

Railway Expansion in Central Provinces (Middle India) during colonial Period

Dr. Shamrao I. Koreti¹

Abstract

Transport is an important infrastructure indispensable for the development process of a country. Without proper means of transport and communications it may not be possible for any government to administer a vast country like India. Indian railways played a vital role in the economic development and integration of India. It has brought about remarkable changes in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the country. The introduction of Railways, which is one of the legacies of the British rule in India, has not only caused a remarkable increase in the quick communication between different parts of India but also resulted in profound changes in the habits and outlook of the people. Railways were the most important infrastructure development in India from 1850 to 1947. In terms of the economy, railways played a major role in integrating markets and increasing trade. Domestic and international economic trends shaped the pace of railways construction and the demand for the important traffic flows to the ports. The traditional way of trade and commerce has totally changed, and the volume of the trade increased manifold. The railway expansion in Central Provinces affected the local cotton trade tremendously and boosted up the volume of cotton export from Central Provinces to the international market. The railway has brought fortune for some traders and business people but at the same time affected the lives of the local societies dealing with the supply and transport of the cotton. In the nineteenth century, cotton was in great demand in the world market as a cash crop. The need for raw cotton during the industrial revolution motivated Great Britain to colonize the rich cotton growing lands in India. The Central Provinces of India (middle India) were geographically known for cotton growing. The cotton connection with Central Provinces played a major role in shaping and reshaping the economy and society. Thus, the researcher has tried to analyze the facts and tried to present the merits and demerits of railway expansion in the economy of the Central provinces and its people.

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¹ Associate Professor in History, Post Graduate Teaching Dept. of History, R.T. M. Nagpur University, Nagpur
shyamkoreti@gmail.com