

23. Aids to Commerce – Transport (I)

Objectives

At the end of this chapter, students should be able to state the meaning of transport, list the importance of transportation, describe the various forms of transport such as land and air, and to state the relative advantages and disadvantages of each form or mode of transport. The students should also be able state the functions of the Nigeria Airways Authority and describe its relationship with the Nigeria Airways.

23.1 Meaning

Transport or transportation is a means or a system of conveying people (passengers) or goods from one place to the other. People can move from place to place on foot or carry their goods on their heads.

Nowadays people can move or carry their goods on vehicles such as bicycles, cars, lorries, trucks, etc. Trains and aeroplanes are used in the movement of people or goods from one place to the other by rail and air respectively, while canoes, boats and ships are used for carrying goods and passengers on water, i.e. rivers, seas and oceans. Certain goods or products such as water, gas and grain can be transported through the pipeline over short or long distances.

23.2 Importance of Transport

Transport is one of the aids to commerce. A nation without a good transport system could be likened to a human body without a good circulatory system. For modern commerce, a good transport system is highly essential. The importance of a good transport system could be summarized thus:

- (i) It aids and sustains the growth and development of trade, industry and agriculture.
- (ii) It assists the mobility of people and the delivery of goods from one country to another and within each country.
- (iii) It promotes the interchange of ideas, culture and expertise; thereby enriching the quality of life through national and international interactions.
- (iv) The transport industry boosts employment opportunities in a country, thus easing major social and economic problems.
- (v) It enhances the efficiency with which commercial enterprises are operated.
- (vi) The various means of transport serve as items of buying and selling – commerce.

23.3 Forms of Transport

The main forms of transport are as follows

- (i) Land

- (ii) Water
- (iii) Air
- (iv) Pipelines

23.3.1 Land Transport

(i) Walking

This is a form of transport which is as old as the early man. It has passed through all times from the ancient to the modern. It was the commonest form of transport in ancient times. It was then used for very long distances. For instance, in the olden days, Nigerians walked across the border to Niger Republic, Cameroon, Togo, etc. Today, a lot of walking is still being done within short distances that link villages and towns; and within a village or town itself.

Advantages

- (a) It is cheapest of all forms of transport; it costs very little to move about on foot.
- (b) It is quicker for short distances; there is no need to wait for any bus.
- (c) In some rural settlements it is the only form of transport available.
- (d) It is a sort of exercise that aids healthy living, and proper functioning of the body. This is because minimum walking helps to keep the body in good condition.

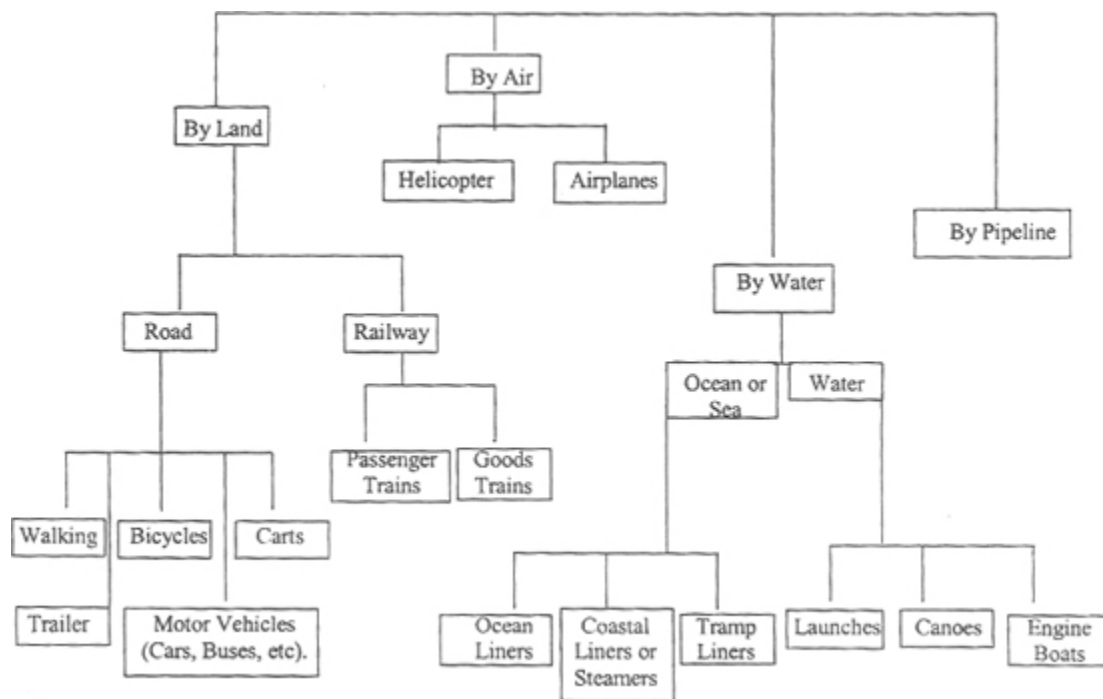


Fig. 23.1: *The Various Forms of Transportation*

Disadvantages

- (a) It is unsuitable for long distances because it is energy – sapping and time consuming.
- (b) The walker is liable to road hazards, like the possibility of being knocked down by motorists or cyclists. Those who engage in walking are also exposed to the dangers of mugging, robberies, physical assaults and even kidnapping.

- (c) The quantity of load or goods carried at a time is usually small.

(ii) **Motorcycles/bicycles**

Travelling by the use of bicycles or motorcycles is equally old-fashioned; but definitely not as old as walking. Both are made use of for short distances within and outside towns and villages. Bicycles have more restricted coverage than motorcycles which are mechanically operated and can, therefore, go longer distances without much effort by the rider.

Advantages

- (a) The use of both is cheaper than all other forms of modern means of transport.
- (b) Each can be owned personally, unlike trains that can only be owned by governments or big corporations.
- (c) Both are handy and can easily be used for short distance journeys.
- (d) Use of motorcycle as commercial transportation is growing in popularity in Nigeria and is referred to as *â€œOKADAâ€™*.
- (e) They can go where taxis and cars cannot go.

Disadvantages

- (a) Both are unsuitable for long journeys.
- (b) Riders of both are prone to road accidents.
- (c) Each can carry only very small load or a few passengers at a time.

(iii) **Carts**

These are man-pushed trucks used for carriage of goods, mainly within towns only. They are popular in the shopping centres of towns and cities.

Advantages

- (a) They are handy for local petty traders who want goods carried over short distances.
- (b) They are cheaper to hire for some types of goods rather than hiring a motor lorry or van.
- (c) They can be personally owned.
- (d) They have larger capacities than taxis and private motor cars.
- (e) They are flexible; often ready to follow the direction of business.

Disadvantages

- (a) They add to traffic congestion in city or town shopping centres.
- (b) The pushers are often careless in handling the goods carried and are therefore, not suitable for transporting delicate goods.
- (c) They are reasonable for short distances only.
- (d) Pushing a cart is strenuous and tiring.

(iv) **Motor vehicles**

These include buses, lorries, trailers and motor cars.

Buses: Buses can be privately owned. Examples are the local bus transport services. They can also be owned by local governments, e.g. the sport services. They can also be owned by state governments, e.g. the North East Line and the Edo Line.

Buses could ply within towns or cities. In Nigeria, as in most other West African countries, bus services are usually inefficient, uncomfortable and badly maintained. However, in developed countries of Europe and the USA, buses are tidy and well kept, and are used by both the rich and the poor.

Advantages

- (a) They are usually handy for travellers having no personal vehicles, especially to and from places of work.
- (b) For long journeys, they prove more reliable than the railway services.
- (c) They are cheaper than the air as a means of transport.
- (d) They usually operate on definite routes and pick passengers at identifiable bus stops, in cities and towns.
- (e) They are most suitable for carrying human cargo.

Disadvantages

- (a) Those operating within towns or cities are sometimes untidy. Bus conductors may also be discourteous to passengers. It is not an uncommon scene to find a *Danfo* bus driver, or his conductor, fighting with passengers at bus stops.
 - (b) Since there is no central control for bus movements, their services are usually irregular and inadequate.
 - (c) Fraudulent practices by caretakers and operators of government bus services usually lead to colossal loss of funds and eventual closedown, worsening an already inadequate transport services.
 - (d) They are not suitable for certain goods on commercial basis.
2. *Trailers:* These are for the transportation of large quantities of goods such as manufactured goods and farm products. They are heavy and long motor vehicles which compete greatly with trains in the transportation of bulky goods.

Advantages

- (a) They can be owned personally, unlike trains.
- (b) They are more economical by virtue of their size. One trailer could handle the goods that would require the use of ten lorries.
- (c) The operation of trailers is flexible – unlike trains; but like trains, they could serve long distances.

Disadvantages

- (a) Trailers are too wide and long for most West African roads, and are, therefore, a danger to other motorists. When they are involved in road accidents, they usually cause heavy casualties.
 - (b) There are cases when trailer drivers interfere with the goods they carry by selling part of them off on the highway.
3. *Motor cars:* A lot of motor cars on our roads are personally owned. In a society where the public transport system is far from adequate, personal ownership of motor cars is a symbol of social prestige. The chaos of traffic jams in major towns and cities is evidence of the mad desire of individuals to have at least a car on the road. The taxis are the commercial

counterparts of private cars. Much of what was said of *Danfós* applies to them.

Advantages

- (a) They are convenient and handy for immediate use.
- (b) They are of vital importance for transacting private businesses in a society without good means of public transport.
- (c) They confer special "status" on their owners – a status graduated according to the quality of the cars.
- (d) They can travel long distances and are faster than most locally operative trains. They also reach out to more places than trains and aeroplanes, whose movements are scheduled.

Disadvantages

- (a) The desire for personal cars pushes a lot of people to living above their means. It is financially prohibitive for some people to own and maintain personal cars.
- (b) Personal ownership of cars sometimes results from wrongful ordering of one's priorities.
- (c) Large scale personal ownership of cars is partly responsible for the traffic jams on most roads in urban settlements.

Roads, for the purposes of maintenance are divided into trunk "A" and trunk "B". The trunk "A" roads are maintained by the Federal Government and these are roads that link the major towns and cities of the country together, e.g. Lagos-Warri-Port Harcourt-Calabar; Lagos-Ore-Benin-Asaba roads. The trunk "B" (secondary) roads link these urban places with the rural areas. They are maintained by state governments.

The construction of flyovers and by-passes has been undertaken to reduce the pressure of traffic jams in some Nigerian cities: examples are at Agodi-Secretariat and Molete in Ibadan; at Marina, Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Yaba in Lagos. There are also pedestrian crossings to make roads safer for road users. Some producers or even wholesalers maintain a regular fleet of vehicles for their business.

23.3.2 Transport by Rail

Nigeria, like other West African countries, is served by some railways. The railway systems in West Africa as a whole serve as links between leading ports and the industrial and agricultural areas in the hinterland. Examples in Nigeria are the railway lines that link Lagos and Port Harcourt with Kaura Namoda, Nguru, Jos and Maiduguri passing through industrial centres like Ibadan, Jebba, Kaduna, Zaria and Kano. A close study of the map of the railways in West Africa shows clearly the pattern of railway services in the region.

The Nigeria railway system is the virtual monopoly of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) which was formed as a commercial enterprise in 1955, having remained as a government department from 1898. The NRC is owned by the Federal Government. The railway is used for the transportation of both passengers and goods. The passenger coaches are categorized into first class, second class and ordinary class with decreasing comfort in that order. The first class coaches are luxurious and furnished with sleeping beds. They are also the most expensive coaches.

Procedure for sending goods by rail

Goods are taken to the railway station or sub-station where they are checked, weighed and a *consignment note* issued out.

The consignment note is prepared by the railway corporation and issued to the *consignor* who fills in all the particulars about the goods to be dispatched. It is usually countersigned by the railway officer.

Particulars usually entered on a consignment note are:

- (a) Description and weight of goods.
- (b) Particulars of the person to whom the goods are to be delivered, i.e. the *consignee*.
- (c) Whether the goods are carried at owner's risk or at that of the Nigerian railway.
- (d) Who pays the transport cost.

The consignor keeps a copy of the consignment note. The railway makes delivery of the goods to the consignee who signs for it in a delivery book prepared by the railway for this purpose. The state of delivery may or may not be stated in the delivery book.

Factors affecting the railway rates

The following factors are taken into consideration before determining the rates to be paid for rail services:

- (i) *Weight of goods*: Light-weighted goods attract lower rates.
- (ii) *Value of goods*: High priced goods attract high rates.
- (iii) *Quantity*: If the goods are of large quantities, the rates would be high.
- (iv) *Nature of goods*: Fragile goods with high risk of damage would call for high rates. Here, the shape of packing is taken into consideration.
- (v) *Handling expenses*: Where expenses of handling the dispatch of goods are substantial, the rates payable would be higher than if the expenses are negligible.
- (vi) *At whose risk would goods be delivered*: When the owners bear the risks of delivery, the rates are lower; but if delivery would be at the corporation's risk, the rates payable are high.



Fig. 23.2: Major Railway Stations in Nigeria

- (vii) *Amount of business done with the consignor*: Where the consignor is a regular customer to the corporation, the rate payable could be less.
- (viii) *Length of journey*: Short distance delivery would attract low rates. However, it is cheaper to send goods by rail for long distance deliveries.
- (ix) *The competitors' prices*: Where the prices of the services of a railway company's competitors are lower, customers tend to abandon the company for its competitors. As such, the company loses business and money, unless it takes steps to reduce its own prices.

Types of rates

There are three main types of rates:

- (i) *Basic rates*: these are rates for manufactured goods referred to as general merchandise.
- (ii) *Exceptional rates*: e.g. in case of large quantities of goods.
- (iii) *Rates based on board risk (BR) or owner's risk (OR)*: Board risk attracts extra charges, while owner's risk attracts only the normal rate.

Advantages of road over the rail

(Alternatively these are the disadvantages of the railway system).

- (i) *Ready availability of vehicles*: Road transport vehicles are more readily available than the railway stations which are sparsely dotted on some definite routes in the country. The

movements of trains are also scheduled – not as flexible as road transport.

- (ii) *Penetration into interiors:* The road network system penetrates more into the villages and countrysides and are capable of offering better services to local markets and traders. They can also be used for door to door assignments. The railway services have relatively fewer stations and restricted routes. For instance, most parts of the country have no railway service at all.
- (iii) *Boarding procedure:* There is usually no need to book in advance for road transport service except in the case of long distance with luxury buses. There is also scarcely the need for advanced weighing of luggage as with the rail and air transport systems. However, in advanced economies of Western Europe and USA, travelling by railway has now assumed an informal procedure. A traveller could simply walk into a station, obtain his ticket, and commence travelling almost immediately.
- (iv) *Time spent:* The road system is better and faster for short journeys.
- (v) *Ease of maintenance:* Maintenance of roads and road transport vehicles is cheaper than that of the railway lines and wagons. The public highways are maintained by the government. The railway corporation, however, has to provide and maintain their own permanent lines at a considerable initial capital and subsequent running costs.
- (vi) *Ownership:* It is more convenient and less expensive to own a car than to own a train.
- (vii) *Intensity of accidents:* The train carries more passengers at a time than motor vehicles. Consequently, in cases of serious accidents, the casualties in road mishaps are not often as many as those in fatal railway accidents.

Advantages of rail over road

(Alternatively these are the disadvantages of the road system)

- (i) *Amount of load carried:* Trains are more suitable for transporting heavy and bulky loads than even the biggest trailers.
- (ii) *Low accident rate:* Accident is a rare occurrence with railway transport.
- (iii) *Traffic congestion:* Rail lines are special traffic ways. They are free from traffic congestion and hold-up.
- (iv) *Fuel shortage:* Unlike road transport, railway transport is not adversely affected by shortage of petroleum oil or diesel.
- (v) *Scheduled timetable:* Trains work to schedule and are, therefore, more predictable.
- (vi) *Standard rates and charges:* The railway rates and charges are more stable and are not as arbitrary as those of motor vehicles which are often dictated by the garage *â€™toutsâ€™*TM. Railway charges are also cheaper for transporting bulky goods over long distances.
- (vii) *Goods packaging:* This is done by experts and goods are more secure than with road transport.
- (viii) *Long distance journeys:* Trains are superior to motor vehicles where long distance journeys are concerned. There are facilities for relaxation and comfort such as sleeping compartments and toilets, recreational and canteen facilities.
- (ix) *Highway robbery:* Armed robbery is mainly a feature of the road transport system. It hardly occurs in transport by rail, except for occasional pick-pocketing by fellow passengers. The historic and singular *â€™Great Train Robberyâ€™*TM in England, where millions of the British currency (pound sterling) were stolen from goods train was an isolated case; and it is an unfamiliar phenomenon of the railway transport system.

23.3.3 Transport by Air

Nigeria is served today both internally and externally by airways (See the map below showing airways both within and outside Nigeria). The Nigerian Air Services are monopolized by the Nigeria Airways (now Nigeria Airways Authority) which was founded in 1959. It operates scheduled international flights to major European countries, by arrangement with the relevant national airlines. It also has arrangements with Pan American and Air India for the operation of scheduled flights to America and India respectively. Helicopters are used for short and personal journeys, while planes can be used for both short and long distance journeys.



Fig. 23.3: Airports in Nigeria

Advantages

- (i) *Speed*: It is the fastest means of passenger and cargo transport. It saves time.
- (ii) *Definite and direct routes*: Air routes are direct and definite. The problem of missing one's way or route, as with road transport, is rare.
- (iii) *Overflying international customs and natural barriers*: Where several countries or even continents are involved, there is no problem of customs barrier at each country's border. Natural barriers such as mountains and oceans are also overcome.
- (iv) *Handy for emergencies*: In cases of emergencies like marine accidents and the like, aircrafts are used for rescue operations. They can also be used to transport large consignments of relief materials to war or disaster zones.
- (v) *Less boredom*: Air flights reduce the exhaustion generally associated with long journeys by trains and road.
- (vi) *Warfare*: Advances in aerodynamic knowledge has resulted in the building of special and sophisticated fighter aeroplanes and war transport planes.

Disadvantages

- (i) *High cost*: It is expensive to travel by air.
- (ii) *Long journeys only*: It is economical for long journeys only.

- (iii) *Light weight and small bulk:* It is expensive to transport heavy or bulky goods by air.
- (iv) *High accident fatality:* Accident may be infrequent, but when it happens, the casualty rate could be considerable.

23.4 The Nigerian Airports Authority (NAA)

The Nigerian Airport Authority (NAA) is to the Nigeria Airways, what the Nigeria Ports Authority is to Nigerian ships and vessels calling at Nigerian ports. It is important to state that the Nigerian Airports Authority is not synonymous with the Nigeria Airways Authority. Both are two separate bodies. The relationship between the two can be highlighted by stating here the functions of the Nigerian Airports Authority, which is the landlord of the Nigeria Airways Limited.

23.4.1 Functions of Nigerian Airports Authority

- (i) Nigerian Airports Authority is the government body which is responsible for developing and maintaining airports in the country.
- (ii) The authority is also responsible for providing facilities such as banks, post offices, duty free shops, and free portage services at the airports.
- (iii) It also mounts an information bureau in each of the airports to aid travellers.
- (iv) It is responsible for the provision of other facilities such as car parks, first class waiting rooms, nurseries and baggage trolleys at the airports.
- (v) It is the responsibility of Nigerian Airports Authority to keep the airports free of touts. Nigerian Airports Authority has the function of keeping Airports clean; so the NAA provides ashtrays and dustbins for the use of travellers in the waiting rooms.

23.4.2 Relationship with the Nigeria Airways Limited

Nigeria Airports Authority provides and maintains the infrastructure airports and other facilities while the Nigeria Airways provides air services.

The Nigeria Airways was inaugurated in 1959 to take over in Nigeria the operation of air services from the disbanded West African Airways Corporation (WAAC). Hitherto, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia, the four former colonies of Great Britain, were served by WAAC. The Nigeria Airways is a tenant of the Nigerian Airports Authority (NAA).

The Nigeria Airways operate scheduled air services (flights) both locally and internationally. Its domestic routes cover all the existing airports in Nigeria while its scheduled international flights are to ECOWAS countries, other selected African countries as well as to major airports of Europe, Asia, the United States and so on.

In conclusion, the functions of the Nigerian Airports Authority are different from those of the Nigeria Airways and the handling company. The Nigerian Airports Authority renders a lot of service to the Nigeria Airways, for which it makes charges on the latter.

Summary

- â€¢ Whichever type of transport systems we talk about, each of them has its own advantages of using the road over the railways and vice versa.
- â€¢ The support functions of Nigerian Airports Authority have been itemized, i.e. provision of portage, banking and post-office services among others.

Revision Questions

A. Essay Questions

1. Discuss FIVE disadvantages of road transport in Nigeria. (10 marks)
2. (a) Describe the procedure for sending goods by rail.
(b) Explain the factors that affect the railway rates.
3. Give FIVE advantages of using the road over the railway and vice versa.
4. State the FIVE functions of Nigerian Airports Authority.
5. Mention and discuss briefly FIVE improvements you would wish to see in the Nigerian Rail System.

B. Objective Questions

1. The capacity to carry bulky goods and passengers is a distinctive advantage of transport by:
A. rail
B. trailers
C. luxury buses
D. ferry
2. Which of the following is not performed by the airport authority?
A. providing loading facilities
B. issuing travelling documents
C. providing warehouses for cargo
D. providing security for passengers
3. All of these function except one are performed by the Nigerian Airports Authority.
A. developing and maintaining airports in the country
B. responsibility for flight delays
C. providing information bureau in each of the airport
D. keeping the airport free of touts.
4. These are the advantages of air transport
A. expensive cost of travel
B. saves time
C. loss boring
D. handy for emergencies
5. One of these is odd in the group of advantages of using the road over the railway
A. more readily available
B. boarding procedure more informal
C. penetrates more into inferiors
D. ownership more wide spread
E. greater intensity incase of accidents
6. Factors affecting the railway rates

- A. weight of goods
 - B. value of goods
 - C. status of sender
 - D. length of journey
7. Consignment note is known as
- A. consignor
 - B. consignee
 - C. receipt given to a consignor
 - D. counter form
8. One of these is not necessarily on the consignment note
- A. description and weight of goods
 - B. name of consignee
 - C. at whose risk is the transportation
 - D. passport photograph of the consignor
9. The following are advantages of walking as a means of transport except
- A. unsuitable for long journeys
 - B. very handy to rural settlers
 - C. not badly affected by transport jams
 - D. quicker for short journeys

Project

1. Which of the commonest types of transport systems in your locality? What are the reasons for this? Which improvements would you like to see in them?
2. Give an account of a visit you have made to a port before – if not real, give an imaginary story.
3. What are the likely economic effects of the removal of the total oil subsidy from the petroleum oil product in Nigeria?