Thangal Kunju Musaliar: An Industrial Genius

Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer

Cashew is one of the major export items of the country. When we trace back the beginnings of this trade, we find a few outstanding personalities responsible for the development of cashew business. One of them is the late Thangal Kunju Musaliar who did not possess high formal education but did better than degree holders and business men by native wit and common sense and flair for business. His feet were firm on the soil of Quilon, his brain could weave out of raw cashew nuts exportable commodities value added to make the quality exportable excellent. He was a pioneer and, in essence, the founding father of cashew export.

I knew him as an Advocate and later as a friend. He was generous and far-sighted. His concerns were not confined to making cashew profits. His interest were national and so he strove to expand the national business of cashew. He did not stop there but wanted industrial development to advance the country's progress. So he started an Engineering College which proved to be of good standard. The College named after him has been turning out engineers in numbers and in this dimension he has helped Kerala move technologically forward. His imagination and industry were pan-Indian and so he kept himself apprised of events in the country and the world. I have known him to keep track of national and international developments so that he may not remain illiterate regarding world events and India's march.

When the history of business development of Kerala comes to the written, Thangal Kunju Musaliar will find a place for himself and be remembered by generations. True education does not lie in the scholarship through books but in the mellow wisdom and mature foresight geared to India's march. Musaliar was, in this sense, a great person, philanthropist, nationalist and down-to-earth businessman.