EMERGENCE OF PUBLIC SPHERE: LIBRARY AS A CENTRE OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN NORTH MALABAR SOCIETY

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Abstract

The public sphere is the arena where citizens come together, exchange opinions regarding public affairs, discuss, deliberate and eventually form of public opinions. In North Malabar society, library as a centre of social transformation and also this space were people come together as citizens and articulate and their ideas and strengthened or influence the political institution of society.

Public sphere we mean a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion. The public sphere is a vital component of socio political organization it is the space were people come together as citizens and articulate there independent view. These views strengthen or influence the political institution of a society.

This paper is an attempt to analyses the structural transformation of public sphere and how printing, Education, public libraries to creating public sphere in North Malabar Arena. Printing is prime symbol of formation of a public sphere in Malabar. The institutionalization of missionary Education and printing the missionaries were not only interested in educating the illiterate and ignorant but also to educate them in their way. Efforts at translation and printing began as the result of the realization that sufficient amount of textual material for religious teaching and secular education, the missionaries were in the danger of lapsing into the methodology of indigenous education which they were opposing introducing new education was a risky
affair. There was the justifiable suspicion among the people that the new schools were centers of conversion. People were also suspicious of printed books. Hence *olas* were used in elementary schools, but the missionaries managed to make copies of several texts by using writes on *Olas* as well as on paper. In 1835 a general permission was given by the British Government to start printing presses anywhere in Kerala. Printing presses and the early Malayalam grammars and dictionaries provided the framework for the production of text book in Malayalam. This text book contains moral lesson and imparting or served indirectly a hidden agenda as followed.

The public sphere was a place between private individuals and government authorizes in which people could meet and have critical debates about public matters. Education, Media, Letters, Books, Drama, and Art etc. These are the major symbols of Public sphere. The government entry into printing was also inspired by the missionaries and adoption of modern education was facilitated by the transformation of public sphere in North Malabar. Malabar government began to encourage Malayalam education during the 19th century onwards. In response to the gradually developing movement of the social depressed castes and sections of population and also as a part of the effort to check the growing influence of the missionaries. Use of the new technology of printing which was popularized by the missionaries had the capability to breaking through caste and gender barriers in the dissemination of knowledge. Thus literacy along with print was treated as important tool for creating a space in North Malabar, British had developed a scientific temperament in all walks of their lives.

Knowledge is the tool for creating active Public sphere in North Malabar realm the relationship between power and knowledge fruit fully worked during colonial North Malabar. Knowledge and information is the basic resource for individuals social and national development. A society with abundant physical resources but lacking information infrastructure registers slow development. There is a continuous shift in society from
industrial economy to the information economy free access to information is a social right. The library is a social institution which collects, preserve, retrieves and disseminates information. Public library is the most dominant social institution that facilities the multifarious progress of the society it is the agency that support formal Education also. During 19th onwards many colonial officials took initiative for the establishment of formal and non formal educational institution in North Malabar area 12

The printing is the most powerful and effective mechanism to bring desired and progressive changes in the society. Printing is a common platform for the people to discuss matters of public importance it discusses vital issues of the masses it is an agent of mobilizing public opinion on problems and prospects of humanity. North Malabar witnessed a rapid growth of printing press and also formal and informal institution than in other parts of Kerala 13. Printing press create widening the scope of public sphere. Reformers and political leaders their work concentrated on formation of a formal and informal institution and publication of many books book produced certain knowledge that transferred from one generation to another thus libraries became the center of cultural heritage 14. During Nineteenth century the intervention of the state in the sphere of education Government established formal and informal institution like libraries, as a part of its programmed expansion of educational facilities in the state. Various social and political forces directly or indirectly contributed to the birth and growth of many libraries in North Malabar. The political consciousness and organized movement resulted in recognizing the increased importance of the individual to creating public opinion and spreading political ideas presupposed an educated and informed public. political workers therefore gave more emphasis to social education activities which necessitated establishment of libraries in all area of North Malabar 15.

With the advancement of printing technology several literary publications came into existence. The first newspaper Rajayasamacharam by Basel evangelical mission at thalassery started publication in June 1847 and other newspaper like Kerala Sanchari, Malayala manorama, Darpanam, panchika, Swadeshabhimani were emerged as a part of literary movement and these dailies were subscribe to libraries and people were very curiosity to know the issues and current events. News paper and other dailies served as an important means of mobilizing public opinion people often had to travel many kilometers for know the newspaper news this
was one of the main causes for the birth of libraries and reading room in every nook and corner of North Malabar. The educational work of the Basel Mission in North Malabar was always directed educating the masses through primary education. The educational contribution the mission did not think of spreading Christianity but also in giving primary education to make the people of North Malabar literate. The Main aim of a mission emancipated the people from all kinds of social evils, North Malabar experiencing from several types of caste bondage the Basel mission made efforts to eradicate the caste bondage. The mission started school and give admission to all caste group people the teaching also stressed upon unity and equality in humanity. The Basel mission had a short span of activity in many areas of North Malabar promoting educational institution. It thus worked intensely in the field of education, literature, etc. the mission achievements contributed to the development of education that create equality and public sphere among people and modernization of North Malabar society.

The North Malabar region was famous for the establishment of libraries some of the important libraries are Calicut public library [1890], Victoria memorial library now known as Azad memorial library in Thellichery[1901], Sree Narayana vilasam Vayanasala Kannur [1926], Aikya Kerala library at Kozhikode[1934], Tagore library and reading room New Mahe [1934], Gurudeva vilasam library and reading room Pathayakunnu, Deshaposhini Vayanasala Kozhikode [1934] etc. These libraries are influenced intelligentsia group in North Malabar.

Conclusion

We may concluded that library as an active centre of public sphere is the basic requirements to mediates between state and society and in an ideal situation permits democratic control of take activities to allow discussion and the formation of public opinion.

The activities of libraries mobilized all sections of people; libraries possess many roles conducting educational programmers, Self employment programmers, Cultural activity etc. Libraries strengthens the reading habit among the people. Library is the most dominant Social institution that facilitates the
multifarious progress of society it supplements formal education and supports the non formal education and continuing self education it is the best institution for eradication of illiteracy

Formation and nature of public spaces are always transforming according to the needs of time and period. Both printing technology and education have made valuable contribution in the developments of Public sphere in North Malabar.

NOTES AND REFERENCE


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