



ROAD TRANSPORT IN INDIA: PRESENT STATUS AND CHALLENGES

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INTRODUCTION:

The development of agriculture sector and industrial sector and above all-round development is depend on the availability of infrastructural facility. Agricultural production requires not only irrigation, power, credit but also transport facilities etc. Industrial production require not only machinery and equipment, skilled manpower, management, energy, banking, insurance but also transport facilities which includes railways, roads, shipping, communication facilities etc. All these facilities and services constitute collectively the infrastructure of an economy and the development and expansion of these facilities are an essential pre condition for increasing agricultural and industrial production in a country. In shortly, as the growth of the economy in general and the manufacturing sector in particular is largely dependent on creation of suitable infrastructure. In this present research paper researcher has to assess the overall development of road transport in India, Present status, Problems and remedies.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To study the overall development of road transport facilities in India.
- 2) To examine the importance of road transport facilities in the economic Development.
- 3) To find out problems in the expansion of road transport facilities and suggest same measurement.

HYPOTHESIS:

- 1) Government of India tries to expand the road transport facility to every year.
- 2) In India there are number of obstacles in the development of road transport.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This analysis is mainly based on secondary sources of data. The statistical data on relevant information have been collected from the Annual reports published by the central statistical offices. The additional information is collected from the books, journals, Govt publications, library and Internet etc.

MEANING OF INFRASTRUCTURE:

Infrastructure refers to the facilities, activities and services which support operation and development of other sector of the economy. In shortly infrastructure is generally defined as the physical framework of facilities through which goods and services are provided to the public.

TRANSPORT:

In modern world transport along with energy is the basic infrastructural requirement for industrialization and economic development. Transportation concerns the movement of products from a source such as a plant factory or workshop to destination such as warehouse customer or retail store. Transportation may take place via air, water, rail, road, pipeline or cable routs using planes boats trains' trucks and telecommunications equipment as the means of transportation. Transport infrastructure facilitates the transportation of people and goods and provides than access to markets employment and investment opportunities. An efficient transportation system can have a multiplier effect on the economy. Whereas a deficient transportation system can result in economic loss. There is a need to provide matching transport infrastructure to avoid overcrowding, overloading and poor maintains of the available infrastructure.

ROAD TRANSPORT:

Road transport is useful for every day movement of people to their workplace or to meet every day needs. For efficient road transportation we need good quality roads with proper signal and traffic regulation.

Advantages:

As compared to the railways, road transport has the following advantages.

- 1) A large number of places (particularly for villages, interior country side and hilly areas) are not connected by railways. Therefore the only means of transport in these areas is the road transport.
- 2) Road transport is complementary to railways. It provides better services as goods arriving at railway station are dispatched to their destination through truck or other means of road transport.
- 3) It is a better means of transport as compared to railway for carrying perishable and less bulky goods for exa- Vegetables and fruits.
- 4) Road transport does not require heavy capital expenditure for exa- railway.
- 5) From the point of view of the defence of the country roads are very important since railway tracks cannot reach all nooks and corners of the country. It is the roads that enable the defence force to move areas inaccessible by railways in times of need.

In this way road transport is very important in the process of economic development.

Status of India Road Network

Year	Urban Length of Roads (in Kms)	Length of National Highway (in Kms)	Length of State Highway(in Kms)
2001	7,36,001	58,115	134,807
2011	9,98,995	70.934	163,898
2012	-----	76.818	164,360
2013	-----	79.116	169,227
2015	1,01,178	100.08	167,109
2016	5,86,181	114,158	1,75,036
2019	6,12,778	132.500	179,535
2021	5,44,683	138,376	186,528

(Source –Basic Road of statistics India – 2018-19 Govt of India Ministry of Road Transport and Highway) & <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1077868/india-state-highways-length/>

Above statistical information indicates that every year length of roads and highways are growing continuously. The road density is calculated both for area and population as accessibility and congestion indicators of roads. In 2001 District road length was 736,001 it decreased 612,778 because of government gave more preference to the National highway development. In 2001 National Highway was 58,115km. It increased 1,38,376 km in 2021. Above table shows that National and State highway road construction work is increasing rapidly compare to the urban road road. It will be helpful for fast economic development of India.

PRESENT STATUS OF ROAD TRANSPORT IN INDIA:

- The length of National highway has grown from 58,115 km in 2001 to 138,376 kms at 2021.
- India has completed 112 Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode projects and 149 are ongoing as of August 2015.
- During the next five years investment through PPP are expected to be in the region of USD 31.billion for National Highway.
- The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) and the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways had sanctioned projects for 3161 km in 2014-15 & 2337 km in 2015-16.
- During 2015-16 around 6300 km of National Highway are to be completed along with eight bypass in India.

This is the present situation of road transport of India. I think that Government of India has been tried to stimulate the growth and development of road facilities for better economic development.

UNION BUDGET AND ROAD TRANSPORT:

Budget 2016-17 was announced by the finance minister of India. In this budget 2.21 lakh crore rupees allocated for the infrastructure facilities. The road sector alone has allocated Rs 97,000 crore. Government will plan to construct 10,000 km of new road projects in 2017. Including Rs 19,000 crore earmarked for rural areas roads under the Pradhanmantri Gram Sadak Yojana. There is required a high amount for linking the roads to every villages to taluka and district.

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In budget 2021-22 finance Minister announced Bharatmala Pariyojna under this scheme announced additional 11,000 km National Highway would be completed by March 2022. For this road development finance minister announced 118,101 lakh crore Rs in the 2021-2022 budget.

PROBLEMS / OBSTACLES IN THE ROAD DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA:

Government of India tried to develop the good road transport facilities but number of obstacles emerged in the process of road development. These are the followings

1) Lack of Co-ordination:

There is lack of co-ordination between the center and state government. The states want the center to construct and maintain main highways but on the other hand center is trying to shift this burden on the states. It has resulted in the blocking of rapid development of roads in India.

2) Slow-paced Growth:

The length of roads the basic requirement of this mode of transport has grown at a slow rate. From about 4 lakh km in 1951 to about 1998 km in 1999, and 4865 km in 2012. Considered in the context of the country's area and population. It is not sufficient to the India's population and all sectors of the Indian economy.

3) Uneven Distribution:

In India there is uneven distribution of the road facility among the states. Road construction process is not depending on the state area and population. Some states have requires a more road facilities and highway facilities for stimulating industrial sector. But lacking of the road facilities they are failed to transfer the goods at the right destination (Market).

4) Poor Quality:

It is not in quantity alone that we are short quality of roads but for poor and of unsurfaced roads poorer still. More than half being unsurfaced our roads are not fit for efficient transport. Particularly during the rainy season the road system as a whole suffers from serious deficiencies and there is a growing mismatch between traffic needs and available infrastructure.

5) Same Areas Deprived form Road Linking:

A number of areas particularly interior areas and hilly areas remain to be linked up with roads. A more serious problem is that large tracts of rural roads are kutchra (mud) roads which cannot be used for the plying of heavy vehicles and un usable in rainy season.

6) Rising Cost of Construction:

Most of the state road transport corporation is running in heavy losses. The main factor responsible for this has been the rising cost of operation an account of increasing process of inputs used in roads transport industry without matching, increase in fares, inefficiency in operations is also an important contributory factor.

7) Problem of Rail –Road Transport:

Rail and road transport are complementary to each other. Taken together they form the principal means of connecting all parts of the country with one another. The road transport provides an important link between farmers in the villages and the local mandis or the nearest railway station. The railways on the other hand provide connection between the areas of production and the areas of consumption separated from each other by long distances. But in India there is lack of co-ordination between road transport and railways.

8) Poor Quality and Old Bridge:

In India number of bridges are poor quality and old. Some bridges were constructed by British before 1947. Therefore these bridges are not good for travelling heavy vehicles. So there in need to Government of India earmarked special amount for reconstruction of old bridge in India.

These are the same obstacles in the road transport of India

SUGGESTED REMEDIES:

In view of the above obstacle it is necessary that the growth of road transport is accelerated and its quality upgraded. Following remedies are helpful for the enhancing the road transport facilities in India.

- 1) The first and the foremost solution lies in sharply stepping up of investment in the road construction basically in urban areas as well as rural areas.

- 2) Increasing the capacity of transport sector that is the productivity of the transport sector to be raised substantially.
- 3) There is also need to correct the imbalances of the transport system to provide a variety of services to cater to various regions.
- 4) Road transport system is required a technological up gradation on a large scale so that the entire system is modernized.
- 5) There is need to increasing the managerial competence through suitable measures like education, training and incentives etc.
- 6) Government of India should be maintaining the co-ordination between rail and road transports with the help of increasing the rail tracks in the rural area.

CONCLUSIONS:

The cross border infrastructure component is an important determinant of regional integration. If countries are not inter-linked each other through improved transportation network, regional integration process will not move ahead at a desired pace in India. So transportation is a very important for a maintaining desired economic development of India. I think that for better development of road transport system there is need to allocate a maximum amount for road development and Centre and state government also support to each other for road development.

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