

MINOR PROJECT

TITLE; MECHANISATION OF FOOD PROCESSING AND ITS IMPACTS ON  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RELATIONS; A CASE OF EXPERIENCE OF PRIMARY  
INDUSTRIALISATION IN PALAKKAD, KERALA

FACULTY SHEEBA S

DEPARTMENT HISTORY

DURATION 27-03-2015 TO 27-09-2016

FUNDING AGENCY UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION.

AMOUNT; 95000

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

Primary industrialization is an important stage in the social history of any region. This is an attempt on the part of society to transmute and modify the existing economic base of the society. During the period from 1960s there were attempts all over the world for such a modification. This was also a part of the mechanization of human activities which was a part of green revolution project.

Industrialization of Kerala is an important question that receives currency in discussion. The nature of industries also is a question of debate. Unlike other parts of Kerala, Palakkad presents a vivid picture of primary industrialization focusing on agricultural products. The primary industries based on agricultural products mainly rice flakes mills, Tapioca, starch industries and edible oil mills etc flourished between 1970 – 85. They functioned through loans from government agencies. But, these industries started crumbling after 1985. They could not flourish though the products were primarily targeting the food area that was closely associated with the food habits of Keralites. The nature of industries and the raw materials in use etc points to a processing and development of industrial sector that has its soul in agrarian economy. These industries were really an extension of the agricultural practice that was in practice in Palakkad designed by the green revolution policies. This project is an inquiry into the mechanization of food processing and its impact on the economic and social relation, a case of experience of primary industrialization of Palakkad, Kerala.

The food processing sector is critical to the development of any nation because it establishes a vital linkage and synergy between the two pillars of economy namely industries and agriculture. The growth of food processing industries is of immense benefits to the economy

raising agricultural yields, enhancing productivity creating employments, and raising standard of living of the people especially in rural areas. This was the situation in Palakkad area of Kerala during 1960s and 1970s in the background of the Green Revolution.

Palakkad is well known for its abundant paddy fields and small cottage industries. It had a great agricultural culture. Primary industrialization flourished from 1970s to 1985. They functioned through loans from government agencies. These industries started crumbling after 1985. The industries did not flourish through though the products were primarily targeting the food area which was closely associated with the food habits of Keralites. These industries were an extension of the agricultural practices that were in practice in Palakkad.

The mushrooming of rice flakes mills in 1970s was a part of the increased agricultural production and new policies adopted by the government towards industrialization as a part of Green Revolution strategies. But by the end of 1980s industries started crumbling there are many reasons for the decline of industries. They can be connected with drawbacks of Green Revolution strategies and associated socio economic scenario.

The decrease in the production of paddy was a major reason for the decline of agro based industries. The disparity between the major and small scale agriculturalists was also a reason. The Green revolution strategy promoted high agriculturalist and small peasants were on the losing side.

The increase in the production cost especially in wages was also a reason. The trade unionism and migration contributed to this. The atomization of land and commercialization of agriculture were other reasons for the decline of agro based industry.

All these factors lead to the decline of rice flakes mills. Many loans became overdue. The mill owners sold mills. Many turned in to other fields. Mechanization of food processing and its decline had great impact on the socio economic scenario of Palakkad. It changed the face of Palakad. Migration, commercialization of agriculture nuclear family system etc are the direct impact of socio economic system of Palakkad.

In conclusion it can be said that the primary industrialization of Palakkad occurred in a pattern followed by Green revolution. Palakkad presents a vivid picture of primary industrialization based on agriculture. After initial boom they started crumbling mainly because of non- availability of paddy and increase in production cost. The commercialization of agriculture a practice of green revolution was a direct reason for this.