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Paper- II (Subsidiary)

Topic : Transport : Indian Roadways

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* Indian Roadways :

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Roads have been existing in India for the last 5000 years. In early stages of Indian history, Ashoka and Chandragupta made efforts to construct roads. But the real progress was made during the Mughal period.

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A number of roads were laid during Sultanate and Mughal periods. Most of the present trunk routes follow the Mughal routes. These routes were essential for strengthening and consolidating the empire.

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One such road was constructed by "Sher Shah Suri" which connected Peshawar to Kolkata. It was named as "Grand Trunk Road" and joined Amritsar with Kolkata after partition of India in 1947. Presently, it is known as "Sher Shah Suri Marg".

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* Classification of Roads :

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The main significance of the Nagpur Plan lies in the fact that it classified road into four categories on the functional basis:

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- i). National Highways
- ii). State Highways
- iii). District Roads
- iv). Village Roads

08 • National Highways :

09 The main roads which are constructed and maintained
by the "Central Public Work Department (CPWD)" are
10 known as the "National Highways". These roads are
meant for inter-state and strategic defence movements
11 and connect the state capitals, big cities, important
ports, big railway junctions and link up with border
12 roads.

The length of NH increased from 19,811 km
13 in 1951 to 33,650 km in 1991 and 49,585 km
in 1999. Currently, the total length of NH in
14 India is 65,569 kms. The percentage share of the
NH to the total road length has decreased considerably
15 from 4.95% in 1951 to only 1.96% in 1999.
They carry heavy 40% of the road traffic in
16 India.

17 • State Highways :

18 These are constructed and maintained by state govt
and join the state capitals with district headquarter
19 and other important towns. These roads
are also connected to the NH. The length of state
20 roadways in India has more than doubled within
a span of about three decades and has increased
from 56,465 km in 1971 to 1,37,950 km in 1999.
These roads constitute 5.46% of the total road
length of India. Although construction and maintain-
21 -ance of state highways is the responsibility of
the state govt.

08 With the revamping of the Central Road Fund (CRF) in
09 2000, the Centre provides about Rs 1,000 crore
for development of State roads.

10 • District Roadways :

11 These roads join the district headquarters with the other
12 places of the district. Development and maintenance
of these roads fall within the purview of Zila Parish-
13 -heads. There has been more than four and half times
increase in the length of district roadways from
14 1,73,723 km in 1951 to 801,655 km in 1999.
In 1999, these roads accounted for 31.74% of
15 the total road length of India. Formerly most of
the district roads were unsurfaced and lacked bridges
16 and culverts. But now the situation is changed and
most of these roads are surfaced. Such a situation
has improved connectivity and paved way for economic
development.

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• Village Roads :

18 The village roads are mainly the responsibility of
village panchayats and connect the villages with
19 the neighbouring towns and cities. These are gener-
ally dusty tracks and are usable only during the
20 fair weather. The length of these roads has increased by
about 5 times from 2,06,408 km in 1951 to 10,
28,410 km in 1999. These roads accounted for over 40%
of the total road length of the country in 1999.

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Still about 10% of the villages having a population
of 1,000 or more and 60% of the villages with
less than 1,000 people are not connected by all-
-weather roads.

By - Apna