

## **CHAPTER- II**

### **NEW ERA OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION SINCE 1854**

The EEIC as the case of Bombay and Madras had set up a separate administrative unit in Bengal known as 'Presidency of Fort William in Bengal' in 1699 to conduct business smoothly in that province.<sup>1</sup> But, the Company had tried to establish its civil and military administrative set-ups with timely modification after the acquisition of Diwani in 1765. Though it was found that the Company intended to set up civil administration known as district administration, it was basically depended upon the military set-up. In fact, the unknown land and also the scare for indigenous reaction against the rule of the EEIC compelled the strategy makers of the said Company to depend upon its military powers. Thus, all the portfolios of the early regime of the EEIC were hold by the military officials and that is why all the initial efforts towards any administrative development relating to the administration of the EEIC, credits must went to the Company's military force.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Governor of the Presidency of Bengal enjoyed topmost power in the administration, he had a specific line of administration which had also been followed by the Governments of other presidencies in India. According to Dodwell,

the Governor had a council of two civil members with the commander-in-chief when that post was not joined to his own. He enjoyed the same power of overruling his council as the Governor General. Under the Governor in Council were three boards- the Board of Trade, the Board of Revenue and the Military Boards- which conducted the detail of administration, and normally were presided over by a member of council.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, a council termed as Governor-in-council of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal, better known as the 'Calcutta Council'<sup>4</sup> comprised of the Governor of Presidency of Fort William in Bengal with three other members including Commander-in-chief, was set up to look after all the matters of the EEIC in Bengal. Thus the Governor in Council occupied the supreme position both in civil and military affairs of the Company in Bengal.<sup>5</sup> The Battle of Plassey was a strongest proof of direct involvement of the Calcutta Council in Bengal politics. However, a Select Committee, as remarked by Nirranjan Dhar, 'was instituted in 1756 to expedite matters, to cope with emergency situations and to deal with secret affairs'.<sup>6</sup> Three separate wings of the Governor in Council or Governor General in Council which was reformed by the Regulating Act and afterwards, hold responsible for three distinct affairs of the EEIC. While first two Boards viz. the Board of Trade and the Board of Revenue basically dealt with the matters of business; collection of revenues and civil justice of the EEIC concerned; the third organ i.e. the Military Board was chiefly responsible for the military affairs of the EEIC. This Board was also responsible for the matter of public works whether civil or military of the Company in Bengal. All the civil and military buildings were constructed, maintained under the direct supervision of this Board. Prior to the introduction of railways, a number of trunk roads, bridged and metalled were constructed and maintained under the supervision of military engineers, connecting the more important military and commercial centres of the region.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, Later on an attempt was made to give a general control over local road operations in Bengal to the Military Board without having necessary increase of authority.<sup>8</sup>

The road policy of the EEIC since its acquisition of political supremacy in the Presidency of Bengal was very weak in strictest sense. The extraordinary neglect with which the subject of improved road communication was treated by the early Government

of the EEIC cannot be ascribed altogether to want of funds but by some other factors e.g. the imperialistic concern and attitude of racial supremacy of the British employees.<sup>9</sup> The roads as a general rule, were constructed if the necessities had been recognised by pressing. “Fair-weather roads”, as stated by G.W. Macgeorge, “were constructed by, and for the use of, armies on the march, but these were neglected almost as soon as they had fulfilled their immediate purpose, and those absolutely necessary for the control of newly acquired territories were only kept open by constant reconstruction”.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the character of roads under the Military Board was chiefly military, based on the notions of overcoming immediate needs. Similarly, the reports from Military Board to the Governor General from 1841 to 1849 clearly revealed the ‘chaotic conditions under which the provision and maintenance of the principal roads were then carried out’. These reports hinted towards the absence of cooperation between the Departments.<sup>11</sup> In addition to this, ‘the powers of supervision exercised by the Military Board in Calcutta were as extensive as its financial and executive authority was limited’.<sup>12</sup>

The temporary measures can’t be a fruitful solution of permanent needs. In fact, till the middle of nineteenth century the EEIC had mostly arranged the administration and economy of Bengal according to their needs. In this circumstance, the urge for strong road policy of the Government was bound to be raised. Accordingly, the activities of the Military Board regarding the maintenance and supervision of roads were repeatedly criticised by the officials of the Government. Even, Marquis of Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India, recorded that ‘the constitution of the said Military Board, was faulty, its duties far too onerous, and its work badly done in consequence’.<sup>13</sup>

The unsatisfactory working of the system for the superintendence and execution of public works attracted the notice of Government and early in 1850, the Honourable Court

of Directors ordered the assembly of a Commission at each Presidency for the purpose of enquiring into the whole subject.<sup>14</sup> These instructions were carried into effect in December 1850 and the Bengal Commission submitted its report in March 1851. They expressed an unanimous and strong conviction of the utter unfitness of the Military Board for the superintendence of public works whether civil or military, and suggested an entirely new scheme for the management of the department, which scheme was eventually adopted with the consent of the Honourable Court. The principal features of this scheme were-

1. that the control of the Department of Public Works should be taken from Military Board and vested in Provincial Chief Engineers.
2. that each Provincial Government should exercise control over Public Works,, Civil and Military, in its respective Province under certain limitations of power in respect to the sanction of new projects;
3. that the Chief Engineers should be assisted by the Superintending and Executive Engineers;
4. that the separate office of Chief Engineer, as before constituted should be abolished.

Consequently, on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1854, the Governor General in the Military Department issued orders (No 430 of 1854) establishing a new scheme for the control and management of the Department of Public Works under the Bengal Presidency with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 1854. With the introduction of new department, the age-old Military Board was abolished in 1855. An extract from the order no. 430 is the following.

The Department of Public Works, Civil and Military, will be removed from under the superintendence of the Military Board and will be placed under the management of one officer to be designated as Chief Engineer, in each of three

great Divisions of the Bengal Presidency, viz. the Lower Provinces<sup>2</sup>; the North Western Provinces; and the Punjab including the territories beyond the Jumna. Under each Chief Engineer will be appointed Superintending and Executive Engineers. Every official communication received by the Chief Engineers and their proceedings thereon shall be submitted to the Local Governments are now reported to the Government of India. Chief Engineers will communicate with the Head of Departments: Revenue, Judicial, Marine etc. regarding the buildings and other public works connected with each.<sup>15</sup>

A Secretary to the Government of India for the Department of Public Works was appointed. Lieutenant W.E. Baker of the Bengal Engineers of late Military Board was appointed as the first incumbent to this post. The staff of engineers were drawn from several sources. Basically, the Engineer Corps of late Military Board, Artillery, Royal regiments supplied the same. The Thompson College at Roorkee was referred for being the future supply line of engineers and subordinates for this department.<sup>16</sup> However, the Provincial Engineers were decided in 1892 to be recruited from the Indian Engineering Colleges from the most distinguished students and by promotion from the upper subordinate ranks.<sup>17</sup>

The organizational evolution of the PWD can be summarised as decentralization of control over the sub-organizations. The central authority of Public Works in India since the second half of nineteenth century fall into four classes- Buildings and Roads,

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<sup>2</sup> The Charter Act of 1833 (No. 38) provided for the division of The Presidency of Bengal into Bengal and Agra Presidencies. The Presidency of Bengal was renamed as the Presidency of Lower Provinces of Bengal. Assam was recognized as a separate province under a Chief Commissioner in 1874. Later on, the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was created in 1905 by merging three eastern Divisions of Bengal with Assam.

Irrigation, Railways and Military. In the year of 1882, the Military Works Branch was separated from the PWD. In 1905, Railway Branch in the PWD was abolished after shifting the whole Branch to the Railway Board. The Secretary of the Agriculture and Industries Department assumed the Secretariat functions in the Public Works Department since the beginning of twentieth century and three Departments viz. Agriculture and Industries, Public Works and Irrigation continued to be under one Secretary till the reforms were introduced in 1937.<sup>18</sup>

As regards Buildings, Roads, and Irrigation, the delegation of powers to Provincial Governments was very clear. Each Local Governments had its Public Works Secretary who was responsible for maintenance and construction of its irrigation works, public buildings and roads. Chief Engineer of Bengal Province played dual role- firstly as Chief Engineer and secondly as the Secretary to the Bengal Government.<sup>19</sup> However, the functions of these two posts were discharged without confusion. All documents relating to the substantive and executive charge of the Department were signed as Chief Engineer while all those appertaining to the Secretariat, as Secretary; 'no document being signed conjointly as in both capacities'.<sup>20</sup> For a considerable period, Chief Engineer in Bengal was responsible for both Irrigation and Buildings and Roads as both were under the control of the PWD. Until 1927 the Chief Engineers of the Irrigation and Public Works (Roads and Buildings) Department acted as the Secretary to the Local Government. In 1927-28 the Secretariat functions were separated from the functions of the Chief Engineer. However, till that time, the same staff, as a rule, responsible for both Irrigation and Buildings and Roads. The Province was divided into Public Works 'Divisions', which comprised of single civil districts, or portions or groups of districts whatever the case might be. Each division was in charge of an Executive Engineer, who was 'immediately responsible for the up-keep and improvement of all works within his

charge'.<sup>21</sup> The functions of Executive Engineers were multifarious, though they were well assisted by a group of Assistant Engineers who were in training for higher functions as Subordinate Engineers, Observers and Supervisors. They were either in-subordinate control of a portion of the division or in charge of a separate work. Five or six PWD divisions were grouped into a 'Circle' which was under the charge of a Superintending Engineer. He was responsible for all the works within his Circle and all important estimates of any work from Assistant or Executive Engineers under his Circle had to forward to him mandatorily for scrutiny.

The Lower Provinces of Bengal comprised of several PWD Circles. Amongst these, The 1<sup>st</sup> Circle was comprised of Calcutta, the 24 Paraganas, Hooghly and Burdwan; the Bengal districts south and west of the Grand Trunk Road; the change of the 1<sup>st</sup> division, of the Grand Trunk Road itself and the Raipore Mail Road. Again, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circle was comprised of the 2<sup>nd</sup> division of the Grand Trunk Road as far as Kurrunnassa; the Bengal districts north of the Trunk Road and bordering the Ganges and Brahmaputra, including Assam, Sylhet and Dacca.<sup>22</sup>

Since the establishment of Lieutenant Governorship in Bengal by the Charter Act of 1853,<sup>23</sup> Lt. Governor of Bengal had a staff of five secretaries amongst them two were for Public Works. While one of the Public Works Secretaries was concerned with irrigation, marine and railways, and the other was the in-charge of road and buildings. The Roads and Buildings branch administered five circles, three of which were controlled by the Superintending Engineers and two by Executive Engineers, designated as the Inspector of Works whose duties were to inspect and supervise the works done under the Engineers employed by the District Boards and to exercise professional control over their proceedings. The Imperial and Provincial buildings and roads in these districts were in

charge of the District Engineers, where the District Boards concerned had accepted the responsibility for their upkeep, and of the Inspectors of Works in certain Districts in which those bodies had not accepted such a responsibility. The Superintending Engineers have control of Public Works divisions held by Executive Engineers, and they also acted as Inspectors of Works in their circles.<sup>24</sup>

In 1905 when new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was set up, by the inclusion of six Divisions of Eastern Bengal and Assam, viz. Chittagong, Dacca, Rajshahi, The Assam Valley, the Surma Valley and Hill Districts<sup>25</sup> the PWD was under the general charge of a Chief Engineer, who was also a Secretary under the member-in-charge of revenue and agriculture to the Local Government and was aided by an under-Secretary.<sup>26</sup> The superior engineering establishment was divided into two services, imperial and provincial. The main roads were usually under the Provincial PWD and local roads were constructed and maintained by Local Boards and Municipalities.<sup>27</sup> Eastern Bengal and Assam each formed a circle-in-charge of a Superintending Engineer. The executive staff included 8 Executive and 4 Assistant Engineers. Local works in Eastern Bengal were generally entrusted to a District Engineer, deputed by the District Board. He had to work under the supervision of an Inspector of Works.<sup>28</sup>

Now, let's have a look towards the road policies of the Government of Bengal within the period of study. The Mutiny of 1857 brought fresh and strongest possible proof of the necessity for improved means of communication.<sup>29</sup> Annual Report on the Administration of Bengal for 1860-61 laid down clear terms and the policy of the Government towards development of roads. The Government had been relieved, the report said, 'in a great measure during the past year from pressing necessity of providing military accommodation for troops and has been able to give practical attention to the formation

of a system of imperial roads throughout the provinces'.<sup>30</sup> The leading features of this scheme had been, the report says,

to provide one main line of Road, at least, in each District, which shall pass through principal Town or Station and be continuous, that is in connection with the main lines of the next District; so that District may be connected with District and the Roads be of general public advantage, as well as of local benefit. At the same time the communications with adjacent Provinces not under the jurisdiction of the Bengal Government have been maintained, and the Imperial Lines have been designed to afford the means of easy communication between the chief centres of population, and to secure to every part of the country a proper outlet for its produce and rarely access to the great channels or thoroughfares of commerce. The existing Trunk Roads and their branches form the first instalment of the projected system.<sup>31</sup>

However, by 1880-81, certain new considerations were strongly emerging in the road policies of the Government. Sunil Kumar Munsii has rightly observed,

Consolidation of administration by projecting the arms of law and order into inaccessible parts of the region- both in the heartland as well as in the northern border areas where railways could not be immediately extended- was fast becoming an imperative for the colonial set-up due to repeated tribal uprisings and the strategic significance of the border zone. Two regions which were getting significant attention in road development were the Himalayan region and the Chota Nagpur region...As for the roads in the Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and other Himalayan and Sub-Himalayan districts, it was noted that the roads opened up communication between the frontier and the plains.<sup>32</sup>

The funds generally collected from the tolls on the rivers, roads, bridges and ferries; were devoted to the construction and maintenance of local roads and bridges.<sup>33</sup> As regards, the Government of India and its provincial counterpart time to time imposed road cesses for the improvement and construction of roads. The Bengal Road Cess Act of 1871 was enacted accordingly to impose rates on houses, mines and other immovable property which might in no case exceed one-half anna in each rupee of the net profits of the land-holders. This was revised in 1878 to one anna on the rupee for the said purpose.<sup>34</sup> The collected fund was intended to construct and maintain the roads, canals and other means of communication in every district. As regards, the Road Cess and the Public Works Cess Act of 1880 was an Act which stood for the levy of a road cess and a public works cess on immovable property imposed for the construction and maintenance of district roads and other means of communication of provincial public works. Accordingly, proclamation issued in 1873, stated that, “every taxpayer is encouraged and invited to claim that the tax shall be fairly applied to the village roads and local paths or water channels in which he is interested. The Government will use every effort to see that such local claims are fairly met, and that every taxpayer derives a fair benefit from the tax which he pays”.<sup>35</sup> But, interesting to note, the Public Works Cess is paid into Government, and the local committees had nothing to do with its expenditure.<sup>36</sup>

Since the time of Lord Ripon, the Governor General of India, a new scheme of rural self-government had been incorporated to Indian administration. Bengal Act III of 1885 or The Bengal Local Self-government Act of 1885 laid the provisions for the constructions and functions of District and Local Boards where special provisions were amended for their specific works regarding the Public Works.<sup>37</sup> On the formation of the District Boards, all roads and bridges; were placed under the control and administration of the District Boards under the provisions of section 73 of the Act. In accordance with

section 3 of the Act, the old establishment was retained under the new management. The District Boards had taken the place of the District Road Committees and had to execute same works with the same trained establishments. The District Board Engineers were either supplied by loan from the PWD or to be engaged independently. However, in most districts of Bengal, Local Boards were entrusted with the administration of the grants for village roads.<sup>38</sup> During the time of famines the workers employed for local works were largely devoted to road making which assisted the Government largely for relief works.<sup>39</sup>

The Bengal Village Self-government Act, 1919 provided for the Union Board which would control all roads, bridges and waterways within the Union and had the power for laying out or make new roads; construction of new bridges; divert, discontinue or close any road or bridge; widen, open, enlarge or otherwise improve any road or bridge; deepen or otherwise improve waterways; and provide for lighting of any road or public place within the Union.<sup>40</sup>

The roads in Bengal forming main line of communication in the first decade of twentieth century, were classed partly as Provincial and partly as District Roads on the basis of control. Similarly, these were also divided into six classes like metalled, unmetalled and so on according to their character.<sup>41</sup> These were maintained by the provincial and district fund respectively. There were also minor roads which were classed as municipal, local, military or cantonment, and village roads. The District Boards received funds from the province at irregular intervals for the construction of new roads specially intended to serve as railway feeders.<sup>42</sup>

By a resolution of the Council of State on 9th February 1927, a Road Development Committee was constituted with members from both Houses of Central Legislature under the chairmanship of Mr. M.R. Jayakar, 'to examine the desirability of developing the

road system of India, the means by which such development could be most suitably financed, and to consider the formation of a Central Road Board for the purpose of advising in regard to, and coordinating the policy in respect of, road development in India'.<sup>43</sup> The Commission in its Report suggested for a unitary road development scheme in India which would coordinate centre and provinces relating issues on roadways. As regards recommendations were made for the improvements of local roads required for motor transport in addition to a view of allocation of more funds in future from the Local Government and local bodies.<sup>44</sup>

During and after the World War II, transport and communication system in Bengal as same as the all Indian scenario, was subject to a very heavy pressure. The War which commenced in 1939 led to a tremendous increase in work, resulting in several changes in the Secretariat of the Provincial Government. A Defence Section was established in 1939 which became a branch of the Home Department in 1942. It dealt with the A.R.P. measures, enemy aliens, Administration of the Defence of India Act and Rules, Air Force, aerodromes, removal of records, evacuation and such other things connected with Civil Defence, the coordination of transport and its use for the carriage of goods to relieve railway congestion, the rationing of motor spirit, gas etc.<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, a Directorate of Civil Supply as a separate branch of the Commerce and Labour Department was created in 1942. This Directorate was merged into the Department of Civil Supply and the distribution of essential consumption commodities. At that time several new roads were constructed in Eastern India for military purposes.<sup>46</sup>

However, paucity of sufficient metalled roads required for frequent military movements, caused for anxiety of the Government which resulted for setting up a Technical Sub-Committee on Transport by the Department of War Transport,

Government of India in 1943 to 'consider the future of road transport and road-rail relations in the country'.<sup>47</sup> In 1943, the Government of India also convened a national conference at Nagpur delegated by all the Chief Engineers of the provinces and states of the country to constitute a road plan throughout the country. The plan approved by the Conference of Nagpur, proposed for four types of roads viz. National Highways, Provincial Highways, Major District Roads and Other District Roads which would fulfil inter provincial, provincial, districts and rural communicational requirements throughout India and terms were laid down for acquiring lands for the construction of roads accordingly.<sup>48</sup> The plan was finalised for implication by the Government of Bengal with modifications in 1946.<sup>49</sup> It is to be mentioned here in this connection that the during the days of War, the Central Government of India and State Government of Bengal laid down various rules under the Defence of India Act 1939 or Act XXXV of 1939 which were accused for creating great hindrances towards easy growth of transportation in that country.

India achieved its freedom in 1947. But, Bengal was bifurcated. Consequently, its broken communication was to be restored naturally. As a result, while the Nagpur Plan was tried to be implemented,<sup>50</sup> at the same time, organizational establishments of the PWD was reconstituted for handling the situation.<sup>51</sup> The Five Year Plans with its other deserving aims were implemented to develop the road networks of Bengal. The Northern Circle abolished in 1947, was regenerated with the head office establishment at Jalpaiguri for supervising and maintaining the road communication system in North Bengal. The Sino-Indian War of 1962 which threatened the security of India greatly, affected the communication policy of the Government. The road networks of the northern bordering districts of West Bengal as well as India had to be reshuffled for strategic reason.

Although, the native state of Cooch Behar maintained its special status during the British rule and has been included to Indian Union as a district, its history of communication is equally important as other parts of Bengal and even India. All the principal roads of Cooch Behar during the Cooch Behar Raj was under the management of the Superintendent of Public Works who was employed by the state and equally 'a good native officer with practical training at the head'.<sup>52</sup> But, since the colonial influence and control over the Cooch Behar Raj had been tighten, the PWD in Cooch Behar state came to the subordination of Vice President of the Regency Council.<sup>53</sup> During the colonial period the road policy of Cooch Behar state was to maintain east-west communication. While the west line was to maintain for connecting its subdivisions, the east line was important to Coochbehar for maintaining its communication with Calcutta through Rangpur, the nearest British headquarter.<sup>54</sup> As regards, there were also a prolonged strategy behind the improvement of road communication in Cooch Behar for opening and linking the villages with the railways.<sup>55</sup> It is no be noted that the State of Cooch Behar followed the policy of the British Government in India for Public Works funding. For example, a 'Communications Improvement Fund' was created in 1891-92, for the construction and maintenance of roads from the 'Government grants and share mainly from road cess and ferry collections'.<sup>56</sup> However, some roads equally important to the Government of India as Cooch Behar state were maintained by the All India Road Development Fund in 1930's.<sup>57</sup> The annually returning floods which occurred great devastations in the existing road system and absence of sufficient bridges and culverts on the roads forced the native Government for procuring heavy expenditure on these segments every year.<sup>58</sup> In this connection, it is interesting to note that all the road improvement works were done under the supervision of PWD as there was no Local Bodies in Cooch Behar State. After the merger of Cooch Behar state into West Bengal,

the PWD of the latter took over the charge of roads and bridges from the PWD of Cooch Behar state.

The inland navigation was the most accepted and accessible way of communication in Bengal all through the ages. But, in comparison to other means of communication, the inland navigation in Bengal was surprisingly shown the negligence from the Government all through the colonial period, although the initial step towards the modernization of Indian transportation was introduced in this segment by introducing motorised steamer services in the Ganges.<sup>59</sup> The Report of the Inland Water Transport Committee says,

sustained efforts to maintain the waterways, quite apart from undertaking some improvements, were unfortunately, conspicuous by their absence. With the guiding principle of balancing expenditure by revenue from tolls etc. it was inevitable that a vicious circle should set in. While expenditure curtailed to the barest minimum to keep well within income, inadequate maintenance of waterways and high toll charged, discouraged large-scale operation on a number of waterways thus resulting in decrease in volume of traffic and deterioration of the waterways.<sup>60</sup>

Since the railways has been introduced by the colonial Government in India, it was the basic policy of the Government to introduce and uphold the railways as the chief way of transportation in India and to conceive the roadways or waterways as the feeders to the railways.<sup>61</sup> But, interestingly, since the railways were introduced, debate arose regarding the issue of this proposed Government policy of communication. There were strong appeals even before the Board of Control to favour inland navigation in lieu of introducing railways.<sup>62</sup> In spite of preference received by the Government towards the railways, the attitude towards the inland navigation seems to be rightly understood from the report on waterways of Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1909. The report comments,

the existence and development together of railways and waterways are desirable first because these two means of transportation are the complements of each other and ought to contribute according to its special merits to the public good. Secondly, because viewed broadly the industrial and commercial development which will result from the improvement of the means of communication must in the end profit both railways and waterways.<sup>63</sup>

Despite of verbal approval for the necessity of the waterways being as relevant as the railways for maintaining healthy communication of Bengal,<sup>64</sup> while the steamer companies of Eastern Bengal and Assam proposed the Government for improving the waterways at the cost of the state; nothing was considered for the upgradation of the system.<sup>65</sup> Although, during the days of the World War I, the Report of the Inland Water Transport Committee says, “the shortage of railway and shipping facilities gave some importance to inland water transport and attempts were made towards better maintenance of some of the waterways...”.<sup>66</sup> Same situation was also seen till the advent of the World War II when the pre-mentioned ways of transportation were heavily engaged for war transportation.<sup>67</sup>

From 1859 to 1860 the questions relating to Ferries were dealt within the Revenue Department and from 1861 to 1878 it was a subject of the Judicial Department and from January to December 1879 this branch functioned as a Branch of the Finance Department. In January 1880 it was transferred to the Municipal Department and was a part of it till May 1891, after which it ceased to have a separate existence and was managed by the District Boards according to Government Notification No 217- LSG, dated 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1905.<sup>68</sup>

Sir Macdonald Stephenson projected first railway line in India in 1843 and it was during the time of Lord Dalhousie the first line began to operate from Bombay to Thane in 1853. Although the first contract between the Court of Directors of the EEIC and the East Indian Railway Company for the construction of a short experimental line of railway in Bengal was signed in August 1849 and the route which had been selected for it was only 121 miles from Howrah to Raniganj via Burdwan; the work began in 1951 and the line was finally opened for traffic in February, 1855.<sup>69</sup>

Questions since the establishment of the railways have been raised on the issue of causes for the establishment of railways in India. The introduction of railways in India, from the Indian point of view, seems to be the by-product of the Industrialization in England which had been regarded as a ground for surplus investment, lucrative employment and an easy means of capturing Indian market for the British manufactured.<sup>70</sup> But, the military policy of the Government of the EEIC were also equally responsible for setting up a speedy mode of communication which would capable of sending troops immediately to a distant place when necessity arose.<sup>71</sup> However, Lord Dalhousie through his 'Railway Minute' thought that the railways would initiate great social, political and commercial advantages in India for which he recommended to construct 'trunk lines' throughout India which would connect all the principal cities and ports in India.<sup>72</sup> The Court of Directors accepted proposed 'Dalhousie Minute' and within two decades from the beginning most of the Trunk lines in India were constructed and opened for traffic under the Guaranteed system.<sup>73</sup> Lord Mayo in 1869, projected the idea for developing the feeders and branches to the Trunk lines for connecting the districts with all India railway network<sup>74</sup> and this would introduce the state railway schemes especially 'in the north Bihar plains and in northern and eastern Bengal' to open the regional markets and to export the products of the concerned region.<sup>75</sup> In the same way,

the native states also contributed funds to the Government of India for constructing their railways.<sup>76</sup>

Most of the remarkable and prosperous railway lines in India since their introduction were under the control and management of the Companies. In 1920, a committee under the chairmanship of Sir William Acworth, was appointed to look into the question of management, finance, future control and organization of the railways. Consequently, the Central Assembly unanimously decided in favour of state management of the railways. Hence, it was enacted in 1923 to take over all the railways by the Government on termination of their contract.

Traditionally, from engine to wagon- all of the parts were imported from Great Britain and only were fitted in India. It was till the beginning of twentieth century when the East Indian Railway and Rajputana-Malwa Railway began to build engines and wagons at their workshops, other large railways were moving in the same direction.<sup>77</sup>

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