CHAPTER V

IMPACT OF RAILWAYS IN SOUTH INDIA

It is said that, if muscles shaped 18th century European history, 19th century world was created by machines. When muscles and mind worked together, the nature and character of human civilization acquired new definitions and dimensions. Europeans forced nature to reveal its secrets before them in the form of science and technology. One of the everlasting contributions of the European science to the world is the invention of machines. The Englishmen were destined to be the inventors of the new wheels of progress - the locomotives. They never failed to make use of its potential to the maximum. In India the construction of Railways played an important role in the process of nation in the making. India's railway system from its beginning in 1853 had linked the local centres to each other. In South India this link had a profound impact on the economic, political, social and cultural life of the people.

I. ECONOMIC IMPACT

The introduction of railways in South India had altered the travel habits of people, broken down the barriers of isolation and enlarged the educational facilities. Lack of efficient communication facilities had been one of the indicators of poor growth and under development.
Southern Railway had played an important role for building up the economic fabric of South India. By providing cheap, speedy and safe transport facilities Southern Railway had enabled a large number of agriculturalists, industrialists, businessmen, professionals and all other workers to travel from one place to another for their needs. Southern Railway also makes it easy for the movement of increasing quantity of merchandise and goods from remote villages of South India and other places of production to the centres of consumption. Southern Railway revolutionised agricultural and industrial progress and stimulated the internal and external trade of the Southern part of India.

The importance of railways over other means of transport from the economic point of view came to be realized during the middle of the 19th century. The British succeeded in introducing railway system in India within a short period of time. Spices, perfumes, jewels, cotton, pearls and such other items had attracted Greeks and the Romans from early times. Rapidity in the movement of such items was the direct result of the introduction of railways in South India. In British view, the impact of the existing railway system in India had been entirely profitable. From the beginning, the British authorities had been advocating the rapid expansion of railways because it would be helpful to eradicate poverty and famine in India. The Parliamentary Select Committee of 1884 had also recommended the rapid expansion of railways on the ground that it would stimulate internal and external trade, safeguard famines, open up fertile tracts and in general, improve the economic condition of the people. The real motive behind the introduction of railways was the capitalist greed for cheap raw materials for their industries, markets for their finished products and fresh fields for good investments of their surplus money.

1. AGRICULTURE

Rail transport plays a crucial role in shaping the economic destiny of a nation. Good physical connectivity between the urban and rural areas is essential for economic growth. Agriculture is the backbone of the economic development of our country. Previously the farmer’s
motives were production for subsistence but now it is replaced by production for market\textsuperscript{7}. A number of markets were started and the agriculturists gained better prices for their products. In South India, transport, especially railways played an important role for the quick transport of agricultural commodities from one place to another. This enabled the agriculturists to earn more profit. Equalisation of prices for the commodities was one important impact of the railways\textsuperscript{8}. Agricultural production provided practically all the food grains in South India and large quantities of raw materials like cotton, jute and oil seeds for the important manufacturing industries. Improved transport facilities led to the improvement of the economic conditions of the people and their standard of living\textsuperscript{9}. It provided adequate food supply and increased purchasing power of the people in South India. Modern methods of farming, machinery, and agricultural implements, better variety of seeds, manure and fertilisers, insecticides for destroying pests and a number of godowns for keeping the grains were also started in South India as a result of the development of agriculture in South India. All these operations undoubtedly needed better transport service and Southern Railway played an important role in this connection.\textsuperscript{10} North Arcot was the principal contributor of food grains and Malabar was the principal consumer.\textsuperscript{11}

Before the introduction of Railways in South India, the South Indian villages with varying customs, languages, geographical environment produced food grains only for their own consumption.\textsuperscript{12} Without railways it was very difficult to transport agricultural products from one place to another and also to distant places. At that time each village was self sufficient and there were no organised markets. This lack of transport facilities led to the emergence of small dealers and middlemen. They greatly hindered the cheaper and rapid movement of agricultural products. Village folks were connected with other villages and neighbouring villages and other parts of
suburbs by earthen tracks full of dust and muddy swamps in the rainy seasons. Therefore the villagers preferred to sell their goods in their own villages.\textsuperscript{13}

After the introduction of railways in South India, agricultural products were carried in large quantities from the place of production to those of consumption. Modern machinery and agricultural implements, better varieties of seeds, fertilizers, manures and insecticides were transported in the trains for the benefits of the agriculturalists. South Indian trains extended its helping hand to every nook and corner of South India. Above all, Agricultural labourers were also transported to different places, where they could secure profitable work.\textsuperscript{14} Compared to other means of transport the ticket charges in the railways were affordable to the labourers\textsuperscript{15}.

Transportion of perishable articles to places, thousands of miles away in fresh condition would have been a fairy tale in the pre-railway age. Today this is easily done in fast moving coaches and in refrigerator vans on the railways. The perishable commodities like vegetables, fruits, milk, butter, ghee, sugarcane and egg are transported to distant places and cities without any damage in quality. Cities like Madras and Bombay are supplied with milk, fruits, vegetables and fish by special trains run regularly.

Southern Railways have provided certain facilities for the smooth transporation of fruits like orange, mango, grapes and banana. During the mango season about 4400 wagons of mangoes are transported from South India to the different parts of North India with the help of railways.\textsuperscript{16} From Nagpur, the place famous for oranges, oranges are transported to different parts of the country and also to the ports for exporting abroad.\textsuperscript{17} Another instance of the brilliant role of the railway in the
marketing of fresh fruits can be seen in the facilities given by them for apple traffic. A diesel locomotive has been commissioned to run fast apple specials from Simla to Kalka and hence by the down Howrah mail to New Delhi. From New Delhi, fast trains carry apple to Calcutta, Bombay and different parts to South India also.

Railways enabled cash crops of South India to be easily transported to industries. In India cotton is a major crop which is to be easily supplied to the mills for the manufacturing of clothes for domestic consumption and also for export. Railways gave encouragement to the farms and cultivators to improve and increase their production. The increased products could be easily transported to the markets and mills at cheap and low rate of cost.18

The commercial crops such as tea, jute, coffee, rubber and spices were grown in plenty in South India19 and railways promoted its transport to inland as well as to foreign lands.20 It not only helped the peasants but also earned foreign exchange for the country. The Indian Railways with its vast net work of 35,000 route miles crisscrossing the country have successfully undertaken the task of transporting the surplus commodities from the places of production to the different parts of the country.21 As a part of Indian Railways, Southern Railway also played an important role in this.

For scientific cultivation, implements, tractors, insecticides and manures are needed and railways provided these items at concessional and inexpensive rates. It was a great boon to the poor peasants. In July 1928 the agricultural commission recommended in their report a closer co-ordination between the railway authorities and the agricultural departments so that concession might be granted for the transport of fertilisers, fuels, agricultural machinery and implements.22
In addition to transporting agricultural goods, Southern Railway also helped Indian farmers to visit various places in organized groups and learn agricultural practices and methods prevalent in different parts of the country. The railways also ran special trains at specially reduced rates entirely for the conveyance of farmers. Travel concessions to farmers were granted to groups consisting of a minimum of 20 persons.

In South India, a number of essential commodities required for consumption, which have direct bearing on the cost of living of the weaker sections of society, had been traditionally carried at concessional rates. These commodities include food grains, salt for edible use, fresh vegetables and fruits, edible oils, and jaggery. Certain commodities of low value which are used only by the weaker sections of the society such as fodder and fire wood are also carried at below cost rates.

The main motive of the Britishers to introduce Railways in India was to carry the raw materials which India had produced in plenty. Therefore within a short span of time the agricultural economy which had produced only domestic goods, began to produce cash crops to earn money from foreign trade. This led to a change in the agrarian sector of South India also. The British introduced slope cultivation and connected the hilly tracts of Anamalai and Nilgiri regions with railways. Coffee and tea plantations came into existence. Development of railways bridge the gap between the backward areas and well developed areas by ensuring accessibility and better utilization of existing industrial resources.\textsuperscript{23} Mobility is a development aspect for the economic growth of a country. Economic activities such as trade, commerce and industries flourished in areas where accessibility is good and mobility is fast and easy.\textsuperscript{24}
2. **INDUSTRY**

The introduction of railways drastically affected the industrial landscape of South India. The new transport system had its direct impact on the traditional industries such as timber, plantations, tiles, newsprints etc. Industrial development took place after the introduction of railways. It necessitated the availability of raw materials like cotton, jute, sugarcane and oil seeds and the deposits of coal, manganese, iron ore and a number of other minerals. In India they could get hold of all these. The major requirement for these was an efficient system of rail transport to effectively provide the necessary transportation facilities for the regular and continuous movement of labour, machinery, raw materials and finished products.\(^{25}\)

Before the introduction of railways, South India was famous for cottage industries, i.e cotton, handloom, wool and silk weaving, ivory, metal, coir and match work, crackers, pottery and basket making flourished in South India.\(^{26}\) But the introduction of railways witnessed the extinction of these famous industries.\(^{27}\) The impact of the railways on the brick making industry was widespread. Millions of bricks had been used for the construction of numerous stations, bridges, viaducts and embankments.\(^{28}\)

When the British introduced railways in India their important aim was to carry on trade with India. The British exported cotton and other raw materials from India and imported textile goods from Britain. With the help of Railways they distributed the finished products in different parts of the country. The products of Indian cottage industries were more costly, though more durable and attractive, and hence found no markets and the sale of such goods declined.\(^{29}\)
In 1905, iron and steel factories were established in different parts of India and also in South India. An aluminium factory and a chrome tanning factory were established in Madras. Later a number of industries like coal, cotton textiles, paper, sugar and match industries were developed. The second half of the 19th century witnessed vigorous efforts to expand railway services to main trading centres of South India. The basic purpose was to collect raw materials from different production centres for export to Britain. The railway system was also used to sell goods in every part of the country.

Although expansion of railways was undertaken to serve commercial and political interest of Britain, it also proved beneficial to Indian economy. It provided a safe, speedy and relatively cheap mode of transport for goods and passengers. Railways gave tremendous impetus to internal trade which was very useful for levelling up prices throughout the country. Before the introduction of railways inter-regional variations in prices particularly of food grains were more different.

Railways not only increased the number of industries but also it paved the way for the conveyance of hundreds of workers from their places to their workshops and factories. And also the manufactured articles could be transported very soon to the market places and to the ports for export to foreign countries. Likewise it provided speedy and cheap transportation of raw materials from the mines, forests and other places to the manufacturing centres and from there the finished products to the various consuming centres.

The Railway in South India was the largest consumer of coal, the procurement of which had been the most difficult problem because of the considerable distance at which the coal fields were
situated. Therefore with a view to assist the trade and industry in the South, and also for the need of railways, large quantities of various commodities from the North had been transported to South through railways.

The manufacturing firm of Kirloskar was built up in 1888 near the Miraj Railway Station. In 1916 the Ogale Glass Works was started and in 1922 the Cooper Engineering Works at Satara Road was started. The coal for these industries was brought from North India by rail. Nagapatanam, Coimbatore, Madras, Bezwada and Tirunelveli emerged as important industrial centres. The industrial requirements of iron and steel of these places were moved by rail from Tata Nagar and Bhadravati and their finished products distributed to different places.

Cotton mill industries in South India expanded as a result of the expansion of railways. There were a number of cotton mills in different parts of the Madras Presidency. A number of cotton mills were located in the areas of Madurai, Madras, Coimbatore, Cochin, Mysore and Pondicherry. The entire machinery for these mills was transported by rail. Most of the mills had railway station sidings, where wagons loaded with raw materials were released. The yarn and cloth produced in South India were distributed to places within the region and appreciable quantities were exported outside India also. About 100,000 tonnes of piece goods were moved by rail from this region every year.

Cement factories were established where deposits of limestone and gypsum were available. These factories were served by the Southern Railway gradually. The first factory was started at Bazwada. There were 7 cement factories in this region and Southern Railway provided enough
materials for its functions. Most of the coal required for these factories and raw materials like limestone and gypsum were transported through railways.\(^{39}\)

Another important industry was the mining industry. Important mines in the South India were located at Bellari - Hospet area. Manganese industry was concentrated in Londa area and both iron and manganese ores were produced in Sandur area in South India. Southern railway promoted these industries by transporting raw materials and finished products. Many small industries like silk, oil, match box and miscellaneous industries have also developed in South India as a result of the expansion of railways.\(^{40}\)

Neyveli lignite industry which enhanced the economy of the Madras Presidency was one of the most important impact of Southern Railway. With the help of United States of America, the Technical Co-operation Mission, a pilot plant was inaugurated at Neyveli on 14 May 1958. The rich minerals, agricultural and forest resources helped the smooth functioning of industries in South India. With the availability of cheap electric power, ample labour and a fast expanding railway network, there was sufficient scope for the rapid industrialization of South India.\(^{41}\)

3. **COMMERCE**

Railways have encouraged the commercial development of South India. Before the advent of the Railways Indian villages were self dependent units and the farmers cultivated only those commodities which were required for local consumption. But with the introduction of railways, this old type of un remunerative subsistence farming gave way to commercial farming.\(^{42}\) Thus Indian farmers produced commodities, suited to the climate and soil conditions, abundantly. They could
sell the surplus commodities very easily with the help of new method of transport. Tea, sugarcane and cotton became the important commercial commodities of South India.

Commerce got prominence after the opening of markets in distant lands. For example cotton products from different parts of India were taken by rail to Bombay and from there it was shipped to the mills of Manchester and Glasgow. With the development of agriculture and industry India was able to produce considerable quantities of commercial products and these were partly consumed locally, partly sold in internal markets and partly exported to foreign markets with the help of railways. Without proper transport facilities it was very difficult for an agriculturists to sell his product. But later the foreign machine made goods gave a death blow to these commodities. Markets were started near the railway stations and later these places became important towns also.

4. TRADE

Railways had its impact in trade also. Since the traders could get commodities very quickly and in good condition, it was not necessary for them to keep large ware houses. They needed little ware housing space and less credit from their bankers and were able to carry on business more economically. Business men had the habit of hiding their goods in the ware house for a long time to sell the goods for higher price during budget times. But railways reduced this tendency. With the development of rapid transport, urgent commodities could easily be obtained from other places.

Railway suitableness created a competition among business firms. Before the origin and development of railways most of the business firms were centralised locally. But the railways broke down these barriers and created national and international competition among businessmen.
especially after 1870. The number of retail shops also increased in South India due to the influence of railways.

Foreign trade also started with the expansion of railways. Today's India, includes large cities and small towns, is a very different place from what it was a hundred years back. It is a world where one sees the formation of larger and larger trading blocks, explosive growth of global production, financial and capital flows and technological virtuoso.48

Port towns in South India like Madras, Beypore, Thalassery and Cochin witnessed tremendous development due to the introduction of railways in the British period. As the commercial activity and industry in the ports expanded which were also the terminal points of railways, large number of jobs were generated in trade and commerce, transport and communication sectors. Railway was responsible for expanding India's overseas trade. New agricultural areas were opened by railways and vast quantities of raw materials and food stuffs flowed to the port and were carried onwards mainly by British ships to Europe. Mica was exported to United Kingdom from Gudur. During the World War mica was very much used for making weapons. Salem region in Tamil Nadu was rich in iron ore deposits of high grade and from time to time several attempts had been made to export these deposits.49 Thus Railways have transformed the agricultural economy into a mixed economy in which the industry has come to occupy a place of significance.

The manufacture of coconut oil was an important industry in the Madras Presidency. The export in 1882-1883 increased to 2159285 gallons. It increased further in 1900. Coconut oil was manufactured in the districts of Madras, Chinglepet, Godavari, North Arcot, Madurai, Tirunelveli
and Coimbatore. New agricultural areas were opened by the railways and vast quantities of raw materials and food stuffs flowed and were carried onwards mainly on British ships to Europe. After the formation of Southern Railway it played a great role for the exporting of different types of commodities to foreign countries. Oil imports were declined by 10.5 percent in 2000-2001. Non-oil imports were increased by 6.3 percent during 2000-2001. Imports of bulk consumption goods like cereals, pulses, sugar etc. also increased by 4.16 percent during 2000-2001.

Agricultural and allied products like basmati rice, cashew, marine products, oil, meals, spices and tea were exported from India to different countries. Ores and minerals, leather, chemicals, engineering goods, manufacturing equipments, electronic goods, computer software, textiles, readymade garment, gems and jewels, handicrafts, carpets, rubber manufactured products, wood products, sports goods etc. were the India's major export commodities in 2000-2001 and the major import commodities were food and related items, chemicals, precious pearls, machinery except electrical and electronics, transport equipment, coal, gold, silver, metal ferrous oils, wood and wood products and fertilizers. For the transportation of these communities Southern Railway has been playing very significant role.

5. **URBANISATION**

India, which once accommodated over 80 percent of the population in her rural areas, has made rapid strides in urbanisation since its independence in 1947. India’s urban population has grown many fold during the last few decades. During the Post Independence period the urban population has trebled from 62 million in 1951 to 159 million on 1981. Correspondingly the
proportion of urban population to total population has swollen from 17.6 percent in 1951 to 25.72 percent in 1991.\textsuperscript{53} It is the largest rate in the world and this increase was mainly attributed to migration from rural to urban areas. Between 1961-71, 24 million people have migrated to urban areas and settled down there permanently. The current migration is three million per year.

As markets concentrate in and around urban centres, things are more accessible to the urbanites. Need can effectively be solved among the urbanites since they are in close proximity to modern amenities. Consumers need not have to search for things, rather things reach them. Exposure to markets, accessibility, proximity and availability of things effected modifications in tastes and preferences. Railway played its own role in this sector also.\textsuperscript{54}

6. EMIGRATION

Apart from the process of urbanisation, South Indian society experienced some unanticipated changes in its socio-economic milieu due to large scale emigration. Indians also migrated as early as 1850 to the Australian Gold fields and then to New Zealand and South African colonies. Indians were encouraged by the Government of Trinidad, British Guiana, Mauritius and Jamaica to migrate there. So we see that the economic effect created by railways was wide spread and significant in many spheres of life. The oil excavations in the Middle East opened the doors of opportunities of employment. It attracted people from all over the world. Developing nations, seeing new pastures supplied the man power needed. Job seekers from different states in India joined the flock to the Middle East. Migration to Arab Countries like the United Arab Emirates, Soudi Arabia, Oman, Baharin, Kuwait and Qatar began on a large scale from the year 1973. Migrants to Gulf countries formed 0.2 percent of the total workforce and less than 2% of the total number of persons employed
in the country\textsuperscript{55}. Although the migrants originally belonged to different states in India, the majority of them were from South India, especially Malayalees who accounted for nearly 70 percent of the total immigrants in Gulf countries. The intermingling of different races of people with different colours of their skin was made possible and easy by the development of rapid transport facilities.

II. Social Impact

The introduction of railways in South India in the middle of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century was a great landmark in social history.\textsuperscript{56} Railways broadened the social outlook of the people. South India had an agrarian background where people depended mainly on agriculture, thus linking them to land and to an extent to small scale handicrafts. Caste as an institution determined the social status and it reflected in the tenurial pattern also. Each caste had several sub castes and these caste variations had fixed the level of social and cultural status with in the major caste. Even dressing style and jewellery were related to this. While such variations determined the status of different castes, untouchability and pollution were practiced with graded levels of distance between castes. Socio economic exploitation and oppression by the dominant against subordinate in the socio-economic sphere were the character of traditional society\textsuperscript{57}. The conservatives who stood for traditional customs and conventions were the first to be afraid of the introduction of railways. They regarded this as one of the instrument to destroy the caste structure and the sacred Hindu traditional family. Further they treated it as a large scale attempt to convert the Indians to Christianity. While travelling in the trains they were to sit in the same compartment along with their fellow passengers belonging to different castes. However it is very interesting to note that many of the conservatives welcomed the introduction of railway system in India.
The evils of strict caste system are being considerably reduced through the closer contact of the people of different castes and creeds on trains and railway platforms.\textsuperscript{58} Railway journey was opened to all and not reserved to any particular castes. Higher classes demanded special carriages for journey. But it was denied by the Government.\textsuperscript{59} Passengers belonging to different castes, creeds with varying social customs and economic status flock in railway premises, platforms, retiring and waiting rooms, booking offices and in railway compartments, where they meet, mingle and travel together. In trains we can find an example of peaceful co-existence. They discuss problems of varied interest with each other and thus develop mutual understanding and sympathy.\textsuperscript{60} People of different religions and professions broaden their views and knowledge through the discussions with fellow passengers. This help to remove many of the social barriers.\textsuperscript{61} Nobody talks about caste system in railway compartments or booking offices where people of different castes come for business. Railways are the powerful agent of social transformation.\textsuperscript{62} It breaks isolation, brings new ideas and disperse ignorance. Railways are the vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge, removal of prejudices and modification of the age old customs and traditions.\textsuperscript{63}

Railways promote the unity of different social groups.\textsuperscript{64} Villages and small towns would gradually exchange their dialect for the national tongue by the increased frequency of communication with other places and persons, whose progress, customs and superstitions have for ages resisted. In the Pre Railway period, it was very difficult, expensive and dangerous for religious minded people to go on pilgrimage. But railways have provided a very comfortable, safe and cheap means of transport for people to visit places of worship.\textsuperscript{65}
Through train travel the general public learn a lot of things and develop their knowledge. In order to make healthy and enlightened citizens, railways have rendered valuable services in conducting publicity campaigns for social reforms, and for the improvement of sanitation.

No mass education would have been possible without the services of modern means of transport. The rapid spread of education in all its branches has been possible by the extension of railways in South India. Students from far and near could come to colleges and universities to get higher education because of the facilities offered by railways. Railways enabled to open girl’s schools also. In 1884-85 there were 35 girls' schools of good condition in South India. In the earlier stages, college study for the girls was not encouraged. From 1900 onwards there was a tremendous change in the attitude of the people of South India. The Hindu and Muslim girls took to collegiate education. So many educational institutions were started in Madras, Nagercoil, Tirunelveli, Thiruvananthapuram and Malabar. It attracted students of remote places to study in these educational institutions. Many educated persons of Malabar, Travancore and Nagercoil were employed in the British service also. Educated individuals, doctors, teachers and clerks changed their residence in search of employment. Railways provided helpful for both students and employees.

Railways completely changed the educational system of South India. English, as a medium of instruction inspired the people to attain higher education and became employees in British service. Educated individuals, preferred to change their residence for employment in cities like Madras and Bombay. Thus Railways by increasing personal mobility increased the growth of towns. This personal mobility encouraged emigration and transference of population from rural
areas to urban areas or from one part of the country to another. Intermingling of people of different social status and of different castes led to liberalism in ideas. By connecting the different parts of the country and facilitating mutual intercourse among the people, railways have created a sense of social harmony.

Railways have encouraged mass migration of population from the areas of congestion and the speedy movement of man power to the needy places. Railways have helped to meet the horrors of famine and drought by supplying food, from the areas of plenty. Since India was overpopulated it suffered a lot from famines. Famines visited South India more frequently than other parts of India. After 1870, human mobility in South India began to increase and the people migrated to different parts of India. Many Indians left their country and settled in other lands. Inter mixing of different colours of skin was made possible and easy, by the development of rapid transport system

Railways have quickened the activities of social reformers. They supplied new ideas of brotherhood, non violence, truth and equality among the people. Some superstitious beliefs like untouchability, unapproachability and the customs like sati, child marriage and female infanticide have been considerably removed from the society of South India with the introduction of railways

III. POLITICAL IMPACT

The railways in South India influenced the political life of the people very much. The railways converted South India from a geographical expression into a well knit and consolidated political unit. Travelling together created an understanding between the various sections of the society which was lacking till the introduction of railways. Feeling of oneness began to develop
among Indians. In the pre Railway period, distributive tendencies used to prevail among the various sections of the people but now a sense of nationality has been born.

The British desire for the expansion of railways had been responsible for a good deal of interference with the province of Tirunelveli, Tiruchirapalli, Salem, Nagarcoil, Malabar, Travancore etc, and in the administration of many princely states. This made consolidation of the British administration and the same time railway stimulated the active participation of the people in the Freedom Movement. Wagon Tragedy in connection with the Malabar Rebellion of 1921 was a good example of British brute force. 60 Mappilas and 4 Tiyas were kept in a wagon and they died of suffocation. Such incident did not find even in the history of notorious cruelties of the rulers of the Roman Empire. As a result in August 1921 traffic between shornur and Calicut on the South Indian Railways was suspended for about 10 days owing to the removal of rails, bolts etc. by the Mappila rebels.

National leaders like Mahatma Gandhiji, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Subash Chandra Bose, Balagangadhara Tilak, and others used railways as a medium of transport to spread the message of nationalism and to enlist the support of all Indians against alien rule. Indian leaders induced the feeling of nationalism and patriotism among the people. Nationalism and patriotism later paved the way to form Indian National Congress in 1885. The first meeting of Indian National Congress was held in Bombay, Second in Calcutta and third in Madras. Eminent leaders of Tamil Nadu and Kerala participated in these meetings.
With the help of Railways, the most effective and cheaper means of transport political unification of the country was attained and modern administration was established. By simply connecting the nook and corner of our country it created a sense of unity among the people by destroying the physical barriers of distance. Railways have helped to unite people of various sects who inhabit in different regions of the country. The system of administrative machinery had also been centralized and now a sense of unity in diversity has been prevailing among the people.

The Indian nationalists recognised the symbolic significance of railway stations and their critical importance as communication centres. The visit of The Prince of Wales to India was greeted by a hartal in July 1921 when he landed at Bombay. His visit to Madras on 14 January 1922 was also boycotted by the eminent leaders of Tamil Nadu. There were instances of Satyagraha in which the railway and its premise were used for National Freedom Movement. During their strike in 1928 the Madras and South Mahratta workers wore Gandhi caps. When one worker was arrested for wearing a Gandhi cap, all the workers came to the work shop wearing Gandhi cap. This showed the solidarity of the railway workers in the National Movement. When the congress started boycotting toddy shops, the Perambur workers actively participated in it. The workers also wore khaddar dress.

During Quit India movement of 1942 the nationalists committed acts of sabotage in so many places of South India, especially in Madurai, where there was intense nationalism among the people. The sights of the members of Indian National Congress sitting across railway tracks became one of the familiar images of the Indian Nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s. Railway and other transportation united Indians which resulted in Indian Independence on August 15, 1947.
Railways also helped for the smooth functioning of State level and National level conferences of national leaders. Railway was one of the important factors which united two princely states of Travancore and Cochin in 1949. This also accelerated the process of the formation of modern Kerala on 1 November 1957.

Apart from the land acquisition for railways, many lands were divided through the passing of the railways. Subsequently the land owners were reduced as farmers and cultivators. William Logan through his work ‘Malabar’ gives a vivid picture of the decline of landlordism through railways especially in Malabar.

1. MILITARY

From the military point of view, development of the cantonment centres, carriage of horses, transport of troops, formation of Railway Volunteer Guards in 1885 etc. were due to railways. During the World Wars Indian Railways were called upon to release locomotives, wagons and trucks for the Middle East, necessitating the dismantling of as many as 26 branch lines, one of them was Shornur line. At that time. Railway workshops, especially the famous Perambur workshop, were diverted to manufacture military weapons. Before the introduction of railways, army was garrisoned in the Madras Presidency only. But after the introduction of railways it was stationed in the adjoining states of Mysore, the Nizam's dominions, the Central provinces and British Burma. In the South, army was stationed at Trissur, Quilon and Thiruvananthapuram. British forces were connected with all the three railway stations. On 18 July 1906 about one tenth of the Indian army
was serving outside India including 9186 men in South Africa and 10616 men in China. Thus railways helped the army to move easily from one place to another.

2. POSTAL DEVELOPMENT

Railways brought about fundamental changes in the postal system of South India. Railways have influenced the postal development very much. Before the development of railways postal mail was carried by runners. They journeyed on foot, on horse and camel back, and by bullock carts, horse carriage and country boats. A letter ordinarily took 8 to 10 days from Madras to reach Bombay. The cost of conveyance of a letter from Madras to Bombay was one rupee. There was no regular and efficient system for carrying parcels. Articles were conveyed only over a few main routes between important towns. But railways in South India revolutionised the postal system. Various kinds of parcels and packages are being sent to thousands from the innumerable post offices scattered all over the country. Now a days the postal system functions in South India properly and smoothly because of Southern Railway.

Railways carried mails to distant places safely and quickly. When a new railway line opened it became the main channel of communication and mails were despatched for all post offices on the lines. Usually mail bags were carried in the guard's van. After 1865, a separate department in charge of a mail guard was posted. Mails were sent as packets or in a bag for every other post office and these packets were received and delivered at each station by the mail guard. In 1907 the Railway Mail Service was established. Later it was designed that two specially fitted compartments of a second class carriage be set apart to serve as a travelling post office on mail trains.
The number of post offices in the Madras circle was 129 in 1854. It increased to 942 in 1883-1884.\textsuperscript{82} The total number of articles passing through the post offices had risen from 5466672 in 1854-55 to 31778552 in 1879. The articles carried by post up to the year 1879 consisted of letters, news papers, book packets and parcels.\textsuperscript{83} Post cards were introduced in 1879. The system of insurance came in 1878, money orders in 1880 and postal savings bank in 1882. Amalgamation of Telegraph with the post office was also commenced at the close of 1883.\textsuperscript{84} Money orders were introduced in August 1884. All the above benefits were enjoyed by the people only because of the railways. For carrying heavy mails and parcels and for linking the postal system with the remotest parts of the country, the railways are the most important means of transport.

3. \textbf{TOURISM}

Railway brought about fundamental changes in the field of tourism also. Tourism is today the world's largest and fastest growing industry in terms of revenue. Tourism earns large sum of foreign exchange without any exporting of tangible products.\textsuperscript{85} India especially South India has a number of attractive places. It offers a variety of attraction such as mountain resorts, historic monuments, ancient temples, forts and sea shores.\textsuperscript{86}

Railways can be considered as one of the most powerful means for mass travel in 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries. The railways have carried millions of passengers and tourists all over Indian States. South India is filled with diversity of terrain, people, language, culture and history and it is a tourist paradise for the tourists. For tourists wishing to travel in groups, Indian Railways provide exclusive luxury coaches called ‘Tourist cars’. These cars have cooking facilities also. The upper class
coaches have extra amenities like additional bathrooms, sitting cum-dining rooms etc. Nation wide
tour is now a reality. Cheap, comfortable, fast and safe railway service has considerably increased
national tourism.

Tourists who like to travel on the Nilgiri mountains, Southern Railway provides the
opportunity connecting Mettupalayam and Udagamandalam (Ooty). It serves an interesting
experience to the tourists. The bird watchers and the safari enthusiasts also have gained the benefits
of railways to visit Thekkady Wild Life Sanctuary, Mudumalai Sanctuary and Vedanthangal Bird
Life Sanctuary. Neyyar Safari Park near Thiruvananthapuram offers exciting tourist opportunities to
the tourists and the railways provide an important role in it. The Ranganathitru Bird Sanctuary is a
tourist attractive place. The Bandipur Wild Life Sanctuary which is situated, 30 kilometres away
from Mysore attracts tourists from different parts of the world and Southern Railway provides
opportunity for the viewers.

The world famous Padmanabha Swamy temple, near Thampanur Railway Station,
Thiruvananthapuram attracts thousands of tourists and Southern Railway provides golden
opportunity for the pilgrims and tourists as it is situated in the walkable distance from the railway
station. In the state of Karnataka certain Southern portions which is served by Southern Railway is
a perennial source of joy to the tourists. Bangalore, the garden city attracts the tourists from
different parts of India and abroad. Mysore Brindavan garden has so many colourful fountains and
these fountains are illuminated in the evening.
Marina beach near Madras, Kovalam and Shangummukham beaches near Thiruvananthapuram attract the attention of foreigners and Southern Railway provides opportunity for it. Performing arts of South India like Bharatanatyam, Mohiniattam, Yakshaganam and above all the world famous Kathakali with its traditional centres attract the artists of different countries. The annual music festivals at Tiruvaiparu to commemorate the memory of Carnatic Musician, Tyagaraja and the Soorya festival at Thiruvananthapuram crowds the trains. Special trains are also run in the case of festivals like Mahasivarathri, Onam, Christmas and Ramzan. Extra staff members are posted and other arrangements including supply of water, sanitation and lighting are also provided by the Southern Railway in festival seasons for the benefits of passengers.

3. RELIEF FROM FAMINE AND SCARCITY

India, a monsoon country, was very often affected by famine and scarcity because of the failure of rain. There was a great famine in South India in 1876. It lasted for two years and many people died of starvation. At that time railways in South India made great helpful service in bringing food products to the famine affected areas. Construction of new railway lines also gave employment opportunities to the people. Different countries of the world had come forward to send food products to India and enormous quantities of food grains like wheat, rice, and millet were imported from abroad. Railways played fruitful service by transporting food grains from surplus areas to deficit areas. While one area was suffering from the shortage of food grains the another area was abundant in food grains, and railways made it possible for the deficiencies of the former to be supplied from the surplus to the latter. Food grains were imported to the famine affected areas of South India. Nearly 25,00,000 tonnes of food grains were imported to South India in 1900 through railways.
4. TRANSPORT

From the British point of view, railroad travelling is a delightful improvement of human life. Everything is near, everything is immediate, time, distance and delay are abolished. Railways became an effective tool of economic imperialism but surprisingly the Indians began to take advantages of this cheap, speedy and relatively safe means of transport. When railways started in India, there was confusion as to whether railways would be accepted as a mode of transport, since the majority of Indians were unaware of the transport revolution and its mechanical development. But the poor people accepted cheerfully, the wonder-on-wheels as a means of transport.

A network of feeder roads is very necessary for the effective functioning of railways. Feeder roads facilitate easier movement of men and material. For example, a few acres of land has been taken from Eravipuram Pakuthi, Quilon Taluk in Kerala for improving the village road to Mayyanad railway station on the Quilon-Thiruvananthapuram line. Besides feeder roads, many approach roads also came into existence in different parts of South India. For example in 1913 the Cochin Durbar sanctioned the construction of an approach road from Avaneswaram Railway Station to Pathanapuram and another from Kaccad to Kypathur at the cost of Rs. 437000 and Rs. 25200 respectively. It was also decided that since these roads would be directly benefiting the railways and the general public, the railway company and the government would share the expense. Railways were solely responsible for developing the road transport system as existing today in the country.
Extension of railway lines promotes the transport. For example the extension of railways to Ernakulam in the Cochin territory in 1902 necessitated the transport on the back waters and the canals. After the opening of Shencotta-Quilon railway for traffic steam boat service also started between Cochin and Aleppy and also between Aleppy and Quilon.95

The British never considered railways as a public undertaking and a better means of transport for the policy of exploitation. For several years goods wagons and even open trucks were used as substitutes for the transport of passengers. A fourth class coach was introduced in which the seating boards had been removed and the passenger had to squat on the floor.96 The public agitation in 1885 helped to establish benches and no provision existed for latrines before 1900. In earlier trains, lights were provided by candles brought by the passengers themselves and placed it behind their own seats. Later in some carriages oil lamps were introduced. In 1907 lightening carriages by electricity became fairly popular.

The company officials insisted on the passengers to put on shoes and long coats to maintain dignity and decorum. It was a disgraceful chapter in the history of company’s railway administration in India. The dress prescribed by the company was really not suitable for the climatic condition of India. The British government considered this dress code as a means to reform the Indians towards westernization.

IV. CULTURAL IMPACT

The introduction of railways brought about significant changes in the cultural fabric of South India. The conservatives who stood for traditional customs and conventions were the first to
be afraid of the introduction of railways. They regarded railways as one of the instruments to destroy their cultural balance and the sacred hindu traditional family. Further they treated it as a large scale attempt to convert the Indians to christianity. While travelling in the trains they were forced to sit in the same compartment along with their fellow passengers belonging to different strata and castes. However it is interesting to note that many of the conservatives welcomed the introduction of railway system in India. It is one of the wonders of the age to see how the people of India have suddenly changed their stereotyped habits of centuries.

Culturally, the area covered by the Southern Railway is primitive. It has not suffered the havoc of the North. Railways carry cultural heritage such as fashions, traditions, fine arts, music, dance, paintings etc. and make them universal. Temples, churches and mosques are plenty in South India, as they are the centres of cultural development. The Sabarimala temple is a place where lakhs of people from South India visit their favourite deity, Ayyappa and mingle with each other during the pilgrim season. Guruvayoor temple, dedicated to Lord Krishna, is another place of worship where lot of devotees assemble together throughout the year. Attukal temple, in Thiruvananthapuram is a place of pilgrimage only for lady devotees. Thanjavur temple, the Srirangam Ranganatha temple, the Meenakshi temple at Madurai, Rameswaram Ramanatha temple, Trichendur temple, Palani temple and Kancheepuram temple are served by trains of Southern Railway. Sree Vaikundam or Alwar Thirunagari is another place of pilgrimage. The temples of Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu also attracts thousands of pilgrims from different parts of India and abroad. These temples promote emotional integration of the people of India and Southern Railway has been speeding up the process. A number of railway stations like Srirangam, Ramanathapuram, Pondicherry and Vaitheeswarankoil have been remodelled as important pilgrim centres. Southern
Railway provides all modern amenities and facilities for pilgrims and tourists. Rail tourist's information centres have been set up at important stations.

Southern Railway serves the cultural integration of the people. The church of Velakanni is very famous. The church attracts pilgrims throughout the year and lakhs of people visit the church on festive occasions. The Nagapatanam Nagore Durga, the celebrated muslim place of worship attracts the attention of the people. People visit this mosque throughout the year and on festive occasions, like Kandoori festival.

At Adayar in Madras the headquarters of the Theosophical society is located. It is also the centre of Kalakshetra and the world renowned school of Bharatanatyam. It continues to offer innovative creations such as ballets based on Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music. The Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry also attracts the attention of people of inside and outside India.

In short, the impact of railways on the life and culture of the people of South India was tremendous. Before the introduction of Railways, the people were restricted by aspects of nature viz, climate, mountain, forests, rain and rivers. After the introduction of railways it minimized these limitations. Railways opened access to mysterious places so that people could reach there without fear. Railways stimulated economic development, political awakening and social awareness. Introduction of modern technologies and industries, growth of education, creation of employment opportunities, supplementary transport system, roads and canals and general enlightenment were some of the direct consequences of the introduction of railways in South India. It has affected almost all the major spheres of human life, and more over it has created a homogenous nation out of heterogeneous people.
END NOTE


31. NNPR, Swadesamitran, dated 15 July 1922, Madras, Tamil Nadu Achieves.


38. Dharmakumar, op.cit, p:583.


41. S. Palanichamy, op.cit, p: 175.


43. S.C. Chakravarti, op.cit, p: 159.


52. Ibid.


55. Ibid.


57. Ibid.


72. RNNP, Kerala Kahalam, dated 9 September 1922, Tiruvalla, Tamil Nadu Archives.


83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.


88. Malayala Manorama daily, dated 5 January 2012.

90. The failure of the summer rains of 1876 extended over about half of the Madras Presidency. The area affected was about 20000 square miles containing a population of 36 millions.


101. G.O. No. 296, dated 30 August 1917, Public Works Department (Railway), 1917, p: 2, Tamil Nadu Archives.