

ECONOMIC HISTORY OF WESTERN INDIA: A SURVEY OF R. D. CHOKSEY'S WORKS*

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Economic History of the Bombay Deccan and Karnatak (1818-1868) — with a foreword by Prof. D. R. Gadgil — is the first book in the series of works by Dr. R. D. Choksey on the economic history of Western India. The book is divided into two parts. Part I covers Bombay-Deccan and Part II Bombay-Karnatak. But thematically, more or less, the same ground is treaded in both the parts.

Choksey says that in both the regions, the British abolished the farming system of collecting land revenue soon after their conquest. Inland transit duties were gradually removed but *Abkari* or the excise revenue from liquors continued to exist. (It must be added here that the British tried to check this evil.) Besides, a variety of currency units were in vogue which caused inconvenience in the day to day transactions. Early British administrators attempted to cope with this problem as well.

In the discussion on the agricultural sector of these regions, land revenue administration apart, Choksey refers to the attempts made by the Government to popularise improved varieties of cotton. To this end, American experts were also invited. But the attempts of the latter generally failed which, the author says, they intended (p. 224). As regards the industrial sector, the author suggests that the industries declined in Bombay-Deccan principally owing to the import of cheap British goods. But the decline of industries in Bombay-Karnatak, according to him, had started even prior to the advent of the British. He has specified four factors responsible for this:

* R. D. Choksey: *Economic History of the Bombay Deccan and Karnatak* (1818-1868) (Poona, 1945), pp. vii + 369; *Economic Life in the Bombay Deccan 1818-1939* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1955), pp. xv + 227; *Economic Life in the Bombay Konkan* (1818-1939) (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1960), pp. xiv + 215; *Economic Life in the Bombay Karnatak* (1818-1939) (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963), pp. xv + 212; and *Economic Life in the Bombay Gujarat* (1800-1939) (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1968), pp. x + 288.