

CHAPTER-7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER-7SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter is devoted to a presentation of the main findings of the study and the formal conclusions that emerge from it.

Economic development can be defined as a process of a steady increase in the aggregate real national income of a country at a rate sufficient to offset the rate of growth of its population so as to result in a sustained increase in the per capita real income of the country leading to a steady improvement in the standard of living of the people. Economic development will, however, be meaningful only when the high level of per capita income attained is followed by an equitable distribution of income among the people. Economic development should, therefore, lead to a quantitative increase in real income - both aggregate and average - and qualitative improvement in its distribution so as to make it meaningful and relevant to the needs and problems of a presently developing country like India.

The rapid economic development of a less developed country requires certain basic infrastructural facilities of which transport is an important one. Though, from the point of view of the economy, transport is an economic

infrastructure whose basic objective is to encourage productive activity in other fields, from the point of view of the transport operators it is an economic undertaking, like any other productive activity, and the operators are motivated to undertake transport activity by the possibility of earning profit. An analysis of the pattern of transport ownership reveals a mixed pattern consisting of individual ownership, partnership, joint-stock ownership and State ownership. However, since transport is basically an economic infrastructure, certain amount of compromise between private profit and social gain should necessarily be brought about while pricing and routing of transport services in a region. This evidently calls for State intervention in pricing and routing of transport services.

Dakshina Kannada district in Karnataka State is primarily an agricultural district and grows valuable cash crops like coconut, arecanut, pepper, cashew and recently cocoa and rubber, besides paddy, the traditional crop of the district. The district is relatively developed in terms of the per capita income of the district when compared with the per capita income of the State as a whole. However, the district has potential for further development on account of its geographical position on the Arabian sea coast, its forest and agricultural resources, availability of skilled labour,

and developed banking and other financial facilities.

The district is also endowed with a fairly developed passenger road transport system. Both heavy passenger road transport, through buses, and light passenger road transport, through passenger cars, metadors and autorickshaws, exist in the district. The case study of the passenger road transport system in the district reveals that while passenger transport through buses is undertaken by both the State, through the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation, and private operators, light passenger road transport is undertaken exclusively by private individuals.

It was found that in 1986 there were 220 buses owned and operated by the State and 399 buses were owned and operated by private operators. It was also found that the share of private operators is larger than the share of the State in operating passenger road transport service in the district.

The operation of bus transport by private operators is undertaken in three forms, namely, individual ownerships, partnerships, and companies. The study reveals that the share of companies and partnerships in the total number of buses operated in the district has been decreasing in recent years while the share of individual operators has been increasing. One reason for this phenomenon is the well

developed banking and credit facilities in the district which enable the individuals to raise the required finance easily for undertaking bus transport operation. It was found that majority of the transport users prefer private operation of passenger transport and among private operators they prefer the passenger services of companies because of their relatively regular and reliable service.

The heavy passenger transport operators in the district are classified into (i) fleet operators, including the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation, owning and operating five or more buses along definite routes (ii) medium scale operators, owning and operating two to four buses on one or more than one routes, and (iii) single bus operators, owning and operating a single bus on a definite route. It is found that the share of fleet operators in the total number of buses operated in the district is larger than the combined share of medium scale operators and single bus operators.

Light passenger transport, through passenger cars, metadors and autorickshaws, is undertaken mainly by individuals and most of the vehicles are operated by the owners themselves, though the system of hiring the vehicles to operators or drivers on fixed rental basis also exist. From the point of view of the earnings of the operators of light passenger vehicles, it is found that the passenger car operators

earn more per day when compared with the operators of metadors and autorickshaws in the district. Passenger transport through light passenger vehicles is found both in the urban and in the rural areas of the district. /

A peculiarity of the rural road transport system in the district is the existence of regular point to point passenger transport services through such vehicles in the district. There is a well developed informal organisation among these operators in respect of fares and freights and competition is avoided through a well organised, though informal, queuing system. This phenomenon is a welcome feature of the rural road transport system of the district because the scale of operation in some of the routes in the villages is so small as to make heavy passenger transport through buses unviable and hence unattractive to the bus operators and hence such transport services have to be undertaken by the operators of light passenger vehicles. The operation of passenger transport through light passenger vehicles gives self employment opportunities to the people on a large scale.

Four categories of passenger road transport routes are found to exist in the district and these categories are, (i) routes from village to village; (ii) routes from village to taluk headquarters; (iii) routes from taluk headquarters to district headquarters; and (iv) routes from village to

district headquarters. It is found that all types of passenger vehicles are operating on all types of routes in the district resulting in overlapping of services and waste of resources from the point of view of the society and such waste of resources can be avoided through, as suggested in the Model developed in the third chapter of the thesis, a proper system of transport routing.

A characteristic feature of the passenger road transport system in the district is its composite nature, in that the vehicles used for passenger transport in the rural areas are also used to transport goods, though on a small scale, along with passenger transport. This nature of transport is found to be economical in the rural areas.

Regional imbalances in economic development have been a feature of economic development of countries in the past. Such imbalances imply existence of economically developed centres with underdeveloped hinterland in a region. The developed centres are usually the bigger towns and urban centres in a region and the underdeveloped hinterland are the rural areas of the region. Such rural - urban disparities in the levels of economic development in a region does not conform to the definition of economic development adopted earlier according to which economic development,

to be meaningful, should be balanced as among different localities in a region and as among different regions in a country. Such intra-regional disparities in the levels of development are found to exist in the district of Dakshina Kannada as well.

Rapid rural development can be viewed as a means of overcoming such intra-regional disparities in the levels of economic development in a region. Rural development is also a means of slowing down the rate of urbanisation in a region. One method of encouraging rapid rural development in a region is through the provision of developed economic infrastructural facilities in the rural areas. Transport is one such infrastructural facility, the development of which will accelerate rural development in a region.

The case study attempted to assess the contribution of road transport to rural development in Dakshina Kannada. Since transport is only an infrastructural facility and is not a direct input in production, the contribution of transport to rural development can be assessed only indirectly in terms of certain indicators. Taking such an indirect methodology, the contribution of passenger road transport to rural development in the district is assessed in terms of (i) its implications to agricultural development; (ii) its implications to industrial development; (iii) its implications

to intra-regional development; and (iv) its implications to consumer satisfaction. The case study reveals that, in terms of the above, road transport has contributed to rural development in the district.

Though the district is endowed with a fairly developed passenger road transport system, with its salutary effect on rural development, there are, nevertheless, certain problems faced by the transport operators as well as the transport users. While the transport operators point out to poor quality of roads, non-availability of fuel and other inputs in the rural areas, high taxes, inter-modal and intra-modal competition and lack of sufficient cooperation from the users and encouragement from the authorities as their major problems, the transport users point out poor quality of roads, overloading in passenger vehicles, insufficient and irregular passenger services on certain routes, high fares and freights as the major problems faced by them. Measures should, therefore, be adopted to overcome the above problems so as to improve the efficiency of passenger road transport in the district and thereby make it more effective in accelerating the pace of rural development in the district.

Conclusion: Having studied the present structure and operation of passenger road transport in the district the following conclusions can be arrived at:

(1) Economic development, to be meaningful, should be balanced, inter-regionally as well as intra-regionally, in a large country like India in order to attain equitable distribution of the gains of development among the people.

(2) Rural development is a means to overcome inter-regional and intra-regional imbalances and the existence of dualistic patterns of development in developing countries.

(3) Road transport, as an infrastructural facility, plays a significant role in economic development in general and in rural development in particular in a country.

(4) Dakshina Kannada district is relatively more developed when compared with other districts in the State and is endowed with different modes of transport owned and operated by the State as well as private operators and has a fairly developed passenger road transport system on a competitive basis.

(5) A noticeable feature of passenger transport operation in the district is a significant growth, in recent years, of single operators of both heavy and light passenger vehicles.

(6) Though the system of passenger road transport in the district is fairly developed, there are still problems faced by the transport operators as well as the transport users.

(7) Measures should, therefore, be adopted to overcome such problems in order to make the passenger road transport system in the district more efficient so as to enable it to cater more effectively to rural development.

