CHAPTER - V
IMPA CT OF THE TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

If one fully understands the real content and context of economic development ganged in a broacher canvas of social, political, regional, cultural, etc., then one can not fail to appreciate the intimate connection between these and the development of transportation and communication systems. Progress as such means the onward march of humanity, in its activities regarding the production and consumption of anything. Man has always been trying to bring himself more in harmony with nature by removing scarcity of those goods around him, which he needs for his satisfaction. There is, however, an important characteristic of human wants, namely, that they are unlimited in number. When one want is satisfied, another comes and takes its place. The never-ending attempt of man’s fulfilment of his wants is at the bottom of all his progress and achievement. His activities are, however, limited to a great extent by his power over movement of goods, men and communication, and for progress, this power, is very essential. So, sooner or later, he finds a way out and succeeds in removing the various hindrances in his way. And when he develops the required means of transportation and communication, the barriers to his further progress are removed and he resumes his onward march.¹ With his march, the society, the nation, the world marches ahead and progress takes places.

The realization of man, about the importance of transportation and communication led to the discovery of various easy, cheap, fast moving and convenient means. In Punjab, positive social, political,

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economic, etc. effects were seen with the improvement of these means. Life would have disintegrated into the primitive and feudal stages of inefficiency and scarcity without them.² They also served as a major unifying and integrating influence on the proposed decentralization of not only Punjab but also of the Indian economy.³ Life without them would almost have been unthinkable⁴ as it would be a major hurdle in any nations of state’s march towards unity, progress and prosperity.⁵ Efficient political structure, military defence, relief work, growth of agriculture, industry and trade, effective movement of food and other necessities of life and equalisation of the prices, even the distribution of population and the growth of towns, ports, etc., all depended on the efficiency and sufficiency of the transportation and communication system.⁶ To carry the finished products from less useful places or from mill-godowns to the markets, where they had greater utility they were required. Through this process transport facilitated the productive system aiding thereby the creation of new wealth.⁷ After the partition in 1947, Punjab was divided into West Punjab (Pakistan) and East Punjab (Punjab). The area, which came to the Indian nation, was less intensively cultivated as the major canal irrigation, network was in the Pakistan Punjab. The people living here had to be busy with other professions also. But the population, which migrated from Pakistan, knew well about the art of farming, as West Punjab’s main occupation was agriculture. The allotted lands were made assessable and cultivated with the help of

the transportation system slowly. Punjab became one of the most important agriculture producer, where Green (crops) and white (milk) revolutions took place, giving further impetus to the transportation system. This led to large-scale construction of rural roads, are the arteries through which the life-blood of the agricultural economy flows.8 Prof. A.W. Ash, a noted British Agricultural Economist says, “If I could do only one thing in a region to spur agricultural development, I would build roads. If to this I could add second, I will build more roads and if to those I could add a third, I would build still more roads.”9 So, we see the importance of roads in the agricultural field is so much that even unlimited roads would be less for its normal functioning.

So, there was an increase in the cropped area in Punjab; there was tremendous increase in the production of various agricultural commodities, i.e., from 4177 thousand ha in 1950-51 to 4732 thousands ha in 1960-61, to 5678 thousand ha in 1970-71 and to 6763 thousand ha in 1980-81.10 Accordingly, the roads became a vital link between the villages and the markets, the villages and the railway station, where the excessive produce could be sold at fair prices by the farmer and could be further transported to the area of requirement.11 Roads made commercial farming possible,12 Specialized production of certain crops, in definite regions, which were produced for export were made possible. The cropping pattern underwent a change, as new kinds of modes and methods were invented and used by the farmers for agriculture purpose,

9. Ibid.
such as new tools, implements, tractors, trolleys, etc. for sowing, ploughing and harvesting the crops. The farmers transported new kinds of manures and fertilizers and other agro-chemicals, which could control the diseases and insect pests of crops, to villages for use. This led to the increase in the quality and quantity of the produce, which came into the market and were easily accessible to the farmers. Further, they encouraged the production of protective foods of perishable nature, such as eggs, fruits, vegetables, milk and other dairy products as rapid and efficient transit system was available to take them fresh to the markets or to other places where they would fetch good price to the producer.\textsuperscript{13}

The increased production, provision of security led to the increase in trade. This trade would have been restricted or not at all happened if a good transportation system was not available.

Transportation encouraged large-scale production, which made possible the growth of markets and mandis. The surplus was easily saleable here. All this led to the reduction in the cost of production per unit of the output, benefiting both industry and consumer.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, equalizing the prices of the commodities in various parts of the province.

From the table 5.1, we can see a continuous rise in the production of wheat, rice, total food-grains, from 1950-51 to 1980-81, for which the transportation facilities played their due role. As the produce could be carried and sold at good prices in no time, which was very profitable for the farmers and more and more people started growing these things. There was a rise in the production of sugarcane and of cotton from the year 1950-51 to 1975-76, but in the years 1980-81 we see a fall in the


production which was due to shifting over of farmers to other crops which would give them more profit with less trouble and the location of the industry in which it was to be made a finished product was far away from the area of production and not due to the transportation facilities. The index of agricultural production, total market arrivals, total fertilizer consumption and export of industrial goods, all indicates rise in their production which was only possible with the increasing consumption which was still only possible, “if they were easily available which was done by these transportation facilities.15

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Wheat</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.24</td>
<td>11.36</td>
<td>17.42</td>
<td>19.16</td>
<td>51.45</td>
<td>57.88</td>
<td>76.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Rice</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>6.88</td>
<td>14.47</td>
<td>32.33</td>
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<td>3. Total Foodgrains</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.95</td>
<td>22.66</td>
<td>31.62</td>
<td>33.89</td>
<td>73.05</td>
<td>88.27</td>
<td>119.21</td>
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<td>4. Sugarcane ( in terms of gur)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>3.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Cotton*</td>
<td>Lakh bales 180</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>7.09</td>
<td>7.31</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>12.35</td>
<td>11.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Index of Agricultural Production**</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>77.65</td>
<td>77.59</td>
<td>109.76</td>
<td>144.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Total Market Arrivals</td>
<td>`000 Qtls</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60690</td>
<td>1,03,310</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Total Fertilizers Consumption</td>
<td>`000 Nutrient tons</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>762</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Index of Industrial Production***</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>177.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Export of Industrial Goods</td>
<td>Lakh Rs.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7561.17</td>
<td>16212.63</td>
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*Cotton bales upto 1970-71 of 180 Kgs each and afterwards 170 Kgs each.
** Base ending 1969-70 = 100.
*** Base 1975-76 = 100.
In the manufacturing sector the impact of the transportation system is also noteworthy. The growth of industry and factories was only possible by their presence. They made the availability of raw material from far off places possible. Small scale industries flourished as their finished products were easily carried off to the markets. New industry was set-up as heavy, as well as, light machinery used by them for production, could be imported. These industrial units slowly became new urban centres as people in search of jobs started migrating to these areas and started living there permanently. So, indirectly the developing transport also promoted urbanisation.

The rates of land in rural areas, and in urban areas increased. The rent of the agricultural land depends on the productivity and the location of land. The productivity of the land is influenced by the transport as it becomes easier to secure for application to the land, the elements of fertility. This system also resulted in the localisation of the industries. Rent of the urban sites and buildings, which were close to railway juncture or on bus routes, went up more than the rates of other places.

Transport facilities made available coal from Bihar to run the thermal plants at Ropar and Bathinda, which supplied 50 percent of the total electricity to the state. This energy when utilized in houses, fields, industry, etc. led to the overall development.

The transportation system also helped in reducing the prevailing caste rigidities to some extent. As increased travelling made people come into contact with each other, leaving aside their caste, creed, etc., they sat together in buses, vans, railways, etc. discussing various issues. This

increased toleration in them, changed their thinking and contributed to national unity.

Even though people of many regions had attained education, still there were some regions where evil practices like infanticide, bad treatment with women, etc. were prevalent. These things had being declared illegal but were still present in the society. With the help of the transportation system it was possible for the officers to reach on time at the scene of incident and catch the culprits red handed. This led to a sense of fear among the people and these socially evil practices were reduced to some extent.

Transportation system led to social reforms, as the people by getting English education contacted with the extensive and profound achievement of the modern west in the sphere of scientific and social knowledge. The liberal ideas of the west spread among people.

The transportation system helped in breaking the isolation of the villages, which during the rainy seasons with stiff clayey soils to remain cut off from the world, but now due to roads and railways they have regular contact with other areas.19

They helped in the spread of education as the prosperous farmer felt the need to educate the next generation so that they had other opportunities to rise. So, new school, colleges were opened and buses arranged for conveyance purpose. A general sense of social awakening among the villagers took place as their contact with the urban localities, other regions and the rest of the World took place. Their thinking, living eating and talking habits, dressing sense, walking, behaviour, everything changed. The sense of cleanliness and sanitation came in them. The development of culture in the countryside took place, which brought a fundamental change in the outlook of people, i.e., they gave up

superstition, ignorance, and fatalism became self reliant and industrious and demanded logic and reason behind all the happenings.

Above all, Punjab being border state, had to have better transportation system and facilities to provide security. The transportation facilities made it easy for the troops and the ammunition to be carried to the frontier in no time through roads, railways and airways. This helped strengthening the national defence of the province.

Transport being a private and public consumption good also played an important role here. In its private role it enabled individuals to travel for private reasons. And as a public good it served to increase the national defence capabilities, social cohesion and political stability, as stated above.

During the time of any natural calamity such as floods, famine, etc. they have provided people with relief measures. As food, clothing and other necessary articles could reach people in no time and with their help the lives of the people could be saved.

They made mobility better for labour from rural areas to urban area in search of jobs and of educated persons to make their life possible. The wages were equalised.

The railways have proved very useful during long journeys and in the carriage of heavy bulky things from one place to another. Somehow the importance of air transportation is just realised to the maximum during emergencies like floods, war, etc. as they can airlift things and carry them to the place of requirement much faster. Agriculture and business are also benefited by it. In Punjab the rivers are no longer used for transportation purpose, but still their impact otherwise cannot

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be ignored as they provide water to the fields, which help in increasing productivity of land and thus increase the volume of produce. Further, electricity is produced which everything is dependent, be it agriculture or industry, or homes.

Irregular transport service even for a couple of days at any time can cost losses worth crores. The system proved very advantageous to the overall development of the province. It acting as a defacto-barometer of economic, social and political progress, transformed not only the province but also the whole world into one organic unit.

The transportation system did have negative impact also as too much pollution due to the use of petrol and diesel on outdated vehicles took place. It also made some commodities expensive. Too many people died every year in accidents, as the knowledge required for driving was inadequate. This caused pain to the families whose near and dear ones passed away. It led to the introduction of foreign capital and foreign investment, which had certain disadvantages along with some advantages. The cottage industry also suffered as people started preferring cheap machine made goods, available to them. It also led to the destruction of our resources. It led to the overcrowding of the people in the areas where job opportunities were more due to which some areas developed much faster than the others. But still if we see they have proved good in more senses than bad.

The communication system of post and telegraph which was started by the Britishers, proved advantageous to the province even after the partition. The conveyance of messages through letters, post cards, etc. and of urgent messages through telegraphs helped people to keep in touch with there near and dear ones no matter how far they were. With the provisions of money orders a person could send money to his family and make his dreams come true even working away from home. Newspapers were delivered, which made people conscious of the various
things happening in the outside world, which helped in changing their views and ideas and broadening their knowledge. During the time of emergency with the deliverance of the news through them, the whole nation united to overcome the situation by helping. They being the true voice of common man protected and safeguarded the interest of common man. Through parcels and packets useful articles could be delivered anywhere with total security and guarantee.

The telegraph system made it easy not only for the common man but for the Government to send messages very quickly. Further the use of telephones, starting of Public Call Offices made it easy for people to talk to their dear ones, no matter how far in no time. It promoted contact, business progress, etc.

Thus, we can say that the transportation and the communication system proved very useful for the progress of the province and making it one of the major areas, without whose contribution the Indian economy could stand nowhere.