

Revisiting the Historical Significance of Telegraph in Modern Travancore

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Abstract:- Communication has a unique place in the development of human civilization. New era of postal system started with the invention of Telegraph. Travancore was a small Indian kingdom ruled by Travancore Royal family, which came under the British rule from the early 19th century onwards. Travancore witnessed socio – political, economic and cultural transformations with the coming of telegraph.

I. INTRODUCTION

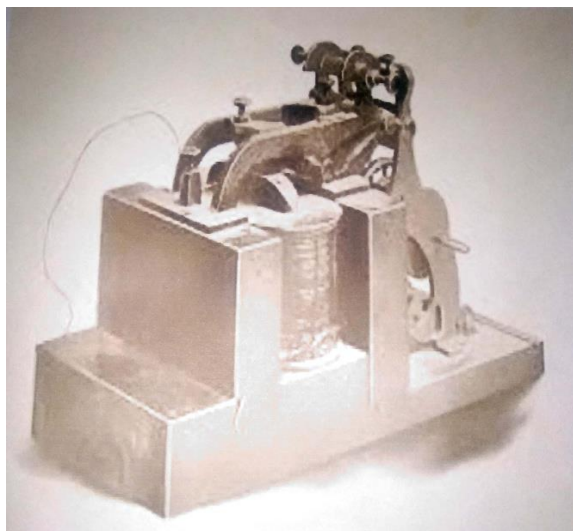


Fig 1

Modern era of communication in Travancore was started with the establishment of telegraph system by connecting Cochin with Tuticorin through Travancore from 1863 onwards. According to the 1971 census, 85 villages had been provided with telegraph officers was also 35. But in 1972, when the Techno – Economic survey of Malappuram district was conducted, the number increase to 44 which were spread out in 44 villages. This shows the sudden expansion of the uses of telegraph all over Travancore and this led to the development of public sphere in Travancore. It connected common people towards the developing world of communication.

In the beginning, people used telegraph for sending alerts of birth, death, and emergency situations. Latter, it was widely used as a channel of spreading messages and news during India's freedom struggle. Telegraph services revolutionized socio – economic, political and cultural life of the people indirectly. Travancore was a state, ruled by caste

rules and regulations, the wide spread uses of telegraph created a public – sphere and paved the way for the upward movement of the society. People of the lower castes began to interact with the higher castes and it developed a kind of social interaction among the people, gradually melting the ice of 'Casteism'. This resulted in the transformation of the society.

Prior to the Telegraph, it took days, weeks and even months for messages to be sent from one location to a far flung position. With the coming of telegraph, messages could be sent in mere minutes and the world suddenly became much smaller. It enhanced the trade and economic related activities by reducing the gap between urban – rural divisions. This resulted in the development and economic growth of Travancore.

Telegraph services had contributed a number of services for the political unity of the country during the days India's freedom struggle. The ideas of writers, politicians, poets, social reformers, etc were spread each and every nook of Travancore. This enabled a feeling of nationalism in Travancore.

II. CONCLUSION

In this era of communication revolution the contributions of telegraph are noteworthy. It revolutionized the entire socio-economic, political and cultural realm of modern Travancore. On 31st July 2013, a historic era of telegraph came to an end with the onslaughts of mobile phones, fax, and internet and so on and the consequent communication explosion, snail mail is dying a slow death in India. But, its legacy is still going on.

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