**Blueprint of Research Proposal for Minor Research Project**

**Working Title: Economic Analysis of BEST’s Public Transportation System**

1. **Introduction:**

The strike of the drivers and conductors of Maharashtra State Road Transportation Corporation (MSRTC) started on October 28, 2021. It has been the longest in the history of the corporation. The Government of Maharashtra set up the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation to create a network of efficient, cost-effective, speedy and efficient road passenger transport services for the citizens of the state. However, the current strike of the employees of the corporation has paralysed the public transportation in the state. The strike has raised questions on the ability of the public entities to successfully run a public transportation system and it has naturally brought Bombay Electric Supply and Transportation’s (BEST) public transportation system under discussion.

According to Ministry of Road Transport and Highways’ report titled “Review of the performance of state road transport undertakings” (2016-17), BEST Undertaking was the third of the top five loss-making state regional transportation services in India.

Currently, with the introduction of smart cards, ‘Chalo’ software application, inclusion of AC buses in the fleet and announcing greater reliance on electric vehicles henceforth, BEST seems to be attempting to match the pace of changing times.

Given these facts and the importance of BEST’s public transportation system in Mumbai’s further growth and development, the project intends to study the present situation of BEST with respect to its public transportation system’s cost-revenue model and profitability.

1. **Significance of the Research**

An efficient public transportation is necessary to ensure sustainable development of a region. It has potential of resolving multiple problems facing societies today. A sound public transportation system averts the problem of congestion and pollution. Moreover, it becomes a safe and cost-effective mode of transportation for masses, reducing their cost of living at least by some margin. BEST Undertaking’s bus transportation system is no exception to this. It has been acting as Mumbai’s lifeline for more than nine decades and has contributed significantly to the economic growth of the city. However, as mentioned earlier, according to Ministry of Road Transport and Highways’ report titled “Review of the performance of state road transport undertakings” (2016-17) BEST Undertaking was the third of the top five loss-making state regional transportation services in India. Inability of such an important and old organisation to make profit might lead to complete collapse of Mumbai’s public transportation system in the long run and its revival will become even more difficult.

The present study is significant as it takes cue from MSRTC’s current tricky situation and attempts to analyse where BEST’s transportation system stands today.

1. **Objectives of the Research**
2. To study the chronological development of BEST Undertaking’s bus transportation system.
3. To study the outreach of BEST Undertaking’s bus transportation system in Mumbai and its satellite towns.
4. To analyse the role of BEST Undertaking’s bus transportation system in the lives of residents of Mumbai.
5. To understand the significance of BEST Undertaking’s bus transportation system in the economy of Mumbai today.
6. To study the cost-revenue model of BEST Undertaking’s bus transportation system.
7. To compare BEST Undertaking’s bus transportation system to private transportation service providers in Mumbai.
8. **Scope of the Research:**

The study will cover various aspects related to BEST’s transport Division, such as nature of service provided, areas served, fare structure, employee status, wage structure, public-private partnership in operations, cost and revenue structure, profitability, etc.

1. **Research Methodology:**

* **Primary Data:** This will be gathered through questionnaires, interviews and group discussions of various stakeholders of BEST Undertaking across Mumbai.
* **Secondary Data:** This will be collected from published documents and reports of BEST, websites, periodicals and newspapers.

1. **Plan of Research**

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| **Research Activity** | **Tentative Time Period** |
| Review of Literature | June, 2022 – September, 2022 |
| Questionnaire Formation | October, 2022 – November, 2022 |
| Data collection | December, 2022 – February, 2023 |
| Data Analysis | March, 2023 – May, 2023 |
| Report writing | June, 2023 – July, 2023 |

1. **Expected Outcome:**

The study is expected to show the current position of BEST’s transport division. It will bring out the causes of its losses. The study will also highlight the benefits and drawbacks of BEST’s present public-private partnership. It is expected that the study will help in suggesting a revival strategy for this public sector undertaking in question.