Industrial Development of Calicut in the 19th Century

Shamli, C. K.\textsuperscript{1}

Kerala has traditionally been enjoying a high degree of political freedom as it was never ruled by foreigners for a long period before the colonial rule. The rulers of various states were deeply committed to the economic progress of their perspective territories. So, Kerala enjoyed traditionally a favourable political climate for industrialization. The state possessed rich natural resources like plentiful supply of the river water, thick forests, comfortable climate and transportation, etc. Kozhikode District represents one of the industrially advanced areas of the state. All these provided the basic infrastructure for the industrial development of the places such as Calicut, Beypore and Feroke. The Malabar District Gazetteer observes “the forest that clothe the western ghats from head to foot, and cover a greater part of the Wayanad plateau, besides making Calicut one of the most important timber marts in India, with the support of thousands of carpenters, sawyers and wood cutters and their numerous progeny.”\textsuperscript{1}

Large scale industrial concerns sprang up only in the closing years of the 19th century. The important large scale industries of Kozhikode District included textile mills, saw mills, match factories, umbrella manufacturing, tile factories, soap making, brick making, printing, furniture making, beedi factories, etc. Basel mission and mission trading activities were mainly influential in the development industries in the Malabar region. They made capital investment for industries; commonwealth tile factory of Feroke became the best example. The establishment of these industries had contributed much towards the improvement of the economy of the District. A large percentage of population drives their livelihood from these industrial pursuits.

The requirements in respect of timber for local consumption and for use abroad are met from the timber worked down from the government owned and private forests. The local market of the timber are the sea ports like Thalassery, Calicut, Beypore, etc. It has been established that 60 percentage of timber marketed at the west coast and goes by sea to Arabia, Karachi, Kutch, Varaval, Ratnagiri, and Bombay and some 30 percentage is railed over land to Districts east of the western ghats and the balance, 10 percentage being consumed locally. Teak in Malabar got worldwide attention during the colonial period. Chief timber logs are sold in round logs.

\textsuperscript{1} Assistant Professor, Department of History, Sadakathullah Appa College (Autonomous), Tirunelveli – 627 011, Tamil Nadu, India.