CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
India lives in rural areas. India's prosperity depends upon prosperity of rural India. About 70 per cent of India's population lives in rural areas. Rural India needs sound economic infrastructure. Rural transport is an important segment of economic infrastructure. Agricultural inputs need to be taken from urban centres to interior rural areas. Similarly agriculture produce of rural India could be marketed only when rural transport facilities exist. Further, meaningful urban-rural economic interaction is possible only when there exists sound passenger transport system.

The need for road laying and road construction has been emphasized in India from time immemorial. Indian history testifies the road construction activities undertaken by different rulers. Even as early as in 400 B.C. Indians were adept in the art of road building. Kautilya, the famous Indian economist of ancient India referred to the specific dimensions of different roads that existed in India. The advent of the British marks the beginning of a new phase in road laying in India. Lord William Bentinck made earliest efforts in the road construction. It was Lord Dalhousie who made a pioneering
attempt in organising the Central Public Works Department in 1865. The British recognised the significance of roads and rail transport in the transportation of raw materials and finished products. Understandably, the Government of India paid special attention for rail transport. With the initiation of planning in India, the need for a network of transport system was emphasized all the more.

An attempt to examine the extent of road development in India was made in 1927. A Committee known as Indian Road Development Committee headed by M.R. Jayakar was set up. The Committee was constituted to suggest ways and means for planned road development in India. Jayakar Committee Report is an important document because it spelt out for the first time the method of financing road construction activity. The Committee mentioned that road construction cannot be limited to the efforts of the Provincial Governments and local bodies. Hence it advocated in favour of national financing and recommended for periodical Block Grants from the Centre to finance the road construction activity. The Committee suggested the collection of a motor vehicle transport tax in the form of vehicle taxation, Licence Fees for vehicles plying for hire and a duty on motor spirit. Accordingly a Central Road
Funds were instituted in 1929. Considerable improvement in road conditions was visible. Every study on road development in India does refer to this Jayakar Committee Report.

The Nagpur Plan (1941-1961) 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 programme in the first two Five Year Plans was based on 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 road beyond a specified distance. Another Long Term Plan (Lucknow Plan - 1981-2001) was formulated to improve total road length. One of the prime objectives 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. As far as villages with less than 500 population was concerned, the Plan 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.

Village Link Transport Services Scheme came into existence in October 1978 in Andhra Pradesh in pursuance of the Prime Minister's 20-Point Programme. The idea behind the scheme is to connect all the villages including interior villages in Andhra Pradesh by mechanised road transport. This was proposed to be achieved under the management of Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation. The Scheme is a bold measure to gain the appreciation and catch the imagination of the rural people deprived of mechanised transport. This study titled, "Extension of Passenger Transport to Rural Areas - A Case Study of Kurnool Experiment" pays attention to operational efficiency, analysing physical performance of Village Link Transport Services Scheme in Kurnool District. Further, the study also analyses financial performance of the Village Link Transport Services.

This study keeps in mind the following objectives:

1) To analyse the pattern and progress of roads in India;

2) To depict the road development planning in Andhra Pradesh;
3) To throw light upon the progress and performance of rural roads in Kurnool district;

4) To evaluate the performance of Village Link Transport Service Scheme in Kurnool District.

The study is based upon secondary data. The data is collected from published sources and official records of Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation. The statistical techniques like Averages, Ratios, Standard Deviation, Mean Deviation and 't' Test are employed in the analysis of data.

Plan of the Study:

The Second Chapter analyses the pattern and progress of roads in India with emphasis on rural roads. The Third Chapter depicts the road development planning and progress of rural roads in Andhra Pradesh. The Fourth Chapter refers to road development in Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh. The penultimate Chapter evaluates the Village Link Transport Services Scheme adopted by Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation in Kurnool District. The summary and conclusion as emerged from the study is presented in the last Chapter.

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