

**The socio-economic aspects of Railway in Colonial India: A study of Northern
Region**

“In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Degree of Master of History.”



LOVELY
PROFESSIONAL
UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree/diploma.

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Statement 1

This project is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for M.A. History from lovely professional university.

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This project is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by giving explicit references.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “The socio-economic aspects of Railway in Colonial India: A study of Northern Region” is confided and original work done by Pele George Chakre, student of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, under my supervision and guidance.

This subject of this dissertation is an original contribution towards the discipline of History and has not previously formed the basis for the award of the Degree, Diploma, Associated ship and fellowship or other similar title to any candidate.

The Dissertation represents entirely an independent work of the candidate under my guidance.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation would make an attempt to study the various Socio-economic impact of the railways in India. Did the railways contribute to the development of India and how it impacted the society socially. I will go in an in-depth analysis from the beginning of the railways in 1853 to 1947 and how the country benefitted from it or vice versa.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important Infrastructures for the development of a country is its system of transportation. The unavailability of transport and communications in India meant an unstable administration of the great expanse of the Indian subcontinent. Railways thus provided impetus to the development of the country especially economically further to create a common identity of nationhood among the citizens. It brought about great changes in the social, economic, political and cultural life of India.

For over many centuries throughout history roads and waterways were the only means of transportation around the world. The railways which carries millions of men and women from one place to another and also million tonnes of materials from producer to the consumer which can't be compared with any other means of transport.

In today's world, Telecommunication, Energy resource and Transport are a very important vital infrastructural requirement which acts as an indicator to the growth of any Economy. Transport gives useful link between production centre, distribution areas and consumer at the end. When we talk about the land transport mode, one of the major transport industries comes to our mind which is the Railways. We sometimes tends ignore the contribution of the Railways to the growth of the economy with its incredible services like mobility of various passengers and commodities.

It is hard to imagine our Indian economy without Railways today. We always feel happy and proud when we think about our Indian Railway which is Asia's first and world's second largest network under the single management. We are also surprised by the fact that the Indian Railway is world's largest employment provider. And as per 2011 statistic the number of persons employed by the railways stands at 1302732 persons.

The railway era in India starts on 6th April 1853 when the Bombay-Thane line measuring 21 miles was first introduced in India .tremendous changes came to be seen in this form of transport in the further years and every year new regions were getting the benefit of a new track line which extended its arms to remote villages, deserts, jungles and even mountainous regions.

A comparative analysis on the works of two parties on the railways constructed by the British shows that the rail network in accordance to its time was the most advanced technology. Its

been recorded to cover 20km in length starting in 1853 to a whole lot of 23,627 in 1900's. This expansion was thus rapid. The years looming between 1860 and 1920 the rail lines of 594 miles were built on an average every year, thus ranking India in rail networks at the fourth position by 1910, falling behind the United States, Russia, and Germany.

The growth of the railways thereby was followed by movement of British goods to interiors of India (1845 - 1873), thereby making it the sole massive unit of international investment of the 19th century .Economically of 271 million pounds sterling of British capital that came to India,a huge part of 200 million pounds was thus invested in the railways, a clear evidence of British interest in the establishment , expansion and development of railways in its colonial territory.

But what was the main British motive for investing heavily on the railways. There are many views in this regard. A view holds that English culture owes to the role of railways in India, while other view is of the opinion that the railways construction was a mega moth of the British rule a project and legacy that continued even after the end of their regime.Ofcourse, the ulterior motive was of the strategic value it held, which helped them in easy movement of troops. However the most obvious motive was the economic motive.

The establishment of the railways opened up new areas to reside and enabled deeper penetration of commercial activities in the region. This was convenient for the colonizers as they gained good access to raw material in addition to the markets of British finished products. This new formed development of railways served an easy purpose of British political and economic control and was an effective tool for exploitation of the India's resources.

Furthermore the motive had many supplementary reasons and motives For example, the rapid movement of troops to facilitate in times of military emergency. Thus the saved money could be diverted to other public works. This strategic/political motive aided the economic motive.

Daniel Thorner, promoted railways stating that the East India Company had already lost its trading privileges with India. Hence, promoting railways could be used in political /strategic argument. An excerpt from a letter by Thomas Williamson, the Revenue Commissioner of Bombay, to the Chairman of the Great Indian Railway said that

with railways in regard to only military considerations, no lines could be of better use than the great trunk-line from Bombay to Kandeish to Nagpur, with two branches above the great western Ghatsone leading towards the south.

These lines showcase the pressure put forward in the establishment of railways based on commercial considerations. Thus, economic motive became the primary target for the establishment of the railways through which India will be a profitable outlet for the British Foreign Capitalist investment.

A condition leading to the economic motive to be the primary goal was seen after the revolt for independence in 1857, which caused the main dilemma within the imperial policy to set in a new order to take share of revenue from India without causing up stir or to provoke any uprising that could upset the British treasury. the best way sought was to extract revenue was to promote foreign investment, thus came the Indian railways which was instrumental in making India a market for British finished products and India gradually became an exporter of raw materials to Britain.

Another important economic interest can be expressed from the view point of Lord Dalhousie during whose leadership the railways was first established in India .He emphasized the importance of a speedy and wide introduction of railway communication throughout the length and breadth of the Indian empire. The economic and social advantages which India could derive from this would supersede all calculations. This would thus mark the introduction of improved and extended communication as seen in various kingdoms of the western part of the world.

Lord Dalhousie from the beginning of his tenure proprieted the policy of conquest and expansion of the colony .His wants were to expand the British domination over the Indian economy by exploiting the resources and wealth in India .and thus the establishment of the railways in India would help him achieve his aim.

There was a lot of discussions on how to manage and finance the railways in which the decision was finally made in 1849 for the construction of the railways. The big questions remains as to whether the colonial state or the private enterprises would do it .However Dalhousie favoured the construction of the railways by private enterprises by saying that the construction [of the railways was not a responsibility of the state.

According to him since the railways were mainly built for commercial purposes in which the private parties will be engaging on it does not fall on the responsibility of the government unless the government of India takes any part in the business.

One of the main reasons as to why Lord Dalhousie favoured private railways companies for the project was that the surplus British capital investment would be in the in railways projects. We can find this in his opinion.

According to him the primary factor that has been a major obstacle in the development of this country in economic prosperity was that people were totally dependent on the government, where the community in itself placed themselves in a helpless situation to do anything for themselves. Accordingly he feels that it is not the responsibility of the state to take up the railway construction as the spirit of enterprise is still so weak in india , and if the use of English capital which is on a large scale its use in the interiors of the country is extremely rare . Hence there is a good reason to believe a positive response to the investment in this one branch of Indian undertakings.

One of the main reasons as to why Dalhousie supported the construction of the railways by private enterprise was that it was mainly provoked by the expansion of British capital investment market. In 1843, there were so many surpluses in capital which made the British began to seek overseas market .moreover, the return of investment in railways began to decline by 1.88 % .this encouraged the investors to look for overseas market.

The court of director finally agreed to Dalhousie opinion on the railways project that it should be undertaken by private enterprises rather than the state.

Now the problem arises as to where to lay the lines and who should take charge of it. And as such the opinion of the governor general the construction of the railways which is being undertaken by private enterprise would be [under the supervision and control of the government.

Hence, it was finally decided that the private enterprises will construct and invest in the railway project but will be under the state's supervision and control and the state will decide as to where the lines would be drawn and when. In return of the control the state would guarantee a safe return of investment of 5%.this guarantee as felt by Dalhousie was that the state has to spend and encourage British capital in India.

He addressed the court of directors of the east India Company that both money and time would be invested which would mean a large amount of British capital and British energy as this would encourage more employment extensively in the products and trade in india.

Hence, by giving financial help for railways by the imperial state encouraged private investment in the construction of railways .the railways enterprises were also shrewd to take advantage of the colonial needs to transform our country into a market source for necessary raw materials and market for British finished product. This is how they can easily bargain for a guarantee of return of investment in the railways.

In some cases the railway project became unprofitable, the state backed up construction with the guaranteed return of 5% on the investment. Hence Thorner remarked this venture as “private enterprises at public risk.” Which clearly signifies that the investment for the railways project was by private enterprise while the risk if the rail faces loss was to be borne by Indians taxes?

The state had paid a sum of 50 million pounds during the forty years of its operations and by the year 1900's the English investment in railway project stood at 200 million pounds as compared to their investment in other colonies like Australia 50 million pound and Canada 25 million pounds in transportation projects.

The big Question now arises as to whether the railways could be built without the help of non State Enterprises? The imperial power did not take up the construction and development of railways between the years 1869 to 1882 as there was a lack of Funds because of the various natural calamities, wars and so on. The state also proved themselves to be unprofitable and inefficient in the construction making the Private Companies preferable.

Even though the construction of the railways was done by the private Enterprises. Establishment and expansion of the railways was done through continuous involvement and supervision. It played a very important role not only in the promotion in the making of the railways but also in their involvement in their various management.

The agreements that was been done between the companies and the state gives us clear specification in details about the influence and power that the state had in the establishment of the railways .This is clearly evident that even for minor transactions official permission was required. And we can also see the extensive and detailed railway records that were purely taken care by the state that we find in the archives of the colonist's shows the great extent in

which the state control was involved in the establishment and extension of the railways in colonial India. We can also see the active participation of the state that can be found in the large amount of correspondences between the directors of the East India Company and by the Secretary of the state on the other hand and the government of India and managers of the railway companies in India.

The state was given a great amount of power as the agreement with the railway company was the state's right to approve the railways lines and routes. This was essentially important in the case of laying particular lines such as the famous trunk lines. The routes for the trunk lines were personally sketched by Dalhousie. In the drawing of the trunk lines Dalhousie opined that the grand trunk lines should be given primary importance as they were immediately required and the trunk lines would form the main channels where in the future other lines can be taken advantage from it. Which would make the ease of communication with the other parts of the subcontinent faster and better.

When finalising the construction of the trunk line, the principle who was undertaken by the imperial state reflected the primary purpose for the construction of the railways in colonial India. To be more specific, these lines were made on the basis of the ones that could firstly connect India agricultural areas to the main ports so that these resources can be easily accessed and secondly connects various parts of the colony and which will eventually form the basis for railway lines in the future. This decision by the state regarding the location of the famous trunk lines signifies its primary attempt to lay the foundation for the exploitation of resources from different parts of the colony.

From amongst the trunk lines, Lord Dalhousie main priority was the line that connects Calcutta and Lahore which will pass through the North-western Provinces (NWP) and Ganges valley which are agriculturally rich. The other lines that were suggested by Dalhousie were to join Calcutta and Bombay and also Madras, and from Madras main city to the other western parts of the Madras Presidency.

Lord Dalhousie died in 1860, the blueprint which he made for constructing the trunk lines were followed in great detail. It clearly shows the British motive in commercial and economic benefits. The major trunk lines as per his plan was connected to the great ports cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Karachi with the agricultural regions like the Gangetic regions and the cotton regions in both Western India and central India and with such construction the result was such that these regions became the dominant regions of

colonial India economically. Also in 1867 there were 20 urban centres in British India of which 19 urban centres were placed on railway lines.

During the expansion of the railways and when making the expansion apart from the trunk lines, the state had to make a crucial choice between lines which will fulfil both economic and political purposes. However as we have seen in most of the situations the state chose economic purpose over political purpose, especially during the period up to the late 1870's. This was done so that there is a balance between the expenditure and revenue. Hence in order to maximise the profits of the railways the state gave its priority the construction of the lines that was profitable and postponed the construction of lines which were mainly political as we can see from the extract of the railways report of 1867.

As per the report it will be really difficult to fix a line of communication for 200 miles which will combine both political and military purposes. Some of the lines will fulfil both purposes in comparison to others and also pure military roads should be built but apart from that lines that opens new sources of trade and lines which are more likely to be profitable should be preferred. In which state assistance becomes necessary.

After 1878 afghan war during the construction of the railway lines which was mainly for political and strategic purposes, the state did not ignore the potential economic benefit they offer. As per as then opinion by the Government of India on the rapid progress of the Kandahar lines in the northwest region was that while building lines on primary basis of strategical work. It should also be noted that the lines which penetrate the country will encourage trade and agriculture. Hence will serve both purpose both commercially and politically.

Good Examples of remunerative line are the lines which connects the cotton regions with the major ports of colonial India. Many of the railway lines that was built and opened in 1860's were those of the cotton lines which was during the period in which the railways expanded by about 468%. By which cotton exports from India grew from 178,000 metric tons to 263,000 metric tons, showing an increase of 45 % during the 1860s.

In fact, during 1860's the cotton lines were given the top importance over the other lines in most of the areas. Example, before the year 1870 the railway lines w built from Bombay to Ahmadabad, the Gujarat cotton area, and Nagpur, which was in turn connected to Khandesh and Berar cotton region and Sholapur and the Karnatic cotton region.

By the year 1880 Great Britain had become India's largest importer of raw materials and also India became the receiver of three-fourths finished British products in the form of imports. Between the years of 1862 to 1929, the imports in the country increased by 350 %. The agricultural exports also expanded huge scale as we can see in the case of wheat. Before the railways were established there was hardly any export of wheat grain from India. However, by 1886 23 % of Britain wheat imports came from India.

The growth rate in average annually from 1852–54 to 1882–84 was 10.7 % of Indian export to Britain when we compare to average growth rate of 3.3 % annually for exports from other tropical colonies to Britain. The British products rate of growth in India for the same period of time was 11.7 % when we compare to the growth rate of 8.4 percent in the British imports to other countries annually. Also, beginning from the year 1860 - 1910, India's trade with Britain increased three times and was at par in the trade with Australia, South Africa, and, China combined.

According to Hurd he says that with the expansion of India's foreign trade through the railways it was possible to link the India's economy to that of the British and also of the World economy at large. By connecting one region of the country to the other, the Indian railways eventually connected India with Britain to such great extent thus they became "extensions of distant financial centres, factories and consumers" in Britain.

Looking at the discussions, we can clearly see the primary motive of the British for establishing the railways India was mainly inclined towards the extraction of resources through economic development project of the British during the latter half of the 19th century. This was done largely on a provincial scale, mainly in the Punjab region and was done in an all India level.

The push factor through the medium of trade for the exploitation of India's resources was mainly the industrial revolution that took place in most of Europe which increased the productivity of the factories during the early 19th century. India was seen as a potential market by the manufactures in Britain, mainly the textile industries. Various economic reforms were carried out by the colonial state in order to transform India's economy but it failed and could not expand the market for the British finished goods in a huge way. One of the main reason as to why the economic reforms failed and the growth of British textile exports to india failed was primarily due to the lack of a cheap and efficient means of transportation in India. Another important push factor was the colonist need for raw material

from India especially cotton .The American Civil war in 1860 played a very important role as the demand for cotton was increased during that time . Thus, the barrier was in India lacking an efficient means of transport. Which made the colonial state look for solutions later implemented a technological fix to the problem by introducing the railways in India.

After the revolt of 1857, many conditions in India gave a boost to the British to exploit India's rich resources through the medium of trade. The state need for revenue as also another important factor as huge revenue can be earned from India's foreign trade. Hence the railways were established in India with the primary motive to expand India's foreign trade with Britain and also to increase the revenue from export tariffs. It must be noted that internal development for India was not a goal for the Britishers.

The railway policy in India was also influenced by many conditions where the colonist interest was first promoted over that of the colony. We can see this especially in the railway guarantee system and also while laying the railway lines. Under the railway guarantee system the railway companies which were given charge were given a guaranteed return of 5 % interest for their investment. Even if the railway venture was unprofitable .The interest was guaranteed to the companies. In the event of a loss faced by the railway companies the difference amount of money was paid for by the Indian taxpayer's money.

Even where there are floods or famine situations in many areas of India, food grains were still being continuously exported on a very large scale as the railways lines was mainly built for export oriented business. And even when the expansion of the rail lines were underway, the colonial state gave its priority for the construction of economically rumerative lines over that of the political line and whenever possible they try to combine the two functions

A very good example for the colonial state motive for the establishment of the railways for efficient resource exploitation can be evident especially in the Punjab region as it was agriculturally fertile .The productivity of agriculture in Punjab can be further increased through railway establishment and expansion. And also in the case on an all india level we can clearly see the primary motive for resource extraction for the establishment of the railways which is clearly reflected through the laying and direction of the railway line.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Indian railways having one of the world largest network has a very large scope. This Study will focus on mainly the economic and socio impact of the railways in Colonial period in the northern zone. This research will face the challenge of finding suitable materials for the study as the railways first establishment was in the southern region and hence more work has been done on the railways in general and mainly in the southern region and less availability of materials for the study of railways in Northern India.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are:

- To find out the main motive towards the introduction of the railways by the British in India
- To study the colonial impact of the railways in India
- To assess the socio-economic impact of the railways in North India.
- To do a comparative study between the Northern Railways and the southern in terms of economic contribution to the nation after Independence.
- To give stress on the construction of the railways in North India by the British.
- To analyze the positive and negative impact of the railways in North India

LITERATURE REVIEW

Colonialism, Development, and the Environment Railways and Deforestation in British India, 1860–1884. Pallavi V. Das.

This book written by Pallavi Das gives us an interesting integration of the Environmental and colonial Impact in the Punjab Province and gives a Great deal of information on the Historical viewpoint of the colonial impact. Moreover, a lot of books have been written on the railways on various topics of labour, economic, social aspects but in the field of environmental impact few articles or write ups are only available. Hence it is a pioneering study of the integration of colonial development and environmental impact of the railways in India. And provides a lot of useful information on the railways of Punjab Province.

Southern Railway: A Saga of 150 Glorious Years 1852 - 2003

Bhandari, R R

this book of 240 plus pages with 27 chapters has extensive illustrations and gives a extensive history of the railways from the early beginnings, evolution of the metre gauge system, railway administration during the colonial period, rail finance etc. This books marks an extensive research and the narrative brings to life the glorious innings of the Indian Railways from its origins as a creation of the Raj to an enduring mass transport system powering modern India.

Wheels of Change? Impact of railways on colonial north Indian society, 1855-1920.

Aparajita Mukhopadhyay

This Thesis central theme is on the colonial impact of the railways in Northern India which examines both social and economic aspects. It also contribute to wider debates on the Nature of the colonial state, and over technology as an agent of social change. Railway journeys have been assumed or claimed to have brought social change; a critical examination will re-assess these claims and assumptions. The thesis takes exception to the idea that Indian railway passengers did not exert any influence over railway operations but were mere recipients of decisions forced upon them.

It suggests a more complex, dynamic interaction between Indian railway passengers and the railway system. The thesis also questions the rapidity and novelty of many of the changes

brought by railways, but concludes that railway experiences were interpreted and analyzed in ways that eventually had implications for Indian society.

Colonialism and Modernization; History and development of southern railway, A Case Study

Saritha. S.R

This thesis gives us an insight of the evolution of the transport system in south India and covers the period of study from its origin up to the year 2001 and also finds out important reason as to why the railways were introduced in India and analyses on the socio economic and political aspects of the railway in India. However much reference can't be made from this as it only focuses mainly on Southern railways except for the comparative study.

Railroads of the Raj: Estimating the Impact of Transportation Infrastructure

Dave Donaldson

This article by Dave Donaldson is based mainly on the archival data of the colonial India and investigates the India's Rail Networks and also explains the benefits of the transportation infrastructure projects and its benefits and gives a positive results of the colonial railways which includes decreased trade costs, increased interregional and international trade , Increased income levels etc.

Railways in Colonial India: An Economic Achievement?

Dan Bogart and Latika Chaudhary

This book entitled *Railways in Colonial India: An Economic Achievement?* By Dan Bogart and Latika Chaudhary reviews the development and organization of the Indian railways, the trends in railway performance, the effects of regulatory policies and ownership, and the impact of the railways in colonial India's economy. It's also gives strong views on the government influence of the railways from the beginning and also does a comparative study on the performance of the Indian railways before and after 1920's which concludes to a higher output, and productivity and profits between 1850-1919 but not after. Lastly, he agrees that the railways increased market integration and national income but argues that the railways could have done more to aid Indian economic development.

'My first railways to Rajmehal', Mookerjee's Magazine, 1, 1860,

OIOC (Calcutta, 1861). Chakrabarty, Jagmohan

This essay entitled "My first railway to Rajmahal" by Chakrabarty Jagmohan is an instructive essay mainly because it uses steam travel as a metaphor for a modern India several decades before Kipling and Harish Chandra. "I hate railways" he Quoted .His ancestors had done well even without railways .However; later in his life he undertook rail journeys to many parts of North India. His essay gives a vivid picture of the people on the station platform. He also discusses about the complex relationship between the globalization of commodities, powerful actor-actant Networks, such as the railways.

Ways and Works in India: being an account of the public works in that country from the earliest times to the present day, OIOC (London, 1894). MacGeorge, G.W,most of the facts and figures in this book has been mainly gathered from various official publications and government records as well as from numerous published volumes or reports dealing with separate branches of Indian public works , or the Indian and English engineering . This book gives us an extensive report on the great Indian surveys, roads, irrigation, watersupply, telegraph, sea and harbours and an extensive record of the railways in India.

The Tourist's Guide: W. Newman and Company's East Indian Railway Handbook, a guide

Historical, descriptive, and suggestive.

This article analyses Bengali- and Hindi-language travelogues written by Indian railway travellers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's. While the authors of these texts were influenced by the literary and interpretative sensibilities of European guidebooks of the period, especially English-language railway guides to India, they did not uncritically adopt their colonial discourses. Rather, Indian authors created a distinct narrative, rejecting or appropriating European ideas with discretion, primarily to suit their specific vision of India. I argue that in their writings, Indian authors, like their European counterparts, participated in a process of creating 'others', which had fundamental implications for the imagining of colonial Indian society.

Tracking Modernity: India's railway and the culture of mobility

(Minneapolis, London, University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

This book offers a fascinating cultural explorations of the ways the railways had shaped modern Indian Society .This book gives us a vivid view of the railways which takes us on a journey through the Indian landscape as it changes from colonial depictions, to postcolonial destinations constantly underlining the violence and terror that the train conjures for the Indian imagination alongside its endless capacity for restless movement.

Andrew, W. P. The Indus and Its Provinces: Their Political and Commercial Importance Considered in Connection with Improved Means of Communication; Illustrated by Statistical Tables and Maps. London: W. H. Allen, 1857

This book focuses mainly on the political and commercial benefits of the railway in India and focuses its study mainly on Scinde and Punjab Railways and also visualizes on the Revolt Of 1857 if and only there was a good rail network at that time which would have greatly accelerated the British army.

The Railways of India: With an Account of their Rise, Progress and Construction

Davidson, E.

The author on the basis that the Indian Railways are proving themselves to be mighty agencies for the improvement of the empire, he makes an attempt to give an account of their rise and progress that may be interesting to many who have at heart the future welfare of India and that as a record of facts, it may possess a certain value for the professional and general Public

India's Railway History: A Research Handbook

John Hurd, II, Ian J. Kerr, John Hurd

This Handbook is an invaluable tool for anyone seeking who wants to understand Indian Railways and the roles which they played in the making of modern India . the book represents a structured and logical presentation of thoughts and provides a concise but detailed understanding of both the history and present of India's railways , together with a wonderful handbook, a comprehensive guide to primary and secondary sources, maps and

statistics for future research into India's railways. The book is also stimulating and thought-provoking, providing a way ahead for research in this field for some time to come.

The Administration Of Indian Railways: How Does It Benefit

The Economically Backward Sections Of The Society?

*Anant Kousadikar and Trivender Kumar Singh**

this article stresses on the economically backward sections of the Indian society with a poor financial setup. It also does a comparative study of different transportation modes based on convenience, cost and effectiveness. This paper analyzes the administration of Indian Railways and how does it benefit the economically backward sections of the society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study relies on both primary and secondary data for the analysis .Reports and publication serve as main source of secondary data. Besides these, various books, journals, working papers, research papers, and websites have been used for the study. The study is both analytical and descriptive.

The collected sources including documentary and non documentary evidences were subjected to a systematic and rigorous process of analytical operation. The use of external and internal criticisms enabled to locate the correct data. The sources were analysed and interpreted in a most dispassionate and objective manner. Northern Railway forms the nucleus of the thesis and all other matters are discussed in relation to it.

CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE RAILWAYS IN NORTH INDIA

When the British first came to India they came as traders. However due to various historical circumstances they became the ruler. Aftermath the battle of Plassey which took place in 1757, the British east India Company successfully established its authority over a large part of the Indian Sub-continent. This marked the beginning of the exploitation of India's resources by the British.

This exploitation of India resources after the Battle of Plassey greatly helped the industrial revolution that was taking place in England as it supplied capital to England's new industries.

In major regions such as Bengal the British merchants gained the monopoly of both Inland and export trade. This led to the decline of the manufacture of silk and cotton goods in India. England gained a position of great advantage due to the industrial revolution.

In 1783 the first sample of English muslin cloth was sent to Bengal. The Textile industry and shipbuilding industry practically went extinct. Most of the raw materials were exported to England from India because of its abundance which in turn led to the import of finished goods from England to India. The export policy of the English was really stringent that it became popular and encouraged in England.

In the production of raw materials items like raw silk and indigo was greatly encouraged in the British Industries. It is clearly evident from the fact that in the year 1837 the export of British cotton goods to India was more than 5,40,00,000 yards comparing it to 1824 it was around 1,0,00,000yards.In 1858 with the transfer of power of the East Indian Company to the British crown the colonial exploitation continued even more to a larger extent.

Over a period of two centuries India's wealth was being exploited by the British; however the pattern of the exploitation was not the same throughout the period. Based on the exploitation of the colony by the colonist various economic historians have divided the whole period into three phases:-

1. Merchant capital period starting from the Battle of Plassey which continued till the end of the 18thcentury.

2. Industrial capital period starting from the beginning of the nineteenth century which continued till the end of nineteenth century.

3. Finance capital period starting from late nineteenth century which continued till the independence of India.

I. Merchant capital and Colonial Exploitation

When the East India company got its first charter for trade in 1600, their main motive from the beginning was to earn the maximum profit from overseas trade. Hence as such the company started its trade with India but at the beginning, the company hardly had anything to offer to India for the exchange of goods and services. Thus, the company was given the authorisation for the export of gold and silver. But the east India Company did not like the idea of paying gold and silver for the exchange of goods and hence after the battle of Plassey in 1757 circumstances changed and by that time the company captured political power thus enabling them to secure maximum goods for a minimum payment.

Secondly, the land revenue system was an effective instrument for the exploitation. The permanent settlement of land which was introduced by lord Cornwallis in 1793 was such that the land revenue was fixed at £34,00,000. The proceeds of the revenue were treated as profit for the company and were not spent on public administration or on public welfare.

Thirdly, the English East India Company adopted all possible means to make large profits through the corrupt and unscrupulous officers. For example, when Robert Clive first came to India he had nothing however; with his short stay in India he had accumulated a vast amount of wealth. According to sources, he went back to Britain with an estimated fortune of two and a half lakh pounds. He also acquired an Indian estate which gave an annual income of £27,000. Lastly, after Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were given the diwani right of city administration the company exploited the peasants by continuously raising the land revenue which eventually ruined the farmers.

II. Industrial Capital and the Colonial Exploitation

When india was being conquered by Britain at that time two great event was taking place in Europe. Firstly, it was the industrial revolution which gave a boost to the demand of raw materials and secondly was the Britain loss of her American colonies. On the basis of these changes various imperial was framed.

Following, the success of the Industrial Revolution gave impetus to a change in the mode of exploitation. In this phase huge efforts were given in order to develop India into a market for the British Industries.

In this period the important forms of exploitation were as follows.

1. Export of machine made goods to India

During the early period the British textile industry faced tough competition with Indian products as the British products were inferior as well as costly and could not penetrate in the Indian market. Hence in order to protect the English interest the government levied a heavy custom duty of 78% on Indian products which were imported. However the British goods that were imported in India remained duty free. Thus, the British policy aimed to restrict the import of Indian goods and to give protection to the exports of British goods to India.

2. Development of jute industry and plantation

A very few industries were encouraged by the British in India because these industries could not be established elsewhere due to geographical reasons. Popular among them was the Jute industry. Jute mills were established by the British capitalist in order to earn more profits. Other industries that interested the British industrialist was that of the tea, coffee and indigo plantations.

2. Revenue and expenditure policies of the British imperialists

With the expansion of the British power in India it necessitated a need to maintain a huge army for retaining their political power in India. The expenditure on the army consumed one third of the total government expenditure.

This included various salaries in the form of pensions, expenditure on the office of the secretary of state for India, salaries of the members of the Indian council, expenditure on the India office and payment to the Bank of England for debt management which clearly signifies that they had very little concern with India

III. Finance capital and the colonial exploitation

The huge amount of money that was invested in India was not brought from England but accumulated in India itself by using all kinds of unfair means by the British capitalist.

The finance capital of the British found its entry into the following main sectors.

1) The State sector

The expenditures which were incurred by the British government was paid for Indians in the form of taxes and all these expenditures almost had nothing concerning india in its development and people. The various investments was forcefully treated as loans granted to the people of India.

2) Investment in plantations

The British capitalists showed great interest in tea, coffee and rubber plantations as the geographical factors in England is not suitable for development in the plantations of tea, coffee, and rubber and also the cheap labour which could be easily obtained in India gave another additional boost for the British capitalist to make investment in the plantation sector.

3) Investment in Railways

The expenditure on the construction of the railways was borne by the British capitalist in the form of investment. Which was mainly constructed for the economic exploitation of india resources by connecting the major cities, ports and rural areas which will facilitate the British need for penetrating the Indian market further for their finished products and also a source of raw materials .

Motive Behind The Construction Of Railways In India

During the 19th century the political condition and the economic trend encouraged the British to construct the railways all over India as the railways which the firmly believed would bring about economic development to India and also would make india a source of raw material and a destination of British finished goods. It would also provide a great help in the administration and provide security by making it easier for the movement of troops within the Indian Subcontinent.

I. The British Commercial Interest

Till up to the 18th century during the last decade India had been a source of luxury goods for trade with Britain. But with advent of the 19th century the situation got reversed. The Industrial revolution which was picking up rapid pace in Europe forced the British to find market for their finished goods and also an uninterrupted supply of raw materials for their

factories. Hence in this way they got involved in the lives of the Indian people through various developments which were meant mainly to serve their main interest. Hence making India a source of raw materials for the British industries and a profitable market for the British finished goods.

The British keenly gave a great priority to develop the remote areas as they have great potential for producing raw materials for the British as during this time there was a lot of pressure created by the Lancashire and Manchester textile mills. Hence, it became important to link these remote areas with the major ports of Cochin, Beypore, Quilon, Madras and Mangalore.

The railways became a very important source of transport over other means of transports when we look from the economic point of view which was realised by the British during the mid 19th century. Their main goal from this was to consolidate the British empire in India and also the exploitation of natural resources from India.

Various kinds of goods like sugar and salt cannot be carried during the wet seasons due to the inconvenience of transports. Hence looking into the great advantage that India has like the vast plains, the low value of land, cheapness of labour and general facilities for producing buildings, the political and economic pressures were brought about by the railway promoters in England to the East India Company to introduce the railways in India.

Before that the British constructed the light railways or tramways which main purpose was to carry forest wealth to the closest lines. They would be given up after their purpose was served as they were only introduced as a temporary means of transport. But, the condition which was prevalent in India and even with the low speed of the tramways people were adapted to it. Which eventually paved the way for the British companies to convert those narrow gauge lines into permanent lines?

For the establishment of the railways, the British residents cleverly projected the importance of railways especially in the princely states of Cochin and Travancore. According to their statement there was not enough food for their population as these states did not raise enough food as they had to rely mostly on the grain imported by sea at Cochin.

If the Railway was constructed in these places, they could be in direct connection with the large grain producing districts of Trichinappalli and Tanjore and be able to meet their demands at greater advantage than from distant ports.

II. Military Motives

The earlier road system which was built by the British was made in accordance to its military need. The railway system was very badly needed as there was a great need for the improvement in commerce infrastructure and troop's movement, as these was a great concern for the British government in India. As the importance of the railways was rightly pointed out by Lord Dalhousie for both maintaining law and order and also defence from internal aggression and as an imperialist Dalhousie wanted to expand the British domination all over India.

The wishes of the local government and the military were always considered before constructing any railway bridge, whether it's a new one or the replacement of an old one. Under the army of the Madras presidency the British had mainly looked for services beyond the sea. And with the huge investment in the railways, the military expenditure was reduced to a great extent as there was faster military transport and better internal administration.

III. Capital investment interest

The railways which were sponsored by the British were one of their most protected monopolies which were to provide a great scope for a fruitful return of the huge amount invested in it. With the coming of the first train in Britain which was greatly successful and brought about opportunities and profits greatly attracted the capitalist who were by then searching for new areas for investment.

IV. Political Interest

For the progress of any country economically and for an efficient administration. It has come to the realisation of the British on the need to introduce a cheap means of transport. Both the administration of the East India Company as well as the crown were always under immense pressure to expand and multiply the railway lines in India.

The trunk lines were given the top priority when Dalhousie planned the railway lines as they were to connect the major administrative centres of the presidencies and provinces. And as the investment in the railways were vey huge the government was forced to look for financial help from the Indian princes within the territories where the construction was taking place.

The major cause for the rapid development of the railways was due to the restlessness of the railway managers and agents. They wanted the rapid expansion as they wanted the political stability in India which otherwise could badly affect their economic activities in India.

V. Other Reasons

The press also played a very important role in the development of the railways by advocating the superiority of the rail transport over the other means of transport. However earlier the British did not show much interest to the various proposals they received as they thought that the railway projects in India would deem to be a failure.

Even the merchants in south India gave various proposals to the government for the expansion of the railway lines. According to them the transport of goods through canals were not safe. Hence, they continuously submitted petitions to open/expand the railway lines. Therefore, during the 2nd half of the 19th century there came a strong need for the establishment of the railways.

After the revolt of 1857 there came about a lot of security concerns in India. Hence, for the political consolidation and economic exploitation of the country the railway project was given the top priority. Which is why most of the major centres in the country was connected with the railway lines. The need for exporting raw materials and importing British finished products was also an important factor for the construction of the railways. And also the various demand of the public played a very important role for the development of the railways in India.

Railways and Indian Economic Development

During the first decade of railway operations the rail traffic developed very slowly, but after it started expanding rapidly surprised even some official estimates. And as there was no other better alternative than the railways people started using railways to transport both men and goods which further led to market integration and price convergence all across the different regions of the Indian sub continent. a huge number of research has been done on the economic impact of the railways which mainly focused on two main themes.

Firstly, the question arises as did the railways were responsible for price convergence and market integration. And secondly did the railways greatly increased the income of the people.

Which comes to a larger question did the railway project impacted economic growth and development in India?

There are a lot of popular research that studies the impact of the railways and the role they play in price convergence important ones of those were Hurd 1975, Mukherjee 1980, McAlpin 1974, Derbyshire in Kerr, ed. 2007. and in these studies most of them examined the measures of crop variation across various districts. Hurd in 1975 did a comparative analysis on the average prices and deviation of prices across various railway and non railway district. According to his findings in railway districts the prices were less varied as compared to non railway districts. Mc Alpin in 1974 discovered the convergence on the prices of both food and non food crops as the railways gradually developed. Collins in 1999 and an analysis on wages and as per his findings there was less wage convergence in colonial india. since labour is generally less mobile than products like tea and sugarcane the latter finding is less surprising.

In the recent studies it had re-examined the effect of the railway on market integration by using sophisticated econometric techniques and detailed datasets. Andrabi and Kuelhien in 2010 on their study return to a former or less developed state on the price gap for both rice and wheat in various major Indian cities on a variable indicator for whether the railway connected the two cities in a year. Their study focused on the various price gaps over the years comparing a market linked with the railways before and after. their estimates implies between 1860 and 1900's there was 60% decrease in price dispersion and out of which only 20% the railways can explain for the fall. And as per their conclusion the effects of the railway on market integration is exaggerated.

Donaldson gives a different conclusion by studying the variation in salt prices. The way he researched was very precise and practical as salt is processed on in some parts of the country and later distributed to different areas of the Indian sub continent. He did his study based on or calculated through theory rather than practice or. Experience he shows that the difference in price in various districts are similar to trade cost as salt is produced in one district and later distributed to other parts . He also found that the greatly reduced trade cost by measuring the trade cost empirically. His methods also look at other means of transport. And accordingly railways lowers the trade cost by more than 87% as compared to roads which was used since age immemorial .The impact of river and sea transportatation with the comparism to rail are

smaller in magnitude where the price gaps is around 4 times larger . He used the method of trade and cost parameter and concluded that the railways greatly increased trade flows.

The various researches done on railways and on the market integration gives us mutually opposed conclusions. Andrabi and Kuehlwein (2010) didn't find much impact on the railways but Donaldson (2010) finds a great impact on the railways in accordance with the previous studies. Looking at Donaldson theory model and his precise empirical exercise. We can say that the railways reduced the interregional prices and increased the trade volume in India. However, there is a missing variable in both the studies. The rates charged by railways in each market. According to Hurd data the freight always differed amongst railways. And even the administration report data shows that it different among commodities, and special prices were given on grain or coal. Hence more research is greatly needed on the railways in order to understand how they influenced market and also changed the ways goods were produced and also the various factors of production.

Railways and Income

According to the historians they argued for a long time on the national income if the railways had never been introduced would be substantially less. During the 1960 economic historians developed a new methodology called the 'social savings' in order to find out as to whether the railways were indispensable. They did measure consumer surplus which was gained from the railways at a benchmark date say example 1900. In the absence of railways the customers will surely rely on the alternate source of transport like wagons and waterways. It is calculated on the basis of the difference between freight rates for wagons and railroads multiplied by the quantity of rail traffic in a given year. Prices capture the marginal costs of each technology and the amount of traffic proxies for consumer demand.

The social saving calculation for the railways was first made by Hurd in 1983. According to his assumption if the railways were not introduced freight rates would be between 80-90% higher. He based his observation on the basis of the difference between rail freight rates and those for bullock carts during the middle of the 19th century. He first limited his study to the year 1900 and studied the volume of freight traffic. He estimates that the social saving would be around 9% of the country's national income or Rs 1.2 billion. The estimates on the railways are really large in which the GDP increased by around 50% in between the years 1870-1913. the railways generates nearly 20% of the total increase in the national income. And when we compare with the US and western European countries the social savings that

India's account for is comparatively large. Where in those countries social saving does not exceed 5%. But when we compare India with other less developed countries the Indian railways look less impressive. Summerhill for example in 2005 argues that the social savings from railways in Brazil was at least 18% of the Nation's GDP in 1913.

The methodology of social savings is indeed a simple and powerful tool, but it has some limitations. Firstly in the absence of the railways one cannot be really clear on the price of road and water transport. And with the increased traffic volume it is obvious that congestion would increase on both river and road transport. Hence if we were to use alternative source of transport the cost in itself is really underestimated. Secondly, when we look theoretically the demand for iron and steel should increase and also there should be an increased competition in manufacturing. The social savings calculation omits spill overs.

Despite of the various critiques, the importance of spill over is doubtful in the case of India. Most of the imports like iron and steel came from Britain which makes the backward linkages of these kinds a limited effect. The manufacturing sector in itself was really small which makes the forward linkages weaker. During the 20th century the Indian cities remained small. Donaldson in 2010 looked further into this issue. He came up with a theoretical model where the railway main impact as in the increase of farm gate prices through lower trade cost. He also studied the economic impact of the railways in agriculture sector through his model and concluded that it increased agriculture income by 16%.

Looking at the various arguments above it seems to us that the main impact that the railways had in the Indian economy was increase in interregional trade and international trade. But there comes a different question. Why couldn't the railways do more, like encouraging a higher economic growth? The colonial policy was blamed by some scholars. More emphasis was given on profits by the GOI which might have made the freight rates lower. Moreover passenger services was not given due attention which also faced criticism. And when we look at the income level in India the fares were really high. Quality of service was ignored most of the time. A good example of it was the long debate as to whether lavatories were necessary in third class carriages. If better attention was given to comfort and prices it would have greatly increased travels and also maybe the exchange of ideas.

CHAPTER 2: SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE RAILWAYS IN NORTH INDIA

When the railways were first introduced in north India in the middle of the 19th century It made a great landmark in the social history. The social outlook of the people was broadened by the railways. North Indian being an agrarian society where their main dependence was on agriculture which mainly linked them to land and to a small extent to small scale industries. The social status of the people was reflected by the caste system. With each caste having many sub castes and due to the variations it fixed the level of socio-cultural status with the major caste

The dressing style and the jewellery were also related to the variations to the system in which the practise of untouchability was being practised with such rigidity. Hence the minority faces economic exploitation and oppression by the dominant class which was a trend in the traditional society during those times. The introduction of the railways was especially feared by the conservatives who supported traditional customs and conventions.

According to the conservatives the railways were regarded as instrument which would destroy the social caste structure and the sacredness of the traditional Hindu family. They also see it as an instrument for conversion of the Indians to Christianity. And during the trains journeys they were made to sit with people of different caste and creed in the compartment. However, In the later stage, The introduction of the railways were welcomed by many of the conservatives.

After The introduction of the railways the caste system which was followed with great rigidity came to be considerably reduced as people of different castes came closer in contact on trains and railway platform. The railways were opened to everyone and there was no reservations to some particular caste .Better class of carriage were demanded by the high class individuals. But it was denied by the government. Hence, passengers who belong to different castes, creed and with different social customs and economic status gather in the railway platforms and waiting room, ticket counters and compartment where they travel together and mingle with each other

There is usually peaceful coexistence on the trains where problems of varied interest are being discussed with each other which further developed sympathy and mutual

understanding. The views and knowledge of the people are being broadened through discussions with fellow passengers of different religion and profession.

The isolation thus has been broken which bring about new ideas and disperse ignorance .The railways thus was an effective instrument for the removal of prejudices , dissemination of knowledge and modification of age old tradition and customs.

The [unity of different social groups has been promoted by the railways. Language also developed in many villages and small town through the frequent communication with other places and people and for ages these progress has been resisted due to customs and superstitions. Before the coming of railways the pilgrimage undertaken by religious minded people was dangerous, difficult and expensive. But with the railways it made it easier for the people to visit their places of worship as it was comfortable, safe and cheap.

Through the railways a lot of things are being learned and people develop their knowledge. It had given a valuable service for social reforms and for the improvement of sanitation by conducting publicity campaigns which made healthy and enlightened citizens.

Without the railways it would be very difficult to imaging the rise of mass education.The extension of railways in North India has been responsible for the spread of education along with its various branches. And due o the facilities offered by the railways many students and all over the country came to colleges and universities in order to pursue higher education.

The educational system of North India was completely changed by the railways and with English as a medium of instruction in British schools inspired the people to pursue higher education and later became employees in British Service. Many educated individuals usually preferred to change their place of residence hence migrated to cities. Which through the railways personal mobility has been increased which further encouraged the growth of towns.

The emigration of people from the rural areas to urban areas has been encouraged by the railways .It also led to liberalism of ideas through the intermingling of people belonging to different castes and social status. Hence it created a sense of social harmony through facilitation of mutual intercourse of the people and also through the connection of different parts of the country.

It further encouraged the mass migration of the people from the areas which became congested and also facilitated the speedy movement of the people to the places where they

are required the most. It also played a great role during famines and drought by the quick supply of food.

The migration of people from North India mainly started after the 1870's to different parts of the sub-continent. There was also a lot of Indians who left their country of birth and settled in foreign countries. And through the development of the of the rapid transport system the intermixing of different skin colour was made possible and easy.

The activities of the social reformers were quickened by the railways. They preached and educated the people about the new ideas of non-violence, truth and called for equality amongst the people. Many of the social evils like childmarriage, sati, female infanticide and also many superstitions have been removed to a great extent from the north Indian society with the coming of the railways.

It also brought about a great change in the cultural fabric of north India. The areas covered by the northern railways are culturally primitive. The rich cultural heritage of India like fine arts, dances, music paintings etc are carried by the railways.

The impact of the railways on the life and culture of the people of north India was tremendous in itself .before the railway came people were mainly confined to the various aspects nature, namely mountain, rain, rivers, forest and climate. But these limitations were minimised with the coming of the railways. It also opened access to various mysterious places as people could reach there without fear. It further encouraged political awakening and social awareness.

The popularity of railway travels in India has been spontaneously popular. Its popularity lies on the busy railway stations, crowded railway carriages, and official statistics. The railway journeys had indeed brought more people at the same time and in the same space with the increased frequency hence the possibility of experiencing and expression the notion of identity was made better with the interaction.

With its popularity increasing many people started emigrating way from their homeland in large numbers than ever before with comfort and speed. The experiences and expressions of identity and community have been sharpened by this. Hence, the railways played a dual role with regards to the increased interaction between people. Firstly, the sites like stations, carriages etc where contacts were made was provided by the railways. Secondly, it physically transported people from their familiar surroundings to the [other. until the point in time under

discussion very little efforts has been given to study the role of railways in shaping the notions of identity in colonial India.

We will aim to explore the notions of identity and community that was contributed by the railways by looking at various critical analyses of many of the travel diaries written by Indian railways passengers. Was any new element in knowing people were added by railway journey? How the existing ideas of identity was influenced by the railways. We will also go deeper into understanding the impact and implications for India of these notions identity.

Railway travels brought many persons together in many new ways but this doesn't mean that before the railways travelling did not bring the similar kind of experience. But with the introduction of the railways it brought about a completely new kind of experience which was unique due to the many new demands of this new innovation. The new practises of purchasing tickets, the huge crowd at the ticket counters, the long wait at the platforms/waiting rooms and not forgetting the long hours of confinement for many hours in carriages, all these adds to the intense experience of meeting new people and the process of contrast and comparism is set in motion. And most of these experiences can be found in the travelogues ethnographic discussions comparatively.

However, before going any further with the discussions we need to proceed with caution. As the travelogues were intended for circulation and the comments and observations may not be fully genuine. And also the ethnographic discussions were taken from various sources which mainly consist of colonial ethnographic discourses, the pre-colonial accounts and personal experiences. And there is a great possibility that the authors travelled in high class carriages with European travellers. The notion of identity has the potential to add through these moments. However the conditions and experiences of travel will be different to most Indians as they usually travelled in the lower class compartments.

Kumkum Chatterjee says that these ethnographic descriptions of India were proofs that the Bengali nationalist bourgeoisie wanted to describe india in their own terms. According to her it is "nationalist ethnography" which was to give a systematic description of Indian people to the Indian audience. The proof that this ethnographic being nationalistic is that unlike the colonist the starting point of the endeavour lays in the self definition. The use of these official sources should be avoided. As these published articles were seen as ready to use information and lacked hindsight. Moreover these sources were taken from a wide variety of material from pre-colonial text and most of these theories and notions were imported from Europe.

Most importantly, these definitions were deployed to reach conclusions of significant political and social import which, if examined, not only add crucial dimensions to the expressions of notions of community and identity, but also question whether or not they were 'nationalistic'.

The experience of the Indian railway travellers will be examined in the following paragraph. And through these unique events it will bring up specific issues around which the notions of identity are constructed and wider issues that are triggered as a result of these experiences will be analysed. As discussed earlier the close physical proximity experienced as a result of railway journeys. According to the experiences of Jagmohan Chakrabarty on his trip to Rajmahal he came across some funny looking Israelites. His other experiences also includes sharing a carriage with a German physician and the other also included a group of british soldiers. In Kashinath Mukhopadhyay experiences he describes his co-travellers, One a Bengali, a Eurasian lady, a young lawyer from NWP, a Marwari entrepreneur, an European men and an Eurasian men.

The processes of instant classification purely based on physical features attempt of fellow passengers are suggestive. And through these classifications we will further come to boarder conclusions about the specific communities and their normative behaviour characteristic features .according to the colonial viewpoint the Bengalis are seen as weak and effeminate people. The classification of Bengalis as per the colonial classification was a non martial race as they had poor physique and were ready to do any kind of labour. They were seen less likely to display either physical or moral courage .They attributed these features as a product of the climatic conditions and their food habit of consuming excessive rice. And in several occasions these attributes are accepted. A good example can be found in these experiences. For example Shayamakanta Ganguly shares about his struggles at the Katihar junction in order to buy a ticket and describes himself as weak and effete Bengali as he has to spend more energy and time in order to make his way to the counter which was blocked by the burly north Indians. Saratchandra Shastri also speaks about the Marathas Ability to climb mountainous region without fatigue and attributes this to their food habits He noted: 'these people do not consider traversing such terrain as challenging because unlike us they do not survive by eating fine rice. Their appetite is satiated only after eating a substantial amount of atta mixed with generous helping of ghee along with vegetables.'

They are enabled to endure physical labour due to their strength inducing food. He also gives examples of courageous characters like Shivaji and Peshwa Rao as a product of Maratha culture. When he went through the NWP he pointed out that for those people food is eaten not only to satisfy their taste buds but also to provide physical strength and energy which is why people of NWP are stronger than them.

Lingam Laksmaji Pandit noted that there was less possibility for the evolution of martial spirit among the Bengalis as Bengal was a quite and fertile country. The Bengalis prefer to fight with their tongue than with a sword and says that the Bengali faints even with a slight show of a sword drawn. He argues that the Bengalis lack a lot of accomplishments which people of other races possess. And one important thing they lacked was a spirit of enterprise. Most of the youths work as clerks in government or mercantile offices and are satisfied and did not even aim to become independent businessmen and even farmers. He described it as slave mentality of the Bengalis.

The Bengalis had the privilege to an exposure to early western education and training. However many Bengali authors lament that Bengalis failed to learn what is good for them or their country. The various authors compare them with the people of Bombay and north Indian peasants and state them as better off than the Bengalis themselves.

Various social issues in Bengal like child marriage, caste inequality, widow remarriage and even resentment towards women's education was a product of the deficiencies of Bengali character. All these issues plague the Bengali society where the growth and progress of the Bengalis will be greatly hindered. All Bengali authors speak about the lack of caste discrimination in western and central India. And women are also said to be free in their movement and manners in comparison with Bengali women.

The experiences connected with the railway journeys which provided new areas where the differences can be explored and asserted. The notion of self and other are constructed. Interestingly, the image of 'other' was created by radical transformation of the meanings associated with ideas of 'self', though in most cases assumptions remained implicit. However the superior knowledge, education and civility of the Bengalis compensate the physical deficiencies of the Bengalis which makes them different from the rest of the Indians.

The word asabhya was used by Durgachan ray to describe the Biharis . He used the word as a prefix to Biharis three times which makes it difficult to exactly point out their specific behaviour for the people of Bihar. In the first incident he describes a group of biharis who tried to enter the second class carriage but were refused as they had third class tickets. In the second incident a Bihari refused to deposit his ticket at the end of the journey and the ticket collector had a hard time convincing him. And lastly in the third incident a group of Biharis insisted on travelling in a crowded carriage over an empty third class carriage as they wanted to travel with their friends. According to the author he described their refusal and weird behaviour as ‘sheep like mentality of Biharis and their inability to lead by example. And coincidentally the railway official too had similar opinion that all Indians were prone to herd mentality .

CONCLUSION

The recent controversy between the two schools of thought among economic historians of India provided the stimulus for this exercise. The demand for a steady supply of raw materials and an assured market for their manufactures, coupled with an abundant supply of capital in Britain prompted the British industrial houses to vigorously campaign and lobby for railways in India. East India Company the politic-economic (monopoly) entity in India-had to succumb to the challenge of the rising industrial capitalism of Britain. Though aware of the better alternatives in the execution of railways in India, the Company could not oppose the interests of the powerful railway/cotton lobby and surrendered the Indian situation at the altar of the British interests. The compulsions of the British capital market more than the necessities of the Indian economy accelerated a rapid railroad expansion in India. India witnessed a disproportionately large investment in railways as against other projects. The failure of two private companies in irrigation-development prompted the railway lobby to denounce and discourage the demand for more irrigation works. The revenue bureaucracy in India was not as much well disposed towards irrigation as it was for railways. Acreage statistics on cropping pattern do not conclusively support Critics' allegation that commercial crops grew at the expense of area under food grains. However, shift in the cropping pattern at the sub regional levels is not ruled out. Prima facie, it appears that the expansion of area under cash crops-especially cotton-was more a part of the general agrarian expansion than a process of replacing the area under food grains. It is doubtful if export trade in British India - largely augmented by the railways-had an effective background linkage with the rest of the economy. The displaced cart men, boatmen and handicraftsmen might have found some solace in turning as rural proletariat in the expanding agrarian sector. The 'extra hands' for the agrarian expansion might have come more from these sources rather than from those. It shows how the Indian economy had become a dumping ground for the British manufacture'l'l during the second half of the 19th century.

Who suffered from unemployment /under-employment which 'was –con comitant to the subsistence agriculture. However, the issue awaits a deeper analysis at sub-regional levels. Similarly, in the absence of empirical data it is difficult to be categorical about the impact of railways on the lot of the peasantry. However, literary evidence does not show that the lot of the peasantry was improving. We have evidence to state that the private interests of the British manufacturing industries had successfully exerted pressure on the Indian government

to thwart the emergence of "satellite innovations" which would have developed the basic industries, expanded the country's industrial base. Strengthened the employment potential and generated a wave of industrial culture. The vast opportunities provided by the rapid expansion of railways in India could not be exploited to develop iron and steel and engineering industries in the country as the Stores Purchase policy was decidedly hostile to the nascent industrial capitalism in India. Though the rail-road was not originally devised to 'develop' the Indian economy, it was a historical necessity in British India. However, the exigencies of the colonial framework not only imposed a tremendous pressure on the financial resources of the country but also resulted in a maldistribution of investment pattern, an excessive zeal for a rapid expansion of railways. Disturbance in the equilibrium of the semi-stagnant economy and a less than optimum realisation of the positive impact of railways on the, Indian economy. Hence, the issues raised by the Critics cannot be 'brushed aside as mere anti imperialist polemics.

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