

## Progress and Impact of Himachal Road Transport Corporation

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### Abstract

*Transport system is the barometer of economic, social, and commercial progress. It has transformed the entire world into one organization. Transportation assumes strategic importance in the development process of an economy. An efficient transport system stimulates the process of economic development. The transport system provides one single mean for the opening up the country for the upliftment of the economic level of a vast rural population. Road transport plays an important role in the process of economic development of the any state. In a hilly state it is considered to be the life line of the people. In Himachal Pradesh where other means of transportation is negligible the road transport acquires added significance. HRTC was established in the year of 1974 after the merger of Mandi-Kullu Road Transport in Himachal Government Transport. HRTC has given transport facilities also in remote areas. This paper deals with the secondary study on progress of Himachal Road Transport Corporation and its impact on rural area.*

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### Introduction

Transport system is the barometer of economic, social, and commercial progress. It has transformed the entire world into one organization. Transportation assumes strategic importance in the development process of an economy. Road transport has played a vital role in the development of rural area. No other means of transport except road are able to serve these regions. Development of road transport is not of recent origin but as old as human civilization. In the year 1898 the first motor vehicle was driven on the Indian roads. The recommendation made by Jayakar Committee in November, 1927 where regulating periodical road conferences and creation of road development fund. In the year 1939 the motor vehicle act was passed for regulating motor vehicles all over the country. In December 1943 a conference of chief engineers was held at Nagpur. It was popularly known as Nagpur Plan. This Plan divided the roads in four parts via; (1) National Highways (2) Provincial Highways (3) District roads and (4) Village roads. Road Transport Corporation Act was passed by the Government of India in 1950 for the better functioning of the Road Transportation. In the present time transport system has spread all over India. Transport system has connected all States, towns and villages with each other. The transport system provides one single mean for the opening up the country for the upliftment of the economic level of a vast rural

population. It provides essential ingredients in extending the money economy to the agriculture sector.

### **Importance of transport**

1. Transport system provides essential ingredient in extending the money economy to the agriculture sector.

2. Road transport has made to the political unity of the nation.

3. Transport sector bears a close and complex relationship with all other sectors of an economy. Efficient administration, military, defense, famine relief, growth of agriculture industry trade, effective movement of food and other necessities of life.

4. Road transport system has been important also because it has connected whole countries with each other.

5. The transport system provides the one single mean for the opening up the country for the upliftment of the economic level of a vast rural population.

### **Himachal Road Transport Corporation**

Road transport plays an important role in the process of economic development of the Himachal Pradesh. In a hilly state it is considered to be the life line of the people. In Himachal Pradesh where other means of transportation is negligible the road transport acquires added significance. It has changed the life of people of the state since its inception. In order to accelerate the process of economic development of the state the HRTC was established in the year of 1974 after the merger of Mandi-Kullu Road Transport in Himachal Government Transport. In Himachal Pradesh, the passenger and goods transport was completely nationalized during the year of 1949. It was put under the control of Himachal Government Transport. Mandi-Kullu Road Transport Corporation was established during September 1959 mainly with the object for operating passengers transport services on Pathankot-Mandi-Kullu section. It was established as a corporate body in the year 1959 with the share capital contribution of the Punjab state, Government of Himachal Pradesh and Northern Railway in the ratio of 40:40:20 respectively.

After the nationalization of bus transport, economic activity picked up even in inaccessible areas of Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Road Transport Corporation has developed a bus route network in remote and inaccessible areas like Lahaul-Spiti, Kullu, Sirmour and Chamba. Besides providing passenger transport in the State, Himachal Road Transport Corporation has been operating as goods transport system. It is also providing food and essential commodities to the remote corners of the state even where private truck owners hesitate to go. HRTC has undoubtedly, played a major role in the economic development of the state. At

present, Himachal Road Transport Corporation has 23 operational units functioning in the state. The operation of the corporation is being controlled by four divisional officers functioning at Shimla, Mandi, Dharmshala and Hamirpur. Government of H. P. is taking many steps for the better functioning of the HRTC and also giving many facilities through HRTC for the peoples.

**Progress of Himachal Road Transport Corporation**

The Corporation was established in deference to provisions of the Road Transport Act, 1950, providing of efficient, adequate, economical and well coordinated passenger transport services in the Himachal Pradesh. Govt. of H.P. is doing many efforts to improve the road transport especially bus transport. At result, ratio of buses has increased as compare to previous years. Because buses of HRTC has been provided its services in remote areas also, where private operators hesitate to go. In this paper, physical growth of HRTC has been discussed, that give information about total vehicles strength (buses, taxis and tankers), route operated and distance covered.

**Progress of physical indicators of Himachal Road Transport Corporation:**

The table-1 exhibits the progress of nationalized road transport in Himachal Pradesh and consequent expansion of the HRTC operations in terms of buses held, routes operated and distance covered. The strength of buses has increased 1728 to 2017 in the year 2000-01 to 2011-12. Similarly, there is a considerable increase in the number of routes; it has increased from 1733 in the year 2000-01 to 2048 in the year 2011-12. The total coverage in the year 2011-12 has increased 16541 lacs kms. Where as in the year 2000-01, it was only, 140941 lacs kms. The number of divisions was zero in 1974-75, which has increased to 4 in 2011-12 located at Shimla, Mandi, Dharamshala and Hamirpur.

**Table 1: Progress of physical indicators of HRTC in the year 2000-01 to 2011-12**

Year	Buses/ other vehicles	Routes Operated	Distance Covered (Kms)
2000-01	1728	1733	140941
2001-02	1753	1747	142513
2002-03	1784	1784	142306
2003-04	1792	1811	143361
2004-05	1775	1923	147128
2005-06	1777	1943	150462
2006-07	1902	1961	154657
2007-08	1998	1965	160142
2008-09	1984	1987	161862
2009-10	2084	2004	165482
2010-11	2093	2148	168319
2011-12	2017	2048	165417

Source: Annual Reports and Official Statistics of HRTC of various years.

### Staff Position of Himachal Pradesh Road Transport Corporation

The staff position in the year 1974-75 was 3500, which has now increased to 8492. It is the total staff of HRTC which is divided in two categories i.e. operating staff i.e. 7793 and staff in headquarters i.e. 699. Operating staff provide direct service for the public of all over in the state.

Numbers of staff related to different categories of HRTC at present working in the state are shown in table 2. There are 2863 drivers, 2887 conductors, 143 inspectors who control the services of buses. There is 390 administrative staff and 1162 workshop employees are working in the state. Facilities of stores are giving 145 employees and other staff is 203. Total staff is 7793; it exists under operating staff position of HRTC. There are 40 drivers, 36 conductors and 28 inspectors. Administrative staff is 230 and 247 workshop employees are working. Store keepers are 68 and other employees are 50.

**Table 2 : Staff Position of HRTC in 2011-2012**

S.No.	Description	Operating Staff	Headquarters Staff
1	Drivers	2863	40
2	Conductors	2887	36
3	Inspectors	143	28
4	Administration	390	230
5	Workshop	1162	247
6	Store keeper	145	68
7	Other	203	50
	Total	7793	699

Source: Annual Report of HRTC: 2011-2012.

### Repairs and Maintenance

There was only a single line repair and maintenance system at the depot level, which include minor as well as major repair and as HRTC grew, the management of corporation introduced two tier systems to improve the quality and to reduce the inventory. HRTC has installed 3 pre-cure re-treading plants at Mandi, Parwanoo and Jassour, where all the tyers are re-treated keeping in view the requirement of each unit. HRTC has its own workshops also.

**Improvement of Himachal Road Transport Corporation:** Government of Himachal Pradesh has taken some steps to improve the HRTC:

#### (a) Safety Measures:

The corporation follows a stringent procedure for selection of drivers and such selection committees are headed by at least an officer of the rank of General Manager. There is a provision of summarily removal from service of drivers, if detected under the influence of liquor while on duty. HRTC has the scheme of

awards for drivers who have not caused any accidents, to foster safety. The drivers having fifteen years accident free service and with clean record are given a cash award of Rs. 21,000 and the Chief Minister's Gold Medal and Transport Ministers Silver Medal. All new buses added in HRTC have power steering and air pressure brakes to ensure safety. A training school has been established at Dharmshala for imparting refresher training to the in-service drivers.

### **(b) Pollution Control Measures**

For environmental protection, the corporation has taken the steps including adding only 1312 and 1512 Model TELCO make vehicles fitted with turbo chargers to ensure minimum emission of smoke. Progressively, the corporation is installing oil treatment plants in its different workshops to ensure that the effluents from the workshops do not pollute the surrounding water drainage system. A large number of smoke testing machines have been installed by HRTC for periodic checking of emission from its buses. Special cell have been created in the depots of the corporation for upkeep of the buses, to ensure pollution level remain under control.

### **(c) Relief to Accident Victims**

Under the Govt. scheme, the relief is provided to the next of kin of the deceased and to injure. Ex-gratia grant of Rs. 1.00 lakh is given by the Directorate of Transport to the next kin of deceased. The injured are given compensation to the protection of disability. For example 10%, 30% disability to an injured ensures a compensation of Rs. 10,000, Rs. 30,000 etc. respectively. Immediate relief is provided by the corporation in the shape of free supply of medicines, shifting to specialized hospitals on medical advice, free transport facilities, wherever required, in addition to any other relief recommended by the medical attendants. The District Administration also provides relief, which extends to Rs. 25,000 to the next kin of deceased.

### **Some social benefits given by Government through HRTC**

The Himachal Road Transport Corporation has been providing concession and free travel facilities to the following sections of the society.

#### **(a) Concession Travel Facility**

Students of Government College are provided travel facility from the place of residence to the education institutions against a payment of ten single fares in a month. State and central government employees as also the employees of public sector undertakings are being allowed travel facility in corporation buses from the place of residence to the office against a payment of thirty single fares in a month up to 25 kms. distance.

### (b) Free Travel Facility

The categories which are allowed free travel facility in the Corporation buses include freedom fighters, their spouses and widows and the facility is available for accompanying attendant. Students of the government schools, Padamshree awardees, press correspondents, gallantry award winners, war widows, handicapped, leprosy patients, ophthalmic patients and social workers.

### Impact of Himachal Road Transport Corporation:

Road transport is considered to a backbone for the development of Himachal Pradesh. Govt. of H.P. has given more emphasis on the road transport development. H.P. is a hilly area. So roads are the main means of transportation in H.P. HRTC having a big hand in the development of H.P., especially in the rural areas. By analyzing collected material from journals and HRTC department, some points are found that shows impact of HRTC on the people of Himachal Pradesh especially who live in rural areas. These points are mentioned as below:

- HRTC has facilitating the transformation of subsistence agriculture into commercial agriculture.
- HRTC increases the area of land cultivation and improve access to credit which is turn leads to improvement in production efficiency in H.P.
- HRTC has developed the rural areas like Lahual & Spiti, Kinnaur, pangi and Bharmour. After transport system, the remote regions and town has come closer to one another. Now they are able to come to cities and find jobs for themselves.
- People of the rural areas are now capable to sell their agriculture products and other handloom products in the market and they get good prices.
- After the road development small scale industries also developed and more people are joining these industries and earning money.
- Road transport has enhancing productivity and widening the size of market. It has also reduced the seasonal price fluctuation.
- H.P. has developed also culturally, because road has provided opportunity for the people to go one place to other place and understand culture and customs of each other.
- Better facilities and services have attracted more passengers.
- HRTC has developed the economically as well as transport provided non-economically benefit also.
- HRTC has also improved literacy rate of state, because children of the long distance areas from the schools are now able to go school through buses.
- After the improvement in transportation, accidents have been reduced as compare to previous years.

**Suggestions:** These are some suggestions for the better functioning of HRTC:

\* Management should achieve high operational efficiency by effectively utilizing available resources, timely replacement of vehicles. Accidents can be

reduced by proper maintenance, appropriate route scheduling, punctuality and safety in operations.

\* The government should allow HRTC to decide its services price on the market conditions rather than political and social conditions which will help HRTC to achieve financial viability.

\* The management should take strong action for reducing operating expenses especially through improving staff productivity and fleet utilization.

\* The government should take measures to ensure that private operators also pay the some registration fee, which is paid by HRTC for establishing, healthy and competitive environment for transport operators.

\* More facilities and better service will attract more passengers on roads, where private fleets are allowed, better buses and matching fare will help considerably in attracting more passengers.

**Problems of HRTC:** After analysis of collected material, there are some problems of the HRTC. These problems are mentioned as below:

1. The problem of the corporation is the inadequate road maintenance. The poor roads tend to increase fuel consumption and more wear and tear of buses.

2. The leakage of revenue by the conductors, drivers and passengers.

## Conclusion

Himachal Road Transport Corporation played a significant role in the developing of Himachal Pradesh. It has shown enormous growth in all parts of the state. HRTC has been provided transport facility all parts of the state, especially in rural areas, because private operators are not much interested to provide transport services in these areas. So, Govt. of H.P. has taken many steps to improve the road transportation. It is also concluded that development in H.P. only possible by roads, because other means of transportation cannot be develop in this hilly state. In short, HRTC has been played a vital role in economical, social and cultural development of state.

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