

Lifelines Economy

Transport, communication and trade are channels which facilitate movement of goods, people and information. By doing so, they facilitate smooth functioning of the economy. Economic activities would come to a virtual halt if any of these stops working. Due to this, transport, communication and trade are called the lifelines of economy.

Transport

Supplying raw materials to a factory and finished products to consumers becomes possible because of transport. So, an efficient transport system can do wonders for the development of economy.

Roadways

India has 2nd largest road network in the world (after the USA). The importance of roadways can be gauged from the fact that 65% of freight traffic and 85% of passenger traffic is carried through roads. We can claim that the road network in India is a developed one if we look at the road density which is 142.68 km per 100 square km in the country, and this figure makes India the number one country in the world. But India lags behind many leading nations in terms of length of road per 1000 population. This figure is 4.8 km per 1000 population.

Road Density

The length of road per 100 sq. km of area is known as density of roads. Distribution of road is not uniform in the country. Density of all roads varies from only 12 km in Jammu & Kashmir to 518 km in Kerala with the national average of 142 km (2016-17).

Roadways Vs Railways

Roads are better than rails because of many reasons. Some of them are as follows:

- Cost of construction of roads is much lower than that of railway lines.
- Roads can be built even on uneven topography. Laying railway lines becomes almost impossible at some places.
- Road transport is flexible enough to carry smaller number of people and smaller loads, which is not possible with the railways.
- Door to door service can only be provided through road network.
- Road transport plays the role of feeder to other modes of transport. We should not forget that we need a truck to carry goods and people up to railway stations, airports and ports.

Types of Roads

In India, roads are classified in the following six classes according to their capacity

Golden Quadrilateral: This project is aimed at linking the four metro cities by six-lane Super Highways or Expressways. The North-South corridors linking Srinagar (Jammu & Kashmir) and Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu), and East-West Corridor connecting Silcher (Assam) and Porbander (Gujarat) are part of this project.

Now, expressways are being built in other corridors as well. Construction and maintenance of expressways is the responsibility of NHAI (National Highway Authority of India). Expressways are access controlled and one needs to pay toll to drive through these roads. Expressways have indeed helped in reducing the travel time in the country.

National Highways: National Highways link extreme parts of the country. Construction and maintenance of national highways is the responsibility of CPWD (Central Public Works Department)

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State Highways: Roads linking a state capital with different district headquarters are known as State Highways. These roads are constructed and maintained by the State Public Works Department (PWD) in State and Union Territories.

District Roads: These roads connect the district headquarters with other places of the district. These roads are maintained by the Zila Parishad.

Other Roads: Rural roads come under this category. Pradhan Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojana gave a new life to rural roads. This scheme is aiming at connecting every village with all weather motorable road.

Border Roads: The roads in border areas come under this category. Border Road Organisation was established in 1960 to ensure development of roads in strategic areas, especially on the northern and northeastern borders.

Railways

Rail transport is ideal for carrying a large number of passengers and large number of items to long distances. India has a well developed rail network.

The Indian Railways have a network of 7, 133 stations spread over a route length of 64, 460 km. The Indian Railways use three types of gauge, details of which are given in the following table.

Rail Gauge and Length of Routes in India				
	Gauge (in m)	Route (km)	Running track (km)	Total track
Broad Gauge	1.676	55,188	77,347	102,680
Meter Gauge	1	6,809	7,219	8,561
Narrow Gauge	0.762 & 0.610	2,463	2,474	2,753

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Development of Railways:

- The Indian Railways is the largest public sector undertaking in the country, in terms of number of employees. The first train ran from Mumbai to Thane in 1853, covering a distance of 34 km.
- The Indian Railway is now reorganised into 16 zones.
- Geographic, economic and administrative factors have influenced the development of railways in India.
- The rail network is highly dense in the northern plains. This could be possible because of even topography, high population density and rich agricultural resources present in this region. The development of rail has been to a lesser degree in other parts of the country because of presence of plateau, desert and mountains. Development of Konkan Railway along the west coast has immensely helped in economic development in this region.

Problems Faced: Rail transport is facing many problems. There is overload of train traffic on major routes. There is a need for upgradation on these routes. Ticketless travel and unnecessary chain-pulling are the nagging problems faced by the railways.

Pipelines:

Traditionally, pipelines have been used to supply drinking water. But later on, pipelines began to be used for supplying crude oil, petroleum products and natural gas as well. So, the much needed fuel and some raw materials can be directly supplied from source to factories through pipelines. From some mines even iron ore is supplied to ports in the form of slurry.

Initial cost of laying pipelines is high but subsequent operational costs are minimal. Pipelines also help in preventing loss and delays during shipment.

There are three important networks of pipeline transportation in the country.

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- a. **Digboi To Kanpur:** This pipeline runs from the oilfields in Assam to Kanpur (UP), via Guwahati, Barauni and Allahabad. One branch from this pipeline goes from Guwahati to Siliguri and another branch goes from Barauni to Haldia, via Rajbandh. A third branch from Rajbandh goes to Maurigram.
- b. **Salaya to Jalandhar:** This pipeline runs from Salaya (Gujarat) to Jalandhar (Punjab), via Viramgam, Mathura, Delhi and Sonipat. Branches from this pipeline go to Koyali, Chakshu and other places.
- c. **HVJ Pipeline:** This pipeline has been built for transporting gas. It runs from Hazira (Gujarat) to Jagdishpur (UP), via Vijaipur (or Bijapur) in MP. It has branches to Kota in Rajasthan, Shahajahanpur, Babrala and other places in Uttar Pradesh.

Waterways

Waterways are the cheapest means of transport. They are most suitable for carrying heavy and bulky goods. It is a fuel-efficient and environment friendly mode of transport. India has inland navigation waterways of 14,500 km in length. Out of these only 3,700 km are navigable by mechanised boats.

The following waterways have been declared as the National Waterways by the Government:

1. **NW 1:** The Ganga river between Allahabad and Haldia (1620 km)
2. **NW 2:** The Brahmaputra river between Sadiya and Dhubri (891 km)
3. **NW 3:** The West-Coast Canal in Kerala (Kottapurma-Komman, Udyogamandal and Champakkara canals-205 km)

The other viable inland waterways include the Godavari, Krishna, Barak, Sunderbans, Buckingham Canal, Brahmani, East-west Canal and Damodar Valley Corporation Canal.

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Major Sea Ports

With a long coastline of 7,516.6 km, India is dotted with 13 major and 187 medium and minor ports, which make up for the total 200 ports. These major ports handle 74% of cargo and 95% of India's foreign trade.

Kandla Port: It was the first port developed just after independence to ease the load on Mumbai port. The load on Mumbai port had increased because Karachi port went to Pakistan after partition. Kandla is a tidal port. This port caters to the highly productive granary and industrial belt stretching from north to west India.

Mumbai Port: It is the biggest port with a spacious natural and well-sheltered harbour. The Jawaharlal Nehru port was planned with a view to decongest the Mumbai port and serve as a hub port for this region.

Marmagao port (Goa) is the premier iron ore exporting port of the country. This port accounts for about fifty per cent of India's iron ore export.

New Mangalore port, located in Karnataka caters to the export of iron ore concentrates from Kudremukh mines. Kochi is the extreme south-western port, located at the entrance of a lagoon with a natural harbour.

On the east coast, is the port of Tuticorin, in Tamil Nadu. This port has a natural harbour and rich hinterland. Thus, it has a flourishing trade handling of a large variety of cargoes to even our neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, Maldives, etc. and the coastal regions of India.

Chennai is one of the oldest artificial ports of the country. It is ranked next to Mumbai in terms of the volume of trade and cargo.

Vishakhapatnam is the deepest landlocked and well-protected port. This port was, originally, conceived as an outlet for iron ore exports.

Paradip port located in Orissa, specialises in the export of iron ore.

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Kolkata is an inland riverine port. This port serves a very large and rich hinterland of Ganga- Brahmaputra basin. Being a tidal port, it requires constant dredging of Hoogly. Haldia port was developed as a subsidiary port, in order to relieve growing pressure on the Kolkata port.

Airways:

Air transport is faster than any other means of transport. It is highly convenient for long distance travel. India is the 3rd largest civil aviation market in the world (2017). The air transport in India carried 131 million passengers in 2016. Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet and GoAir are some major airlines in the country. The regulatory authority for air transport is named DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation). Indira Gandhi International Airport (New Delhi) is the busiest airport in the country.

The government has recently announced the UDAN-RCS initiative. UDAN stands for Ude Desh Ke Aam Naagrik, while RCS stands for Regional Connectivity Scheme. This scheme has been launched to connect smaller towns with air transport network. Moreover, this plan also aims at providing affordable air tickets to the common people.

Communication

Personal communication and mass communication including television, radio, press, films, etc. are the major means of communication in the country.

Indian Post: The Indian postal network is the largest in the world. It handles parcels as well as personal written communications. Cards and envelopes are considered first-class mail and are airlifted between stations covering both land and air. The second-class mail includes book packets, registered newspapers and periodicals. They are carried by surface mail, covering land and water transport. To facilitate quick delivery of mails in large towns and cities, six mail channels have been introduced recently. They are called Rajdhani Channel, Metro Channel, Green Channel, Business Channel, Bulk Mail Channel and Periodical Channel.

Telephone

India has one of the largest telephone networks in the world. India is the 2nd largest telephone market in the world in terms of number of subscribers. In 2019, there were 1.1724 billion telephone subscribers in India. India has the 2nd largest internet user base and the figure is 661.94 million. There are 121 crore mobile phones being used in India.

Before mobile phone became part of our everyday life, people used to rely on landline telephones. In those days, it was difficult to get connected through telephone. So, the government introduced STD (Subscriber Trunk Dialling) facility. This helped in connecting the remotest part of the country with telephone. Now, STD booths have become a thing of history.

Mobile phones have changed the way people communicate. Penetration of mobile phone has helped every section of society in business transaction. The arrival of smartphones further opened the unlimited opportunities for facilitating business interaction.

Mass Communication

Radio, television, newspapers, magazines, books and films are the modes of mass communication. All India Radio (Akashwani) and Doordarshan (Television Network) are owned by the government and they have reach to every nook and corner of the country. DTH (Direct To Home) facility has helped in proliferation of private television channels to most of the parts of the country.

Newspapers: India publishes a large number of newspapers and periodicals annually. They are of different types depending upon their periodicity. Newspapers are published in about 100 languages and dialects. Hindi newspapers are being published in the largest numbers, followed by English and Urdu newspapers.

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Films: India is the largest producer of feature films in the world. It produces short films; video feature films and video short films. The Central Board of Film Certification is the authority to certify both Indian and foreign films.

International Trade

Trade between two countries is called international trade. It may take place through sea, air or land routes. Advancement of international trade of a country is an index to its economic prosperity. It is, therefore, considered the economic barometer for a country.

Export: When the goods are sent to other country for sale it is called as export.

Import: When the goods come from other country to be sold in India it is called import.

Balance of Payment: This is the difference between export and import of a country. When export is higher than import then this is a situation of favourable balance of payment. On the other hand when the import is higher than export then this is a situation of unfavorable balance of payment.

Export (2010-11)

Commodities	Share in Exports
Agriculture and allied products	9.9%
Ores and minerals	4%
Gems and jewelry	14.7%
Petroleum products	16.8%

Major Imports to India (2010-11)

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Commodities	Share in Imports
Petroleum and petroleum products	28.6%
Pearls and precious stones	9.4%
Inorganic chemicals	5.2%
Coke, coal, briquettes	2.7%
Machinery	6.4%

Bulk imports as a group registered a growth accounting for 28.2 per cent of total imports. This group includes fertilizers (3.4 per cent), cereals (14.3 per cent), edible oils (17.4 per cent) and newsprint (40.3 per cent).

There had been dramatic changes in international trade in the last two decades. Commodities and goods are being replaced by information and knowledge; as items of exchange.

Tourism as a Trade

Tourism in 2011	
Foreign tourists' arrival	+23.5%
Foreign Exchange	64889 crore rupees
No. of foreign tourists	5.78 million
No. of people directly employed in tourism	15 million

Tourism helps in promoting national integration. It supports local handicrafts and culture. Tourism helps in understanding culture and heritage. This helps in developing a sense of cross-cultural sensibilities.