Chapter - 1

INTRODUCTION

History is an unending dialogue between the past and the present. Man’s endeavor to overcome the natural barriers is also unending. As the invention of wheel changed the very style of the mankind, the invention of air craft revolutionized his living. The air travel became the mark of the transport system of comfort and sophistication. It took man to the sky and enabled him to overcome the challenges of time and distance of transport barriers. Air became the medium of transport added to the traditional means namely surface and ocean. The introduction of aeroplanes has reached a century of changes in a short interval. The impact and impetus to growth is tremendous. It is an important factor as it has brought a great impact on the promotion and growth of the tourism industry in India. This is an attempt to trace and record the growth and challenges of the aviation industry from the time of its inception in India, that is in 1911 to 2003, the year from which flying become within the reach of common man.

This thesis entitled “History of Indian Civil Aviation A.D.1911 - 2003” is an investigation of the aviation industry and its impact on the 20th century
India. The study period is from A.D. 1911 to 2003. The inception of aircraft began in the year 1911. Air Deccan, the first low cost carrier of India has truly changed the face of Indian Aviation Industry since 2003. The airline gave wings to the dream of flying of every common Indian.

The story of the growth of transportation can conveniently be divided into three stages. The first covers the period from antiquity to the Industrial Revolution, until when only the power of human beings, animals, wind and water currents were used as prime movers. The second phase began with the Industrial Revolution, when steam and electricity were harnessed for locomotion. The third stage beginning from the twentieth century in a technological revolution, yielding various types of motive power engines for faster and larger trains and ships, heavier than air flights, jet propulsion, supersonics and the space technology of today. While the time span of each later phase was getting compressed, the achievements were getting more and more spectacular and dynamic from phase to phase. The future can be relied upon to offer untold opportunities and prospects.

The basic conditions under which these developments took place greatly influenced both the technique and the form of transport organization. Land transport always involved a vehicle and a track, a road or a specialized way,
like a rail. A road was common to pedestrians, riders and drivers of other vehicles, but not owned by them, while a rail track was generally owned by the railways. The conditions regarding sea and air transport are different in as much as nature provided the track and man the vehicles. The track for land, sea and air transport, naturally exercised much influence on the design, size, facilities and growth of these forms of transportation.

History has shown that every phase of development in the form and means of transportation has influenced the life of man tremendously. Transport is at once a personal need and activity, that has grown into a vast and highly complex industry. It is an essential element of nearly all kinds of economic, social and political activity. While it is an indispensable ingredient to the satisfaction of individual and collective demand for the movement of the people, it also plays a highly strategic role in the exploitation of natural resources, in the movement of raw materials, essential commodities of consumption and products, in industrialization, in domestic and international trade, commerce and tourism.

The demand for travel is ever increasing and shall continue unabated in the future. Air transport is the most modern, the quickest and the latest addition to the modes of transport. Because of speed with which aeroplanes can fly,
travel by air is becoming increasingly popular. As far as the world trade is concerned it is still dominated by sea transport because air transport is very expensive and is also unsuitable for carrying heavy, bulky goods. However, transportation of high value light goods and perishable goods is increasingly being done by air transport.

Airways are wonderful invention of man. Airways can access anyplace, anywhere. Twenty four hours a day, 365 days of the year, an aeroplane takes off or lands every few seconds somewhere on the face of the earth. Behind the scenes are millions of employees involved in manufacturing, maintenance and monitoring of the products and services required in the never-ending cycle of flights, in fact, modern aviation is one of the most complex systems of interaction between human beings and machines ever created.

Airways play a prominent role in passenger and cargo movement in all countries because of their geographic nature and size. In fact, the aviation industry acts as a catalyst for business, trade and tourism as well. Airways are an important community resource. The air industry encompasses a wide range of interested parties ranging from light aircraft manufacturers, owners of large international and domestic carriers, foreign and domestic trade and industry, tourism bodies and the traveling public including tourists.
Air transport has emerged as the most effective mode of transport, though it emerged very late. It has revolutionized the life style of the modern world. The most remote areas can now be accessed, any journal around the world can be measured in terms of hours of travelling. With commercial flights that can reach upto 1000km/hr, international tourism is no longer unusual and exclusive. Business people are among the biggest users of airline facilities.

Airways are best suited for air-tourism. Airways can access anyplace, anywhere, for landing of course, terminal is needed. In these days of fast life style for quick transport of tourists, airways play a vital role. Global tourism is influenced by the airways. Social, cultural and international understanding of people is influenced by the airways.

Civil aviation has made such a rapid progress that it is now a well established industry in most of the advanced countries of the world. The economic structure of a country, whether developed or developing, can be strengthened by modernization of its transport system in which civil air transport plays a significant role in the domestic and international communications. It has been, therefore, the objective of all countries big or small to possess a civil fleet which may serve commerce and industry during
normal times and may simultaneously remain available for immediate conversion to military use in the event of national emergencies.

In India, the progress in the field of civil aviation has been fairly rapid and almost phenomenal. The proposal to bring about a merger of various civil aviation companies of pre-independence era and to restructure their organization and working into Public Corporations indicates the importance of this industry which is going to play in the national life of our socialist democracy. Civil aviation has contributed immensely to the enhancement of tourist traffic and increase revenue in foreign exchange.

Aviation administration is an area which has presented itself in various critical dimensions in the post-war period. It is not because that aviation industry has made rapid strides after 1945 but for several other reasons like the growth and development of tourism is a national industry and increasing economic collaboration among the developing and developed nations of the world.

India is one of the fastest growing aviation markets in the world. With the liberalization of the Indian aviation sector, the industry had witnessed a transformation with the entry of the privately owned full service airlines and
low cost carriers. Gone are the days when air services enjoyed a distinct position and remained a monopoly for the use of the political and business elites. Today, because of democracy, socialism and international cooperation the aviation industry has to function and conduct its national and international operations under the public gaze.

The entire nation is involved in it and its administrative operations need a thorough study and scientific research to bring to light the facts which condition its growth and development. Moreover, the impact and implications of aviation administration are not confined to national administration alone. Aviation administration is inextricably and subtly linked up with international airlines whose operations are managed in private as well as public sectors by nations friendly or otherwise.

Unfortunately, the past of aviation administration has created an impression that airlines represent the special amenities for the privileged few. Historically, they have been viewed as an aristocratic service for the aristocrats and have naturally functioned in an opaque house. Democracy and development add a new perspective to this area of administration and expose it not only to popular criticism but also to newer challengers of science and technology.
It should be a matter of concern that while much serious research literature exists about railways, shipping and road transport, not much research study has been undertaken to explore the ways and means necessary for the promotion of air age education in India.

The present study is certainly a great attempt to trace the history of aviation in India and its development, it also focuses on the problems with which aviation industry seems to be facing. The present study is a modest attempt to initiate more academic research in this direction in the future.

**Aim and Objective**

The main objective of this study is to show case with a historical perspective the rapid progress of the air transport, which now has well established itself as an industry in India like that of the most advanced nations of the world. An attempt has been made to analyze the growth of tourism industry. And also it aims to bring out the main issues like the incidence of air crashes, hijacking of planes of aviation industry and impact of the tourism industry. It should be a matter of concern that while much serious research literature exists about railways, shipping and road transport, not much research study has been undertaken to explore the ways and means necessary for the promotion of air age education in India.
Methodology and Source Materials

The historical methodology is followed and the narrative is in chronological sequence. Probing, critically analyzing and recording the birth, growth and impact of the aviation industry in India is the methodology adopted in this work. The methodology is to arrive at a critical investigation and careful documentation of historical events in the chronological order. While the research was under progress the scholar had to face difficulties in collecting informations from the department of airforce for security reasons. The repeated enquiries proved to be fruitful in getting relevant records from Airport Authority of India and various Airlines, whereas it was difficult in collecting the details of security measures and accidents. Details of finance, funds, accounts, profits and loss and of the similar informations used at a minimum level due to the higher level of confidentiality maintained by the Ministry of Civil and Aviation. Both primary and secondary sources have been consulted at Airport Authority Libraries at International and Domestic airports regarding the organizational framework. Reports, Government orders, Magazines, Souvenirs, Research papers, Minutes, Correspondents and periodicals were found in the National Headquarters. The Jawaharlal Nehru University Library at New Delhi, The Connemara Library, Chennai, Hindustan Aeronautical Limited, Bangalore, provided a great source of information. Rajiv Gandhi
National Institute at New Delhi and District Libraries proved to be a great help. Indian Tourism Development Corporation, New Delhi and Tamil Nadu, Air India and Indian Airlines documentation departments annual reports and souvenirs, journals, magazines were also consulted. In addition to these, interviews with Directors of Air India, Indian Airlines, Branch heads, station masters, Airport Authorities, Director and Joint Director of ITDC, New Delhi and Chennai were also consulted.

**Scope of the study**

The present study seeks to trace the history and examine the organization and working of Civil Aviation in India. The study has endeavoured to probe into the Nationalisation of the Indian Air Transport, structure of the Air corporations and the emergence of Airport Authority of India, Reprivatization of airlines and into some of the problem areas like air accidents, hijacking, bird hits, pilot errors. The study has also tried to highlight the impact of aviation on Tourism Industry between 1911 to 2003 A.D.

**Organisation**

This study is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter is introduction to the travel industry in general and Air travel in particular. The second chapter is devoted to trace the birth of Aviation and its arrival in India. The third
chapter focuses on Nationalization of Indian Air Transport and its development. The fourth chapter covers the Emergence of Airport Authority of India. The fifth chapter deals with the Reprivatization of Airlines. The sixth chapter focuses on the Challenges of Air travel. The seventh chapter brings out the aviation industry and its impact on tourism. The last chapter summarises the conclusions reached in the course of study and ventures. Some recommendations for further research are also suggested.