

Steam

The technological changes during the nineteenth century affected the 'timing and location' of the European conquests and thereafter determined the economic relations of Colonialism. (Sarkar 2010: 90) The new innovations were – printing press, vaccination inoculation, steam ships, telegraph, railways lines, and electricity in British India.

The newer development in the steam technologies had first appeared in Europe and it spread from therein. Steam vessels were introduced in India primarily for commercial purposes.. From 1830's onwards iron steamers was an important technological development which proved to be quite beneficial in the commercial and in the technical fields. In addition to the introduction of the steamboats in the Indian rivers , the steam communication also opened up between Indian and Britain from the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. The innovations brought out in the development of the steam technology set up a significant position to the British proving the 'dynamic factor' in their civilisation and at the same time expressed the vast cultural and technological distance they had visualised between themselves and India perceived as backward and ridden by superstitions.

Railways were one of the most important innovations introduced into India from the industrialised West during the colonial period. Locomotives and the railway networks was a show on the road towards their policy of 'civilising mission' in India. Suvovrata Sarkar in his article had stated that 'Steamboats and railways were largely initiated and financed by private merchants for the expansion of trade, while the telegraph was entirely financed and managed by the government in India. In England, the telegraph grew as a commercial adjunct to railways, but in India it came ahead of railways. The political and military necessities outweighed social and economic considerations in the development of the electric telegraph' (Sarkar 2010: 99).