CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
Road laying and construction were always emphasized in India. With the advent of the British, the significance of roads for the prosperity of the nation was increasingly felt. The Jayakar Committee appointed in 1928, to examine the extent of road development recommended for periodical block grants from the Centre to finance the road construction activity. It was also of the opinion that road construction cannot be left to the efforts of the local bodies alone. On the basis of the recommendations of the Committee, the Central Road Fund was instituted in 1929.

Of the different roads in India, unsurfaced road length accounts for more than half of the total road length. There is not even one Kilometre of Cement Concrete road for every 100 Kilometres of road. India's road length is not internationally respectable. The neighbouring Sri Lanka is in a better position than India. Belgium has the highest road density per Sq.Km. area. Judged from both per lakh of population and per 100 Sq.Kms. of area, India has the shortest road Kilometrage.

The Nagpur Plan (1941-61) was an important milestone in the development of the roads in the country. The Plan laid major emphasis on the construction of rural roads.
The Plan also felt that no village in agriculturally well developed area should be at a distance of more than 5 miles from the main road. The road development programmes in the first two Five Year Plans were based on the programmes of the Nagpur Plan.

Another milestone in the road development in India was a Long Term Plan (1961-1981). The main objective of the Plan was to build a net work of roads, so that no village would be farther from a metalled or unmetalled roads beyond a specified distance. Another Long Term Plan (Lucknow Plan - 1981-2001) was formulated with an ambitious target of rural road length. The overall objective of the Lucknow Road Development Plan was to connect all the villages having population of more than 500 with all-weather proof roads by the year 2001. With regard to villages having population of less than 500, it was envisaged to bring them within a range of 3 Kms. and 5 Kms. from all-weather proof road in plain areas and hilly areas respectively.

Analysing the programmes and performance during Plan periods, we get a feeling that the planners have recognised the need for a well laid out net work of roads in rural areas. Progressively increasing efforts are being made to
provide rural roads to as many villages as possible. In some of the initial Five Year Plans, the programme of rural roads was given a distinct status and was considered an integral part of the Community Development Programme and National Extension Services. In the recent Five Year Plans, the programme of rural road laying is contemplated under various programmes like Minimum Needs Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, National Rural Employment Programme, Command Area Development and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana. This is mainly done in recognition of their employment and income generating potential. Investment in road building has cumulative employment generating potential in the context of employable labour force available in rural areas. It is believed that a unit of investment in road building would generate 100 units of employment. Obviously, rural road laying is labour absorbing and capital saving. In the programme of road laying greater attention was paid to laying of unsurfaced roads, rather than surfacing of existing roads. The hard reality that should be recognised is that the diseconomies of unsurfaced roads will be far reaching. Hence an imperative need for a proper balance between surfacing the existing roads and unsurfaced road laying and construction. Regarding accessibility of
villages with roads, about 36 per cent of the villages in the Country are without any road and 65 per cent without all-weather proof roads. Obviously villages with higher population received greater attention regarding the provision of all-weather proof roads. Only one-fourth of the total villages with a population of less than 1000 could be provided with all-weather proof roads. In India, 70 per cent of the villages were with less than 1000 population. Hence wide coverage of villages with less than 1000 population by Minimum Needs Programme and other rural programmes is of utmost importance. Unlike the First, Second and Third Five Year Plans, increasingly more expenditures were incurred on rural roads during the subsequent Five Year Plans. The growth of rural roads in India has been dismal, inspite of launching of special programmes like Minimum Needs Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, National Rural Employment Programme etc.

The importance of roads in the economy of Andhra Pradesh is not debatable. The growth in National Highways during the period from 1956 to 1985 is insignificant. State Highways, however, increased four-fold. However, Zilla
Praja Parishads and Mandal Praja Parishads' rural roads have registered a significant increase. Unsurfaced road length accounts for nearly half of total road length. This speaks for the magnitude of total rural transport problem. Apparently total road length of Andhra Pradesh is one of the highest in South India. Needless to say, that the percentage rate of growth of roads is the highest in Andhra Pradesh. It could be said that surfaced roads per 100 Sq.Km. area is the lowest in Andhra Pradesh. The position of Andhra Pradesh compares favourably when viewed against All India position in terms of availability of roads per lakh of population. In tune with the National Plans, the planners in Andhra Pradesh also have recognised the need to extend transport network to rural areas. A reference is also made to a 'Village Plan' in the Second Five Year Plan of Andhra Pradesh. However, such a reference is ambiguous. In the Third Five Year Plan of Andhra Pradesh apart from emphasising road laying, attention was also paid to construct the bridges and culverts. The Fourth Five Year Plan restricted its role to the completion of already planned programmes which were not fulfilled. The proposal of Minimum Needs Programme was emphasized in the Fifth Five Year Plan with a proposal
to connect all villages having population of 1500 and above. The Fifth Five Year Plan also made a special provision for backward and tribal areas. Apart from fixing targets to be reached in certain categories of rural roads, the Sixth Five Year Plan of Andhra Pradesh pinpointed its concern for the roads leading to fisheries villages where fisheries are located. In the Seventh Five Year Plan, high priority was given for rural roads. Seventh Plan outlay for rural roads was double that of Sixth Plan outlay and more number of villages are proposed to be connected with roads.

The total expenditure in Andhra Pradesh on roads steadily increased up to Third Five Year Plan. But in the years following the Third Five Year Plan and Fourth Five Year Plan, there was a perceptible decline in the allocation for this purpose. However, the Fifth Five Year Plan is characterised by a big jump in total expenditure on roads. The same is not noticed in the Sixth Plan. But the outlay for roads in the Seventh Five Year Plan nearly double when compared to the Sixth Five Year Plan. The pattern of expenditure on rural roads reveals a steady increase up to the Fourth Five Year Plan.
When compared to the Sixth Plan, the outlay on rural roads has considerably increased in the Seventh Five Year Plan. The two major road building authorities in Andhra Pradesh are the Panchayat Raj Department and the Roads and Buildings Department. Panchayat Raj Department is responsible for the maintenance of village roads. Roads and Buildings Department is responsible for the maintenance of State Highways and Major District Roads. The regionwise expenditures by the Panchayat Raj Chief Engineer are revealing. The regionwise allocations at times declined then increased marginally. On the whole there does not seem to be uniform pattern. The focus also frequently gets shifted on regional pulls and pressures. The physical counterpart efforts are not commensurate with financial expenditure under Minimum Needs Programme and other programmes like the crash programme, Drought Prone Areas Programme and District Rural Development Agency. The tendency for financial expenditure to disregard physical counterparts will be aided by other economic variables like Price rise, shortfall in supply etc. Under these circumstances, the refining of data may make it infirm and soft rather than reliable and dependable.
Kurnool District is located in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Rayalaseema region is drought prone and is known as stocking ground of famine. The drought prone area of Kurnool region is suggestive. A good net work of transport facilities is necessary to reach drought prone people in the district. Further agricultural and allied activities can be effectively promoted only in the presence of adequate rural roads. Finally meaningful rural industrialisation cannot be made possible in the absence of adequate rural road transport facility. The intensity of roads in Kurnool District is not discouraging when compared to the intensities of roads in India and Andhra Pradesh. The population intensity is substantially higher than All India and the State of Andhra Pradesh. The intensity relating to geographical size is more than All India and Andhra Pradesh levels. All the roads under Mandal Praja Parishads are categorised as village roads. Further more than 65 per cent of the Zilla Praja Parishad roads belong to the category of rural roads in Kurnool District. Of the three divisions, viz. Kurnool, Nandyal and Adoni, the Mandal in Adoni Division constitute major portion of Major District Roads followed by Mandal in Kurnool
Division. In Kodumur, Krishnagiri, Bethamcherla, Atmakur, Pamulapadu, Allagadda, Chagalamarri, Kosigi, Nandavaram, Maddikera and Gonegandla Mandals, they have only village roads. The distribution of village roads among different Mandals is uneven. Peopally is the lone Mandal with highest kilometrage of road and Gospadu is the Mandal with lowest Kilometrage of road.

Most of the Mandal Praja Parishad roads are unmetalled. Water Bound Macadam roads are found in all the Mandals. Nearly three per cent of total roads under Zilla Praja Parishad are black topped, the rest of the roads are divided between water bound macadam and unmetalled. Water bound macadam accounts for nearly 2/3rd of the total road length. Unmetalled roads account for 31 per cent of the total road length. The highest road length Mandals are Alur, Kolimigundla and Peopally followed by Midthur and Owk etc. The inter-Mandal disparities continue if we take road length per 1000 of population. The first four Mandals are Krishnagiri, Tuggali, Pattikonda and Owk. In case of Kurnool and Pagidyala Mandals road length per 1000 of population is far too low. An analysis of expenditure on rural roads with reference to three divisions namely Kurnool, Nandyal
and Adoni is revealing. The incurred expenditure in Nandyal and Adoni divisions is almost the same. On the other hand in the Kurnool Division, the expenditure incurred is marginally higher. However, when analysed in terms of per kilometre expenditure, it gives a different picture. Though total expenditure is the highest in Kurnool division per kilometre expenditure is comparatively less than Nandyal Division. When compared between Nandyal and Adoni Divisions, though their total expenditure is almost the same, the per kilometre expenditure of Nandyal Division is marginally higher than Adoni Division.

A more relevant point is the extent of road facility enjoyed by the villages in Kurnool District. Nearly 36 per cent of the total villages are on the main roads. Obviously, they get mechanised transport. Another 11 per cent of the villages are connected to the main road through a pucca road. The remaining villages are connected by kutcha or cart track roads. In these villages extension of mechanised road transport is difficult and expensive. Further, nearly 28 per cent of the villages in the population size 2000 and more depend
on kutch or cart track road. As the population size decreases the number of villages connected by kutch and cart track road increases. Mandal wise analysis of the district reveals that nearly 27 per cent of the total villages are still relying on kutch or cart track roads. Among these villages, mechanised road transport is difficult and costly.

In pursuance of the Government of India's 20-Point Programme, the Village Link Transport Services Scheme was taken up in Andhra Pradesh in March, 1978. The scheme was to connect all the villages in the State by mechanised road transport. It is a bold measure to win the appreciation and catch the imagination of the rural people. The Village Link Transport Services Scheme was proposed to be implemented under the management of Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation. Prior to the launching of the Village Link Transport Service Scheme, 17,728 villages were provided with mechanised passenger transport facility. The progress of Village Link Transport Service Scheme in the first 3 years after its implementation was commendable. More than two thirds of the total new villages covered under Village Link
Transport Service Scheme were in the first three years. Thereafter the progress was tardy. In Kurnool District, the Village Link Transport Servicee has 35 Schemes originating from eight depots covering 40 routes and connecting 310 villages. The 35 Schemes covering 40 routes revealed certain pattern of trips. Most of the routes were urban to rural rather than within the rural areas themselves. Almost all the schemes are in actual operation in five depots, namely, Kurnool, Adoni, Nandikotkur, Atmakur and Banaganapalli. One Scheme in each depot of Yemmiganur and Allagadda and two Schemes in Nandyal Depot could not be put into operation. The distribution of routes and their lengths in Kurnool District is more unevenly pronounced. The official records of Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation claim to encompass all the villages that had no transport facility at the commencement of Village Link Transport Services Scheme. In an attempt to establish the basis of Village Link Transport Services Scheme a hypothesis is formulated. The hypothesis is that there is no difference in the mean distance of the villages included under Village Link Transport Services Scheme and all the villages comprising the district. The applied tests confirm the absence of difference.
The Village Link Transport Services Scheme is not economically viable. Its revenues are discouraging in the face of mounting costs. The Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation can ill afford to sustain the consequent losses. It does not show the same enthusiasm as it revealed at the time of introduction. Moreover, there occurred fluctuations in the rates of operation. These fluctuations point to the complexity of the problem and the operational difficulties encountered in the Village Link Transport Services Scheme. Obviously adequate preplanning was not done before the commencement of the scheme. The scheme was put into operation even before the completion of the necessary infrastructure. The reasons which range from absence of motorable roads, to bad roads, to poor traffic, expose the Village Link Transport Services Scheme and its feasibility in Kurnool District. The reasons listed out point to the main obstacles. The obstacles lie in the nature of roads and their maintenance. The rural road laying and maintenance programmes are managed by Zilla Praja Parishads. It is very necessary to secure infrastructure in the form of adequate roads before the Village Link Transport Services
Scheme can be meaningfully implemented. Proper coordination and understanding between Zilla Praja Parishads and the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation would go a long way in making the Village Link Transport Services Scheme successful.

The main problem is how to make Village Link Transport Services Scheme feasible and viable. The scheme has been incurring losses. This does not mean the Village Link Transport Services Scheme should be wound up. If profit making is the only criterion for the continuation of a scheme or a project, most of the public sector projects should have been wound up. The public sector continues in the public interest, regardless of profit or loss. Moreover loss incurring is not an exclusive phenomenon of a Village Link Transport Services Scheme. To contain losses, earnings per kilometre should be stepped up. Similarly, every effort should be made to lower the cost per kilometre. The divergence between earnings and costs needs to be reverted, if not arrested into an equality. The higher cost per kilometre in the Village Link Transport Services Scheme is largely due to poor surface of the road, improper maintenance and other
physical barriers, impairing smooth and speedy movement. Road surfaces need to be improved. Human factor can also be effectively geared up. By applying skills and talents, vehicle drivers can certainly reduce the cost on the vehicle and fuel. Other things being equal, low earnings are attributed to undependability of the transport system. Unplanned frequencies, inflexible timings, disregard to the norms of punctuality, insufficient buses and consequent overloading, are responsible for the low earnings. Planned frequencies, flexible timings and adherence to the punctuality, adequate meeting of demand are necessary. Winning customers, retaining them after having won and providing satisfaction to riders are important for a transport system. Adequate attention should be made to all these aspects, to make the Village Link Transport Services Scheme attractive.

The reputation of Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation has not been good. Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation has near monopoly over all routes. It faces no healthy competition, from other modes of transport. The bureaucratic functioning of the
system too contributed in a measure to the poor and unattractive image of the organisation. The militant trade union activity of the employees also is responsible for making the organisation unimpressive and unattractive. The problem of pilferage has its adverse effects on the Village Link Transport Services Scheme. Loop-holes regarding pilferage need to be plugged. If pilferage is allowed to continue, earnings can not be increased. Such low level of earnings may be used both to discredit the Village Link Transport Services Scheme and to strengthen the practice of leakage of earnings. If additional are to be incurred to overcome these losses, costs would mount up. This would make the Village Link Transport Services Scheme appear financially not feasible and viable. A new organisational framework and a net set of management values are called for.

Village Link Transport Services Scheme may be brought under tax concession before it could be made remunerative. Model vehicles may also be designed for rural transport; to facilitate economy and to suit the convenience of the rural people. The Regional Transport Authorities may encourage fresh licence seekers to rural
services under the Village Link Transport Services Scheme. Institutional credit should be advanced to operators willing to extend their services to villages. In the evaluation of Village Link Transport Services Scheme social cost benefit analysis are more pertinent than physical financial parameters. The provision of committed personnel to man the rural services will help the scheme, look more attractive. Hence no efforts should be spared to motivate its personnel with all the resources at its command.