

Enlargement of Roads: A Trip to Travancore

Leena Anna Lalu*

Research Scholar, Department of History, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, India

Abstract: Travancore, a princely state, focused on economic development. Developing communication mediums is one of the most real motives of Travancore rulers. Road is the most important communication medium. They have been made an initiative for the road making. Through the roads, society achieved economic progress. Social mingling was also happened. Study on how road construction has contributed to economic and social upliftment.

Keywords: Avenues, Communication, Public Work Department, Road, Travancore.

1. Introduction

Communication is a process that is crucial to the development of every community. Several sorts of communication media were prevalent in our society: roads, railways, state transportation, air transport, telegraph, and so on. Among these, road transportation is most cost-effective means of transportation. Early Kerala was divided into three units: Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. This was primarily due to its geographical and political characteristics. Following the downfall of the Chera dynasty, local rules gained greater power. The Travancore area arose during the Chera power. The Travancore state was under charge of various kings. The Travancore rulers maintained a good administrative system. The state of Travancore was bordered on the north by Cochin State and the Madras district of Coimbatore, on the east by Tirunaveli and Madurai districts, on the south by the Indian Ocean, and on the west by the Arabian Sea. Travancore, out of the three geopolitical units, had the most advanced communication mediums. A good communication networks is the best illustration of a government system that is running smoothly. In Travancore, both overland and maritime transportation were common. The network of roads was one of the principal modes of transportation in Travancore. With the construction of highways, we can notice a significant shift in society.

2. Public Work Department

The Maramath department was modified in the 1860s and it became identified as Public Work Department. Department was primarily concentrated on the construction of government buildings, palace associated works etc. They were not aware of the scientific construction method. At the time of Madhava Row, Public Work Department became more scientific than

earlier. The Public Work Department began to work as an independent unit from 1861. In 1863 Mr. Barton was appointed as the chief engineer in Madhava Row's time. Several foot paths in Travancore were constructed for the military purpose. In the time of Veluthampi Dalawa, he made several paths for the same. Those were reconstructed by the chief engineer, Mr. Barton. Administrative era of Mr. Barton was a golden period of the Travancore. In 1758- 98 Travancore rulers Rama Varma constructed a road between Cranganore to Cape Comorin. This was mentioned by writers in their works. The road provides Taneer Pandals facility to travelers. Ayyappan Marthanda Pillai appointed as the Dalawa in Travancore by ruler Rama Varma. During the time of Bala Rama Varma, he provided four lakhs rupees for the construction of the Trivandrum- Kanyakumari road. Rulers of Travancore passed a resolution of enlargement of road from Anandavallewaram-Mulamkadavoo. Administrative officers were take initiative to the construction of the roads. In 1895 April 26, chief engineer of PWD Department send a letter to the Diwan of Travancore regarding the cost of the road construction. Rs. 800 was the total expenditure of the road erection. In 1895 July 9th, another letter sends by the president of the Maramath Department to the Travancore Diwan on the subject of the progress of road construction. By 1896 the Anandavallewaram to Mulamkadavoo road construction was completed. The total cost was Rs. 940 only.

Most parts of Travancore are hilly; road construction in those areas was a challenge to the authorities. Roads were connects all the hilly areas. At the same time, the journey through the forest areas like Kanjirapally was more difficult for the travelers. The road connects the Pandalam and Pathanapuram section. Pandalam was a slope area, so through the Pandalam region, the road construction was not an easy task. The rulers and officers adopted scientific method to the construction. Later authorities maintained the road and keep in a good condition. The other road was in between the Krishnapuram and Changanassery. The road passes through Mavelikara and Thiruvalla area. The Panagudy - Trivandrum road connect areas around Travancore and panagudy. Travancore was well constructed by the rulers. The road provides Avenues in two sides of the roads, and has paddy cultivation and other cultivation. Kottayam - Madurai road received a wide attention from its construction onwards. The natives of the Kottayam were Syrian Christians, those who were traders and look after

*Corresponding author: Leenalalu99@gmail.com

the rubber related works. They continuously used the route. Another newly constructed road in Travancore was Tinnevely to Travancore road, which helps the trade activities in the traders in Travancore. Tuticorin port connected with state of Travancore. Trade activities were made very easier with the Tinnevely – Travancore road. Travancore rulers were more concern about the welfare of the people. So they provide more facilities to them. In the southernmost part of Travancore, Roads were constructed through the rural areas. Travancore - Aramboly road stands as a bridge between the seashore places like Neyyantinkara and Vizhinjam.

Quilon was another best example for the road making. It can be said that Kollam was the capital of Travancore in trade from the very beginning. The trade in goods and materials took place by land water transport. Therefore, the land trade depended mainly on roads and railways. Marthanda Varma, the very efficient ruler of Travancore was keen to build new roads in Kollam. The Quilon- Shencottai Road- The road between the Quilon- Shencottai covers kottarakara region, Aryankavu pass etc. Hilly and forest areas were included in the road way. The road was mostly used by the Merchants and traders. Another one was Quilon – Cochin road, which passing through the Allapey, Sherthallai area. The road was very useful to the foot travelers. Long distance travelers were used the route. On both sides of the road we could see paddy other crops from the Kayamkulam region. The road between the Quilon to Eratupetta connects forest areas like Ranni and Kanjirapalli area.

The government has given encouragement for the construction of roads. They opened network of road by themselves. Government agreed to give sufficient fund for the erection and preservation of the roads in Travancore. Road development fund was given for the maintenance of these roads. Adopting these types of road making helps the government for the introduction of the several network of roads.

In the 20th century, Travancore government gave significance to the road transportation and its enlargement. This was the developmental period of Travancore. The public Work Department and the Travancore Government jointly worked for the expansion of the transport system. Several roads were constructed by department. Around sixteen lakhs rupees were set aside to the construction of the roads in Travancore. Near 5267 miles of roads were built by the Public Work Department. The new construction and maintenance work have also completed by the government. Diwan Peishcar was sent a letter to the Diwan of Travancore state regarding to build a road between Vaikom – Udayamperur route, which was very essential to the native people. We can find out from the Government records that PWD took the initiative to the construction of roads. One among was Nagarcoil - Friday market. Chief engineer of the PWD and state authority were interested in that work. Public Work Department attains lands from the native people and provides satisfactory compensation for the property. In the city of Travancore, there was a crisis in the case of condition roads. There were unmetalled roads and it was full of dust. Travelling through the roads was not

convenient for the public. The public work department was started to concrete the roads with the available component like cement and metal. Three lakhs rupees were pay out to the maintenance. The Kaudiyar palace road was also concreted in the concrete maintenance scheme. The improvements in the roads system lead the travelling satisfaction to the travelers. Foot paths were built in the both sides for foot travelers.

Authorities had paid special attention to construction Mundakayam road, which is situated in Kottayam district now. The natives of Mundakayam area need a fine road communication. Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyer was the Diwan of Travancore in the 20th century. He took initiative to build newly roads. The public work department and the finance department gave approval to the maintenance work. Now a network of roads was attached with Mundakayam. Certain evidences are available to the construction of the roads from the North to south. The British resident of Travancore sends progressive report of the road construction to the Diwan of Travancore. He stated the total cost of the road and other expense of the road construction.

There are some evidences available for the construction of highways from north to south of Travancore. British resident of Travancore sends a progress report on road construction to Travancore Diwan. He indicated entire cost of the road construction. These are just a few roads that existed during that period. Travancore rulers have always attached importance to the welfare of the people. We can give a lot of evidence for this. Roads have played an important role in making people's lives easier. After the construction road, there was an economic and social uplift in Travancore. The document starts here. Copy and paste the content in the paragraphs.

3. Conclusion

This paper presented an overview of Enlargement of roads: a trip to Travancore.

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