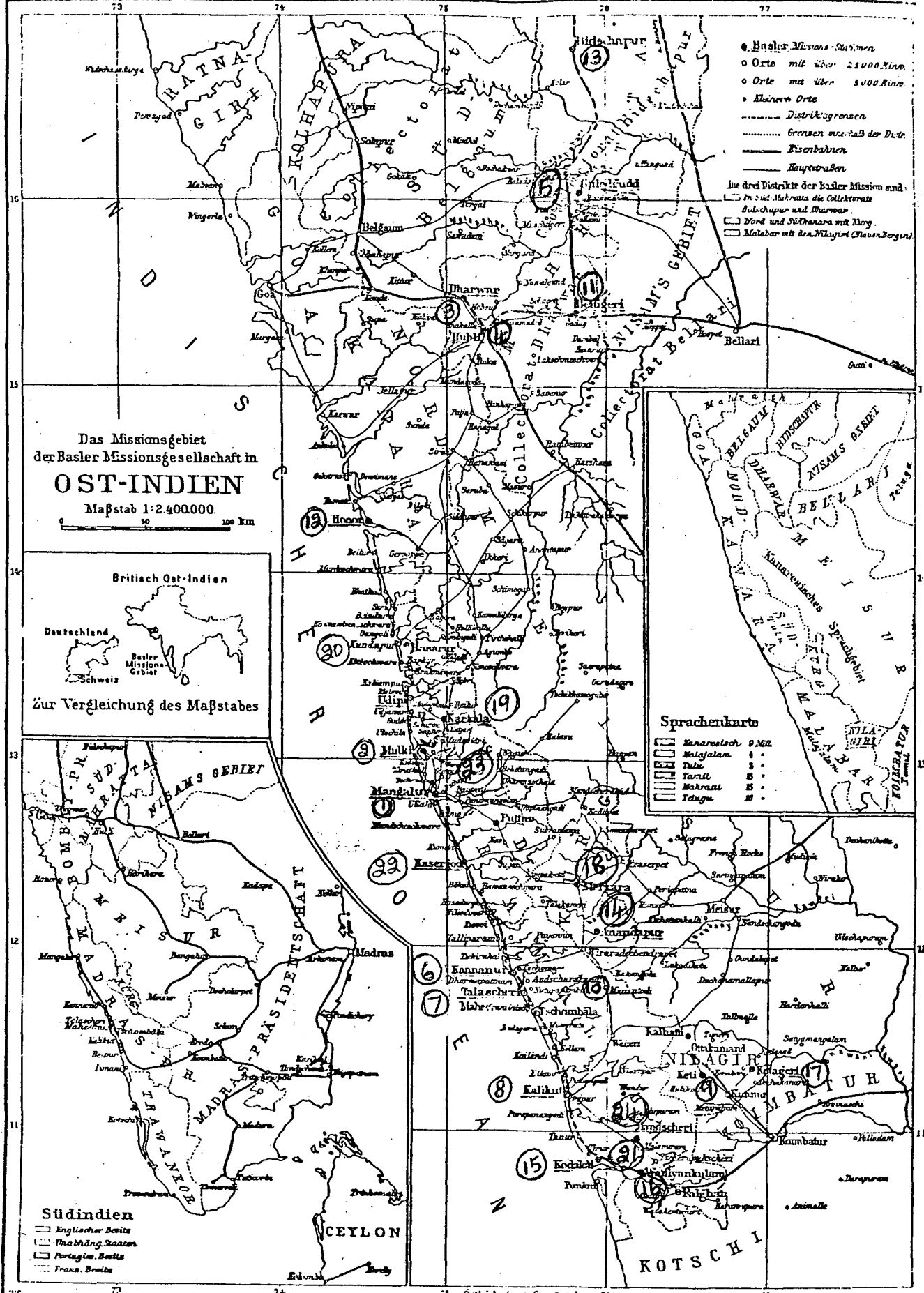
20. J.Sturrock: op.cit, Chapter V. p.192.

21. Ibid.

22. This is a qualitative observation which can be substantiated only by a detailed in-depth study of both the regions during the nineteenth century.

Zu Schlatter, Geschichte der Basler Mission II.

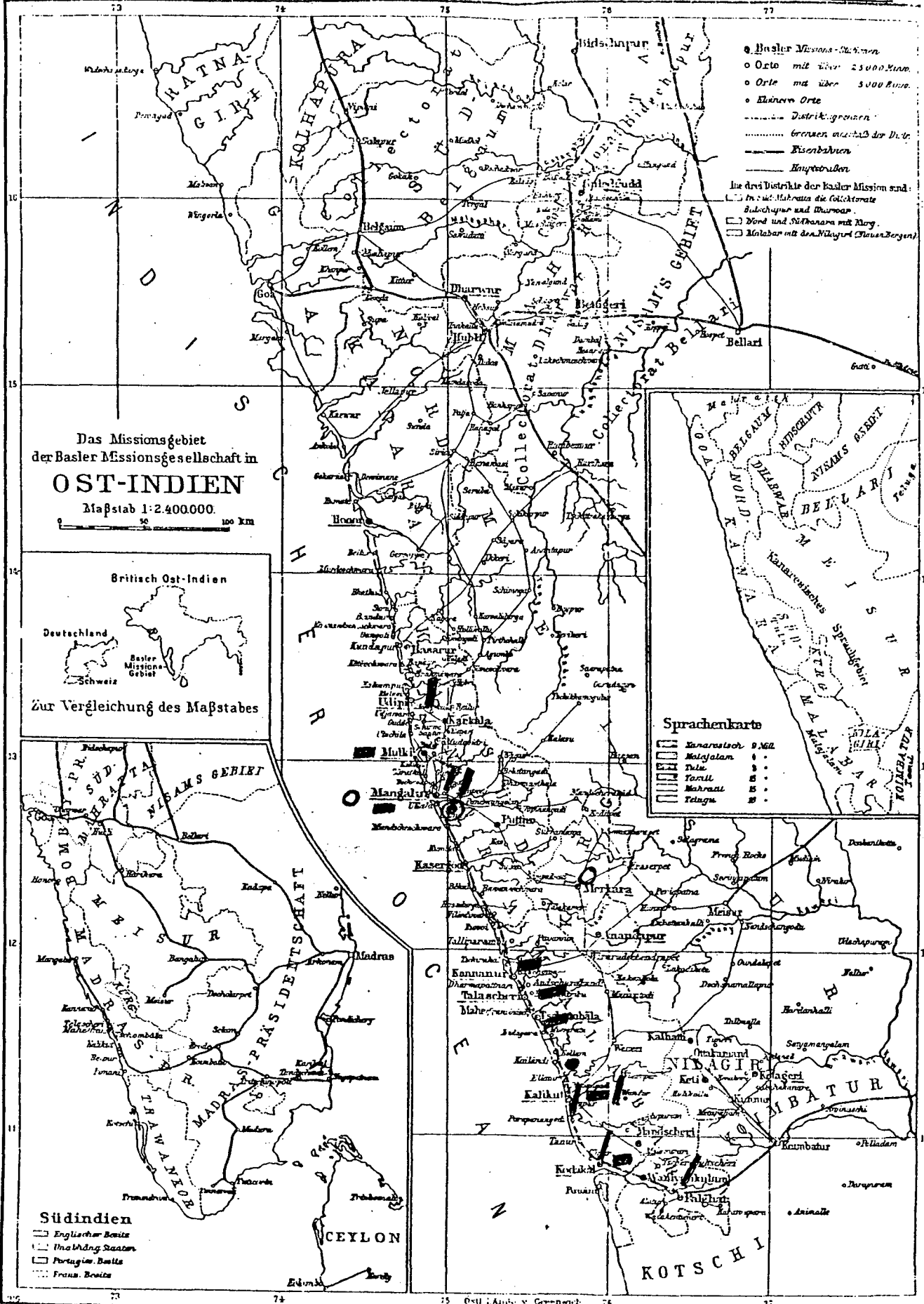
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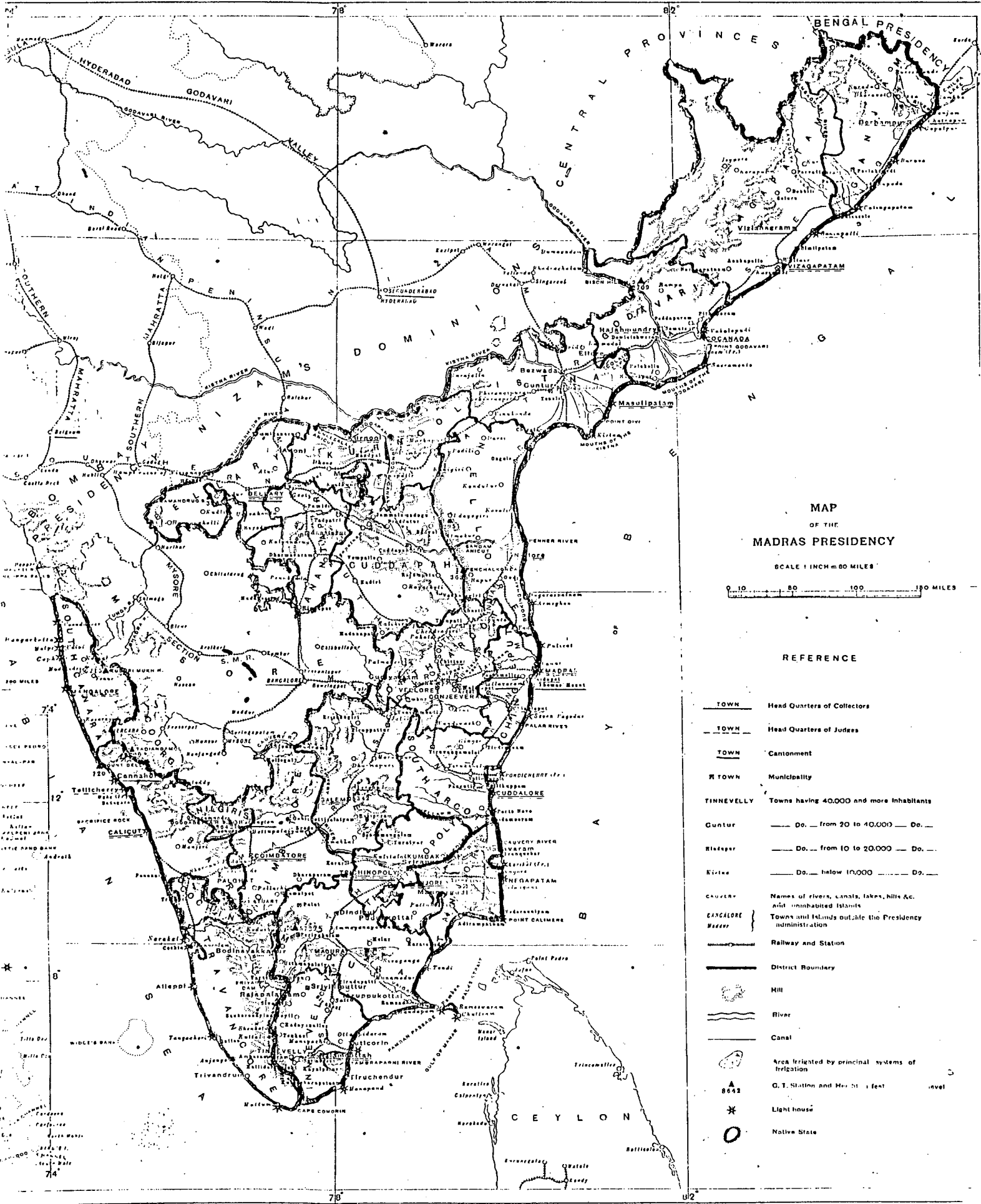
Map Indicating Location of Basel Mission Industrial Activities

Zu Schaller, Geschichte der Basler Mission II.

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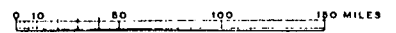


■ WEAVING FACTORY. ● DYE HOUSE ○ TRADING BRANCH.
 | TILE FACTORY. ⊙ MECHANICAL ESTABLISHMENT.






















MAP OF THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY

SCALE 1 INCH = 60 MILES



REFERENCE

-  TOWN Head Quarters of Collectors
-  TOWN Head Quarters of Judges
-  TOWN Cantonment
-  TOWN Municipality
-  TOWN Towns having 40,000 and more Inhabitants
-  Guntur Do. from 20 to 40,000 Do.
-  Kistna Do. from 10 to 20,000 Do.
-  Kistna Do. below 10,000 Do.
-  CAUVERY Names of rivers, canals, lakes, Nils &c. and uninhabited Islands
-  CALCUTTA } Towns and Islands outside the Presidency administration
-  Railway and Station
-  District Boundary
-  Hill
-  River
-  Canal
-  Area irrigated by principal systems of irrigation
-  G. T. Station and Height in feet
-  Light house
-  Native State

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