IMPACT OF CONOLLY CANAL IN MARKET REORIENTATION AND CONFIGURING REGIONAL NETWORKS OF MALABAR

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines about the north and south regions of Malabar through the inland water way and configure the market system of interior parts by interconnecting with major ports near to Malabar. The hydrological elements used as an imperial policy in the west coast of Malabar in Madras presidency of British India. However, as an impact of the integration of the natural inlets like rivers, backwaters and estuaries it brings out an uninterrupted line of inland waterway. This study also analysis the reach ability of the canal to fulfill the imperial purpose and relocation of market system of west coast of south India, leads the market reorientation in early 20th century. The canal policy of British was a prime motive of imperial power that took up the natural water bodies especially rivers, backwaters and estuaries to join with artificial ways.

Keywords:

In Indian subcontinent, the implementation of colonial dominance was executed through the political as well as economic spheres. The process of colonialism initially referred as a political ascendancy then it further rooted in the territory through the economic policies. The economic intervention was considered as the actual arbitration of British. As a part of the political and economic strategic policies British tried to enact Treaty of Seringapatnam in 1792 and Treaty of Powney in 1790 with Malabar and Cochin as a part of political ascendancy and it tries to merge the individual principalities with Bombay presidency. So, the English East India Company (EEIC) became an initial form of colonialism maintained their economic policies through acquisition of territories.

Since 19th century the inland navigation system was a part of the imperial policy of British. They were much known to the water resources and its mobilization facilities from the remote areas of the regions. So, British gave emphasis on making water navigational channels throughout the accessible regions, witnessed to spurt irrigational works occurred during the period of 1836 to 1866 in British India. Here, British tried to attempt realigning land and water policies in terms of systematic alteration of British India’s great drainage networks. In fact, the period witnessed the systematic proliferation of control of society and nature that combined through hydraulic interventions of colonialism. The construction of canal with the geographical affluence paved the integration of both the colony and colonial power at greater extent. The hydraulic as well as mercantile policies were brought to bear in parallel and created some transitions in the economic as well as political sphere of Malabar. That they primarily engaged with the local marts where the imposition of transit and town duties by EIC led to segmentation and contraction of the ancient markets.

In the case of inland navigation British thoroughly understood about the geographical features of their equipped region, like the possibilities of navigational channels, satellite ports and interlinking with natural harbors etc. however these navigational prospects of Malabar along with natural advancement were first enunciated by H.S. Graeme, who identified the continuity of water channel from Hodsurg to Chetuvai around 150 miles distance. It can be better used during monsoons when the sea is impassable. Further, the interlinking plan of natural water bodies facilitates an unbroken water navigation system in Malabar. The first connection of this system was the construction of a canal named as Pyolee canal to link Korapuzhain the north and Beypoor in the south which was initiated by Malabar collector H.V.Conolly (1840-1848) and canal became popularly known as Conolly Canal in the history of Kerala.

The original anicut of the canal starts from the northern part of Malabar that is, Pyolee canal of 3 miles in length that connecting 30 to 40 miles of the natural navigation. The second stretch of the canal was the 6 miles that connects 40 miles of river and natural backwater carriage to the south of Calicut which named as Calicut canal. The third stretch of the canal named as Tanur canal was occurred in the Kadalundyriver, about 8 miles cut through from the high ground of pooraramb which stretch up to Tiroorangadi. The final stretch was the interconnection between Ponnani and Chetuvai backwater with the artificial channel of Veliangode - Orumanayur canal, which finally conjoins with the harbor of Cochin. So,
these artificial channels primarily connecting the waterways like Beypoor, Kadalundy, Ponnani, Chetuvai backwater, Karuvannur river with the backwaters of Cochin.\textsuperscript{iii}

Here, the canal mainly accessed for the navigation and transportation purpose, which definitely shows the upward and downward commutation of men and material. For instance, the cultivation of grains in the northern part of Calicut was lower than the south Malabar, so they exported the grains from south to north. And the chief articles like sappanwood, arrowroot, pepper, betlenut etc. for exporting to foreign and asiacal bottoms from the Malabar ports were collected from the interior parts with the accessibility of the artificial channels. The transportation facilities further progressed by the navigation of boats that transported both the commodities and men from one place to another. And here, the canal was only easy and convenient means of communication between the north to southern stretch, which facilitated very large number of travelers through this route.\textsuperscript{iv} Gradually, British tried to impose toll levies and taxes to the transportation facilities of the channel. By this the ferries of the Malabar district, were classified to four classes and also categorized the navigable boats into big boats, smaller, passenger and miscellaneous based on the service accessibility of river and canal. The ferry levies were in the amount of 6 pies, exempted in some cases. Whereas, the toll levies were implied on both the rivers and canal channels which become more convenient in the transportation of both commodities and people.\textsuperscript{v} In fact, it clearly points that the artificial channel of west coast were imperially taken by British, who directly controlled the entire water bodies.

Although Malabar was an emporium of trade and commerce since 19\textsuperscript{th} century which had a vast market network near to the old port cities of Ponnani, Calicut, Chetuvai and chavakkad. Here the market was mainly existed as in the form of angadis and chanda which primarily connects with port that gave more accessibility to the transaction of goods through water channels. The port cities were linked with the adjacent market centers had been transported the important commodities from these regions. The Calicut and Ponnani ports were connected with the north and south section of Malabar regions, where the major market depots for the timber products. The Chetuvai and Chavakkad port, played a pivotal role since ancient period, connected with the interior parts and exported rice and other grains which linked with the small bazaars of the region. The accessibility of canal led to the easy flow of commodities from the remote areas to the port cities. That the pepper, cardamom, dry ginger, betlenut etc. were grown in the eastern part of Malabar which brought by the rivers like Kuttiyadi and Korapuzha, further moved through the canal channels to Calicut port. There is some evident form of inland channel that used for the commercial purpose, likevaliyangadi or bigbazaar, which was commonly known as Bazaar canal or Robinson canal, actually lies between the Calicut railway station and Kallairiver. These portions were now transformed into the premises of Calicut railway station and Kallai river. Another inland communication was connected to Calicut the areas of Areekod, Edavanna and Nilambur where rice, paddy and timber was busy with large paddy boats thatched in with a semi-circular roof of leaves carried 1 to 4 tons of cargo to Calicut port. Most of these paddy boats belonged to the wealthy merchants of the city.\textsuperscript{vi} The ports were developed due to the advancement of canal navigation system and it transported the grains, manufactured iron from palakkad, sappan wood, arrowroot, coconut, copra and oil etc. were the exportation articles from north to south were then carried through the canal system.\textsuperscript{vii}

In fact, the imperial discussion between the officials evidently shows the integration of inland network for the commercial purposes. The configuration of regional networks of Malabar prominently connected with the navigation system by which, it conjoins the inland parts of Malabar and British Cochin in south wards. The accessibility of the direct navigation through inland waterways strategically paved the way for depreciating the importance of the subordinate ports. For instance, the Chetuvai port, a subordinate declined because of the systematic plan of the company was to create a direct navigation via northern to southern end. The records of export and import value indicate steady increase in the exports rather than import.\textsuperscript{viii}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{TABLE 1: EXPORT AND IMPORT FROM CHETUVAI PORT DURING THE YEAR 1848-1857.}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Import & Export \\
\hline
1848 & 293 & 91114 \\
1849 & 5046 & 13453 \\
1850 & 7622 & 92424 \\
1851 & - & 71443 \\
1852 & 10787 & 115505 \\
1853 & 1798 & 110757 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
Communications. According to H.V. Conolly, Chetuvai along with the improvement of Eddathiruthy and Chavakkad channels which directly brought the commercial goods to Chavakkad, then directly exported from chavakkad direct to an exit seaward at Cochin. Here onwards the imperial forecast about the importance of Cochin port which explicitly seen in the official communications. According to H.V. Conolly, Cochin port is rising gradually an importance and it was much frequented with British and foreign vessels, as well as steamers and country craft looking at the tonnage account, the average number of vessels of the description which are hereafter contribute to the customs, amount to more than 500 and then tonnage to 4500 a year, the traffic with free Indian ports is also considerable.

Apparently, British brought a new scheme of trading system, the looping trade system that is port to port trade within the madras presidency through the Act VI of 1848. As per the Act, the trade from port to port should be left free and unrestricted and take this opportunity as a modifying or abolishing the duties on articles used for the purpose of manufacture. In the case of Malabar, the company targeted to the Cochin port as a port to port trading system, which was affluent with sea trade activities within the madras presidency. By the survey of the company with the sea ports like Tanjore, Ganjam, Calicut and Cochin, the number of foreign vessels and tonnage of goods passed through Cochin was commendable.

TABLE 2: FOREIGN VESSELS PASSES THROUGH MAJOR PORTS IN SOUTH INDIA 1845-47.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Port of Ganjam</th>
<th>Port of Tanjore</th>
<th>Port of Cochin</th>
<th>Port of Quilon</th>
<th>Port of Calicut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vessels</td>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td>Vessels</td>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td>Vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1068</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1068</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The advancements of Cochin port paved the way for the diminishing the necessity of other ports in the west coast. So, as a mercantile policy the company planned to maximize the utilization of accessibility of the Cochin port by connecting it with the inland areas, linked with the of artificial channel of Conolly canal with the natural watercourse of the region brings out the southward relation.

In fact, it was hydrological perspective with mercantile policy of British that actually configured hierarchies of ports as well as the market centers. The mercantile policy of Malabar certainly shaped through the treaty of 1865, popularly known as Inter-Portal Trade Convention. The treaty signed with Travancore and Cochin princely states, to transport the whole products of these southern states through the port of British Cochin. According to the treaty, these states were liable to pay duty for import and exporting commodities from their ports and taken away the monopoly of pepper, cardamom and tobaccos. Whereas, as per the Act of 1848 port to port treaty, port of British Cochin was exempted from the liable duties and government viewed other ports as like foreign except British ports. By the strong support of both these treaties the mercantile policy of company established in the western coast of Malabar region. So, the market hierarchies now orientated towards British Cochin that trading system moved more to south. The market centers of different regions as from the northern part or southern part, all of them magnetized towards the Cochin harbor, that owned by British. The perceptions of treaty basically a theory to grabbing the major market position with it root, from the interior section, through the inland waterways and channelized the market towards the British commercial port. The provision of the treaty itself clarifies that the improvements made in Malabar would materially increase the trade of British Cochin. So, the reorientation becomes complete through Inter Portal Convention Treaty in 1865.

The transition in the orientation of market centers and port towns during the period of second half of 19th century, also witnessed the emergence of new locale for the local marts. Earlier times, the centers of market existed along with the passes and major ports which were geographically inclined

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areas for the transaction of trading system. The period later half of 19th and first half of 20th century, explicitly shows that the reorientation of the market system that primarily become more interior and remote in its character. The impact of Conolly canal for the emergence of new marts at considerable extent, which the canal stretches more closely related to these regional markets and by the introduction of these navigation facilities the economy underwent great transformation. Due to the emergence of new market centers nearly to the inland areas where the major center of agro products namely coconut oil, oil cake, coprah and coir led to the reorientation of the commodities of the transaction through channel. Since 19th century the coconut commodities became major product for the exportation from the west coast. So, the articles of coconut like coprah, coir goods and oil also considered as the important products of this period before that, these products were shown undistinguished under the ‘fruits and vegetables’ of other sorts but under the instruction of government orders, the product separately shown in the trade accounts. The total quantity exported was valued at 21lakh of which 15 lakh were from Malabar. 

The study concludes that the penetration of British to Malabar region mainly through the mercantile and hydrological policies. In the hydrological aspects, British tried to bridging regional networks by connecting natural waterways with the possible artificial channels of canals. It was mainly 4 parts; Pyolee, Ellathur to Beypoor, Tanur to Calicut, Ponnani to Chetuvai, unconnected parts of west coast division. Above all, the canal construction policies were also played a pivotal role in the transition in the system of market as well as port hierarchy in the region. And this waterway became inevitable and forms practically sole means of communication between the southern parts, especially British Cochin, one of the flourishing port of British Empire.

1 Letter from H.V.Conolly to F.C.Cotton, civil engineer of 7th division, Ootacamund, dt.21st July 1845, Calicut.
1 Map-1. Rivers and backwaters map with conolly canal.
1 Letter from Thahasildars of Ponnani to Revenue Divisional Officer, Palakkad, 28th August, 1909, Dispatch Abstract Regarding Improvements of West Coast Canal from Ponnani to Chetuvai, Calicut Regional Archives.
1 Correspondence Relating to Introduction of Canal and Ferry Act in Malabar from 1874 to 1880, Vol.1, Calicut Regional Archives.
1 Routes in Madras Presidency, Madras, October 1879, p.508.
1 Correspondence relating west coast canal project, 1845-1855, 2nd volume. Calicut regional archives.
1 Letter from H.V.Conolly to Esq. Pycroft, secretary of Board of Revenue, fort st. George, dt.23rd June 1848, proceedings of Board of Revenue (sea custom) vol.107. Madras Archives.
1 Letter from W.E.Underwood, Collector of Madras Sea Customs to H.V.Conolly, Collector of Malabar, dt.6th April, 1848. Proceedings of Board of Revenue (Sea Custom) Vol.106. Madras Archives.
1 Administrative report of madras 1845-57.
1 Letter from P.Grant, collector of Malabar to F.N.Maltby, resident of Travancore and Cochin, dt.31st August 1860. c/107, Cochin regional archives.
1 Administrative report of madras 1880-81. p.128.
Seeing yourself as you want to be is the key to personal growth.

~ Anonymous