

**STUDIES
IN
HUMANITIES
AND
SOCIAL
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RASHTRAPATI NIVAS, SHIMLA**

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SUMANYU SATPATHY



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY RASHTRAPATI NIVAS,
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Neo-colonialism in Malabar: Transculturation under Basel Mission

Dr. Alias Kutty Poulse.

Abstract

The legacy of Basel Evangelical Mission (B.E.M.) in modern Kerala is undoubtedly commendable. A number of Protestant Christian Missionary Organizations have been formed in Europe during the 19th Century. One of the most important organizations among them was Basel Mission. The vision and concepts of Basel Mission to a great extent continued and practiced in Kerala by number of social reformers from Travancore and Cochin. Ayyankali, Sree Narayana Guru, Chattampi Swamikal, Vagbhadanandu, Kumaranasan and others were the prominent names in Kerala Renaissance. These socio-religious leaders took up the new spirit of universal oneness and fraternity. There began a new awakening in the social milieu of Kerala. The ultimate success of Basel Mission in neocolonialism and thereby to a phase of transculturation set the phase for a new reawakening in the social, religious and cultural environment of the Kerala society.

Key Words

transculturation – inculturation – neo-colonialism – social renaissance- *gurukula* system

The legacy of Basel Evangelical Mission (B.E.M.) in modern Kerala is undoubtedly commendable. The Basel Mission as it was known in late 19th Century of Malabar, north Kerala unquestionably set the state for a remarkable and unique change in educational scenario, industrial expansion and socio-economic realms of Malabar society.¹ Malabar was known for its highly rigid caste entities, as elsewhere in Kerala in the 19th Century. This class rigidity was shaken up with the advent of new education system, new industrial skills and better health facilities, because of the activities of missionary activities.

The Basel Mission established weaving industries in Malabar that led to the social mobility, job opportunities expanded new industrial skills such as carpentry, black smithy, mechanical industry and other sophisticated skills in Malabar. As a result a new stage was set up for new industrial culture in Malabar. It is to be high lightened that radical changes have been introduced not only in education but also in all other realms of society. One can see a trumpet call for the ensuring socio-cultural renaissance in Malabar. Notwithstanding the native revolt and hostilities against the missionary activities, it is to be stated that the advent of the Basel Mission in Malabar was the beginning of a neo-colonial phase in northern Kerala. On the whole it was a new era of transculturation in Malabar.

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