

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial, it has been recognized in India that the provision of facilities for efficient road system was one of the primary duties of the ruler. Indian history is full of references to the road; policy and road construction in vogue in different periods. A clear picture of the conditions is available on coming down to the Mauryan period when political consolidation and more efficient administration promoted commerce and industry along with greater use of communications and transport for internal trade. A royal road 10,000 stades (about 2400 kilometre) in length, ran from the North-West Frontier to Patliputra, passing through the district, with milestones showing distances and by roads and signposts at every tenth stade¹.

Chandragupta Maurya had a whole army of officials overseeing the maintenance of this road as told by the Greek diplomat Megasthenes who spent fifteen years at the Mauryan court. Kautilya refers to this road as the kings' highway (*rajmarg*). This principal highway connected the *Raja Griha* to Taxsila, to frontiers and to central and western Asia.

In the medieval period, Sher Shah Suri recognizing the advantage of improved means of communication built afresh the road from the coast of Bengal to his great fort at Rohtas, the north of Jhelum, in 1543. This road was later improved upon by the Mughal emperors who constructed spacious *sarais* with bricks and stones 8 *kos* (approx. 16 miles) apart and 20-30 feet high *kos minars* two and half miles apart. The *kos minars* extent at a number of places in the district and the gateway at Samalkha mark the route of old royal road.

Up to the middle of nineteenth century, the district did not have any important road except old grant road which was passing through it. With the establishment of the British rule the road development was started on a large scale. However, roads were mostly constructed from the strategic and administrative point of view; little attention being paid to their civic and economic aspects. The traffic generally was carried over narrow unmetalled tracks rendered impassable during the monsoon. The speed of movement was regulated by the capacity of the bullock carts struggling over the paths. Ten

miles a day was a fair average. A network of unmetalled roads connected Panipat town with other villages of the district and neighbouring towns like Gohana, Rohtak, Jind, Kaithal, Pundri, Safidon, Assandh, Nisang, and to the towns of neighbouring State of Uttar Pradesh, namely Sanauli, Shamli and Kairana.

The opening of the railways on the opposite side of the Yamuna somewhat prejudiced the commercial position of Panipat, having attracted from it much of the commerce formerly passing along the Grand Trunk Road. The Delhi-Panipat-Ambala railway line was opened in 1892. The introduction of the railways, however, retarded the expansion of roads, because the entire financial resources of the government were consumed by the railways. The advent of the motor transport after World War-I, however, redressed this imbalance. Many feeder roads and highways were constructed to connect the interior part of the district with the railway stations. Communications made a fair progress after the War. In 1916, another railway line was opened to connect Jind. Panipat-Gohana railway line was opened in 1930 but was closed in 1942 due to uneconomic conditions.

After Independence, great emphasis was laid on the development of improved means of communications and a large number of roads were constructed. Firstly, all the major unmetalled roads were metalled and later national highways, state highways, district and village roads were developed. At the time of formation of Panipat as a separate district, it inherited a network of well metalled roads and 3 major railway lines as well.

ROADS

A well-knit and co-coordinated system of transport plays an important role in the sustained economic growth of a region. The present transport system in the district comprises of several modes of transport including rail and road etc. The transport has recorded a substantial growth over the years both in the spread of network and in output of the system.

In 1992-93, the total length of metalled road in the district was 1025 kilometres and 16 kilometres of unmetalled road. The district now has a wide network of well developed metalled roads. In the district, the total length of metalled roads, including the national highways, state highways, district major roads and village roads is 842 kilometres in 2010-11 and there is no unmetalled road.

CLASSIFICATION OF ROADS

According to the Nagpur Plan of 1943², roads have been classified into groups, namely national highways, state highways, district major road and village road. A detailed description of each is given below:-

(A) NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

The Central Government is responsible for development and maintenance of the national highway system. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is responsible for the development and maintenance work of national highways. It acts through three agencies, namely National Highway Authority of India (N.H.A.I.), State Public Works Department (P.W.D.) and Border Roads Organization (B.R.O.).

Grand Trunk Road (N.H.1).— This is the oldest road passing through the centre of district. The road enters the district from Delhi side at 66 kilometres, traverses and leaves it at 102 kilometres. It runs along the Delhi–Ambala railway line. The total stretch of 36 kilometres of this road falls in the district. The six lane road having width 10 metre each side is metalled, bitumen-surfaced and has 5 metre wide central verge. It connects the national capital with the States of Haryana and Punjab, besides providing connectivity with other national highways for Himachal Pradesh and the State of Jammu and Kashmir. This is an important road from defence point of view also. It is maintained by N.H.A.I.

Panipat Elevated Expressway.— The expressway has been built to ease the traffic on NH-1 between Delhi and Amritsar. The entire stretch between km 86.000 and 96.000 has been developed to a 6 lane access control highway with elevated 6 lane structure from km 88.560 to 92.160. The main 6 lane part of this elevated expressway is in the Panipat city. This 3.6 km flyover is the longest 6 lane flyover in India to date. The total length of the 6-lane elevated section is 3.6 km (3048m of viaduct and 560 m of ramps) covering central built-up Panipat section. The flyover also covers Gohana road, Sanuli road, Assandh road crossings, city bus stand and the Skylark (tourist complex). For use by the locals, a separate 2-lane peripheral paved shoulder road is provided on either sides of the access-controlled 6-lane highway. There are two underpasses and a bridge over the existing *ganda nalla* (drain).

This flyover has been built by utilizing state-of-art technology. The

foundation of this bridge consists of 1,282 piles done by rotary rig method over which pile caps and piers have been built upon. I-Girders have been pre-cast at the base camp and transported to site in specially modified trailers, where the erection work has been completed using Gantries and high capacity cranes. Pre-cast deck slabs have been used as a load bearing member in combination with cast-in-situ. This has most efficiently led to time and cost reduction. In order to provide interconnectivity to peripheral road on either side of the access controlled main carriageway three underpasses have been provided at Ch: 87.365, Ch:91.900 and Ch:93.600 with a maximum length of 850 metres. These underpasses have a minimum vertical clearance of 5.5metres with 20 metres effective span to accommodate 4 lane divided carriageway with median and 1.5 metres footpath on either side. This build-operate-transfer (BoT) project has been executed by Larsen and Tubro Panipat Elevated Corridor Limited. A 20-lane toll plaza has been constructed at Ch: 94.775 with all the modern facilities, for collecting the toll for a period of 20 years.

Rohtak–Panipat Road (NH -71A).— It enters the district from Gohana side at 48 kilometres near Chidna village and met on NH -1 at RD 89 at Panipat. The total stretch of 24.52 kilometres falls in the district. The road is metalled with four lanes; two lanes having width 7.00 metres on each side of a central verge. The road connects Grand Trunk Road (NH-1) at district headquarter Panipat.

(B) STATE HIGHWAYS

The state highways, major district and rural roads are under the responsibility of the state government. These are developed and maintained by various agencies of the State. However, funds are also being provided from the Central Road Fund by the Central Government for the development and maintenance of these roads under various road schemes.

Panipat-Safidon-Jind Bhiwani (SH 14).—This road starts from NH 1 at RD 90.600 and leaves the district near village Nara. This metalled highway has two lanes with a width of 7.00 metres, and it covers a distance of 24 kilometres in the Panipat district. This road connects the district with Jind and Bhiwani.

Sanoli-Panipat-Road (SH 16).—This state highway starts from the state boundary at Yamuna river near village Ramra and meets the National Highway (NH-1) in the district at 89.400 kilometres. The metalled width of

the road is 6.70/7.00/2x5.50 metres and it covers a distance 18.31 kilometres in the district. The road provides link for the State of Uttar Pradesh.

(C) DISTRICT MAJOR ROADS

Ganaur-Shahpur Road (MDR121).—This road enters the district near village Pugthala at RD 16.45 and meets on NH 71A at village Shahpur. The metalled width of the road is 5.50 metres and the road covers the distance 9.551 kilometres in the district.

(D) OTHER DISTRICT ROADS

Other District Roads mean and include all other roads except national highways, state highways and district major roads. These roads are also known as village roads. Such roads are maintained to connect towns and villages of the district with one another and with important roads and railway stations. Earlier, these roads were usually below the level of the fields and got flooded during raining season. These have now been metalled after raising their level and are converted into all weather roads. Total length of such roads in the district as on 31st March, 2011 is 776 kilometres.

ROAD TRANSPORT

Vehicles and conveyances.— Since ancient times, the usual means of transport through roads have been horses, bullock carts, camel carts, *raths and majholis* for well-to-do people, but most people moved from one place to another on foot. They travelled only on the rare occasions like paying visits to holy places and that too in groups. Such visits took a long time to complete their inward and outward journeys. With the passage of time villages, towns and cities were linked by roads and vehicles improved in technology and material. The road transport took a plunge with the use of air filled rubber tyres and motors in vehicles.

With the improvement in means of communications after independence and particularly after formation of Haryana as a separate state in 1966, means of conveyance underwent a change. Traditional means of transport like bullock cart and horse carriages gave way to mechanised means of conveyance like cycle, motor-cycles, scooters, motor cars, jeeps, rickshaws, auto-rickshaws, tempos, trucks, trailers, dumpers, tractors, etc.

The number of different types of motor-vehicles registered year-wise

in the district from 2007-08 to 2010-11 is as follows:-

Year	Passenger vehicles						Goods vehicles			Total
	Buses	Cars	Jeeps	Taxi	Auto Rickshaws	Motorcycle/Scooters/Auto-cycles	Trucks	Tractors	Others	
2007-08	237	2401	102	36	227	15658	228	2242	531	21662
2008-09	50	2728	198	90	578	15246	226	373	780	20269
2009-10	97	2891	207	101	314	15810	241	2312	623	22596
2010-11	152	3088	240	114	299	16500	289	2554	523	23759

The total number of different types of motor vehicles on road in Panipat on 31st March, 2011 is 2,37,949 as compared to 32,608 vehicles as on 31st March, 1992. There is more than 7 times increase in the total number of vehicles on the roads of the district since March, 1992. The increase in the number of buses and trucks is indicative of progress of road transport whereas increase in the number of tractors denotes progress of mechanized farming. In addition to the usual farming operations, tractors provide convenient transport for grain and fodder to the near-by markets. Usually, the two wheelers and cars provide mobility to middle and upper class people, respectively.

Passenger Transport.— Before Independence and the period immediately following it, the bus transport was not satisfactory in the country as a whole and there was a dearth of travel facilities for the passengers. The very first attempt to nationalize in the country was made in 1943 by bringing in an Act on road transport which caused the establishment of the road transport corporation at national level. A more comprehensive legislation was brought into the force enabling the state governments to form state road transport corporations within their respective jurisdiction. The Motor Vehicle Act, 1939 was amended in 1956 to incorporate special provisions for State Transport Undertakings which were meant to be agents for the government for progressive nationalization. In the erstwhile Punjab, the roadways was operating service as per agreement arrived at between the private operators and Government on 50:50 share basis. The agreement was to remain operative for a period of ten years, which expired on 30 June, 1969. Under this scheme, services on routes existing on that time and on those routes which might emerge as a result of development of roads were to be operated in equal proportion by the state undertaking and private operators. But, the system did not work well.

After the formation of Haryana as a separate State in 1966, the State Government modified the scheme of 50:50 sharing in 1967. It was decided that all the new routes and additional trips in future be given to Haryana Roadways only. However, the mal-practices of the private operators remained operative which were often greatly criticized by the public for inefficient and deficient services. So, the State Government finally modified the passenger transport service with effect from 30th November, 1972. Haryana Roadways as the sole operator provided passenger facilities to the public for 21 years. In 1993, the State Government introduced the scheme of private bus services again with a view to augment the passenger transport facility and also to provide employment to the unemployed youth of the State. In order to provide an adequate, economical, safe and efficient transport to the public especially in the rural area, the government introduced the Haryana Transport Policy, 2010 which aims at meeting the large growth and the increased demand for public transportation.

The Panipat Depot of Haryana roadways came into existence on 10th January, 1993. With its fleet strength of 121 buses as on 31st March 2011, the depot operates various routes connecting different towns and cities within the State as well as Inter-State to cater the need of the public for passenger transport. The details of the routes operated by the Haryana Roadways and private operators in the district are given in the Table-XIX of Appendix.

Goods Transport.—The goods transport in the district is handled mainly by the private operators. Majority of these operators own one or two trucks only and are mostly unorganized. The system of booking agencies has been developed which cater to the needs of both the operators and traders. Under this system operators are provided with parking and godown facilities and traders with a regular satisfactory service. The people of the district prefer using road traffic especially for short distances. However, railways is preferred for long distances. The freight and incidental charges of road transport for short distances are also less as compared to the railways. People are now developing inclinations for the transport of goods by road even for long distances, as the goods are usually transported quickly, with lesser risk and often at doorsteps of parties. The State Government is following the liberal policy for the grant of public carrier permits. Anybody who comes forward with a road worthy vehicle is usually issued a permit as per terms and conditions of the policy. To facilitate inter-state movement of trucks for the

transportation of goods from one state to another, the State government has entered into the bilateral agreements with the other States to facilities facilitate free flow of goods throughout the country. In 2011, there are 5,333 goods vehicles and 26,431 tractors on the road of the district.

RAILWAYS

The system of railways in India is divided into various zones which are further sub-divided into divisions. The divisions are not co-terminus with the State territories. In 1966, when Haryana came into existence, about 1,220 kilometres of rail length came in its share as against the total rail length of 3,312 kilometres in the erstwhile state of Punjab.

Like elsewhere in the country, the Indian Railways has always been a principal mode of transportation for freight as well as passengers in the district. As the district is exclusively served by the Northern Railway, it has been instrumental in giving a boost to the economic life of the district and helped in accelerating development of its industry and agriculture besides being a premier mode of passenger transport both for long distance and sub-urban traffic. A brief description of railway lines passing through the district is given below:-

Delhi-Ambala-Kalka Railway Line.— This is the oldest railway line in the district. This railway line passing through Panipat, was completed and opened for traffic on 14th October, 1870. This line runs almost along the Grand Trunk Road, entering the district near village Bhodwal Majri. In double track, the railway line passes through Samalkha, Mandana, Panipat and Babarpur, and it leaves the district near village Ganjbar after covering about 24.75 kilometres. This route was electrified in phases from 1992 to 2000. In first phase, during 1992 to 1995, Delhi to Karnal section was electrified.

Panipat–Rohtak Railway line.— This railway line was opened in 1927, but it was closed down in 1942 being uneconomic. In view of importance of Gohana as a surplus area in food–grains, a portion of the railway line of Rohtak to Gohana was re-laid and a shuttle service was revived in 1959. The railway line from Gohana to Panipat was again linked on 8th April, 1977. Besides passenger and goods trains, the major express trains on this track include Ekta–express and Greeb Rath running from Kalka to Bhiwani and from Chandigarh to Ajmer, respectively. The main railway stations on this

line within the district, starting from Panipat, are Naultha and Israna, and then the railway track enters the Sonapat district.

Panipat–Jind Railway line.— This broad gauge branch line of the Northern Railway was constructed in 1916. It starts from Panipat proper and leaves the district near village Narah. The total length of railway line falling in the district is about 22 kilometres. Three railway stations, namely Asan, Madladua and Narah fall on this line.

Rail-Road Competition.— The rail and road modes are world-wide the dominant mode of transport. During 1950s the rail mode occupied, commanding position. The position of railway remained same until 1970s. India became a road dominant economy in the beginning of 1980s. This was affected due to the implementation of the three five-years plans led to increase industrial and agriculture production. Rapid growth of population, consumer goods industries and industries requiring special facilities had increased the demand of road transport. Another reason for diversion to road traffic seems to be the lower freight rates, proper supervision, absence of irksome formalities and door to door service. The four laning of National Highways and construction of expressways increased the efficiency and speed of road transport. Although all forms of road transport have shown spectacular increase in volume yet in respect of long-distance travel, heavy machinery and for bulky articles, there is a pronounced for railways.

In order to make both modes of transport complementary to each authorities have planned travelling more comfortable. For this purpose the following classes of rail passenger were taken to be in competition by car: general air condition, air condition first class, air condition sleeper, air condition three tier, first class rail and first class ordinary classes. The classes of railway travel that are taken to be competitive with travel by bus on road are ordinary second class and ordinary sleeper class. Besides this the railway has started super fast trains, special trains and luxury trains including Shatabdi with better speed and facilities through Panipat.

WATERWAYS AND FERRIES

The Yamuna river running parallel to the eastern border of the district that separates it from Uttar Pradesh is the only navigable waterway in the district. During the monsoon season, some villages lying along the Yamuna are cut off and can only be reached by boats. To connect the district

with these villages and with other districts of Uttar Pradesh the ferry services are maintained at Sanauli, Khojgipur and Goela Khurd. The ghats are auctioned and the highest bidder is allowed to ply boats for transporting goods and passengers across Yamuna.

TOURIST FACILITIES

There are two tourist complexes, namely Skylark and Blue Jay maintained by the Tourism Department, Haryana at Panipat and Samalkha, respectively for providing facilities during travel in the district. The former provides facility of 14 regular rooms and 2 economy rooms at the rate of ₹1500 and ₹1800 per day, respectively, whereas the charges per day, in the latter, of the 7 regular rooms are in harmony with the former, the charges of the only standard room available are fixed at a little higher of ₹1999.

In addition, rest houses are maintained by different departments of the Government like Bakhra Beas Management Board (BBMB), Public Works Department (PWD), National Fertilizers Limited (NFL), Thermal Rest Houses, Oil Refinery Rest House, Sainik Rest House and Canal Rest House to render boarding and lodging facilities to officers/officials and their families while on tour.

Private hotels, *dharmshalas* and *serais* are also maintained in the district by private persons or trusts. *Dharmshalas* and *serais* primarily owe their origin to the generosity of the rich residents of the city and town. Important amongst them are listed in Table-XX of Appendix.

POST OFFICES

In the beginning of 20th Century, there were only 5 post offices located at Panipat, Sambhalkha, Urlana, Naultha and Nohra. The number of post offices was increased from 5 to 11 in 1935 by establishing new post offices at Ahar, Binjhol, Dhatrat, Israna, Manana and Nara with their Head office at Panipat town³.

After Independence, development of road transport has helped in expansion of postal facilities to a great extent by bringing within reach the distant and inaccessible areas. A number of post offices increased from time to time and provision of delivery vans added to the speed of delivery. In 1972 the Postal Index Number (PIN) code system was introduced in the country to identify the post offices with a six digit code which provides with built in

routing information for postal sorting and quick delivery of the post. The PIN code of Panipat city is 132103.

The post is delivered very expeditiously in the district. Letter boxes have been affixed at all important places and are cleared daily at fixed timings. Post offices in the district are under the overall control of the Superintendent Post Offices. All the villages of the district have been covered under daily post delivery system without any exception. Mail in the city and towns is delivered on all days of a week except on Sunday and gazetted holidays.

Registered post, Speed post, Business post, Express Parcel post, and Money order, Post Office Savings Bank, E-post, E-bill post etc. are some of the facilities available at various post offices of the district at prescribed charges. Besides providing postal communication facilities, the post office network has also started providing facilities for remittance of funds, banking services, insurance services etc.

Besides the post offices, a number of private courier services are also running in the town areas of the district which also cater to the need of people for faster and secure delivery of their articles and letters on prescribed rates.

As on 31st March, 2011, there are 01 main post office, 21 sub-post offices and 74 branch post offices in the district. A list of these post offices is given in the Table - XXI of Appendix.

TELEPHONES

As on 31st March, 2011, 26 telephone exchanges are functioning in the district. These telephone exchanges work under the jurisdiction of General Manager, Telecom, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, Panipat. Every exchange has the facility of broadband connections. The list of telephone exchanges (with capacity) functioning in the district is given in the Table-XXII of Appendix. In addition, a number of private telephone companies are providing a good network of landline and mobile tele-communication facilities in the district. These companies also provide facilities of Internet or Broadband for their subscribers. Most of the private sector players such as Reliance Infocom, Tata Teleservices, Bharti Telecom, Idea, Vodafone, Essar, Aircel, Uninor and Videocon are providing their services in the district. Mobile phones are also being used by all strata of people due to ease of convenience. In 2010-11,

there are 2.24 lakh landline phones and 5.47 lakh mobile connections in use in the district.

RADIO, TELEVISION AND WIRELESS STATIONS

There is no radio station in the district. This need of the people of district is being met by the All India Radio Station, New Delhi and Rohtak. Frequency Modulation (FM) radio channels due to their presence on almost all mass media including televisions, internet as well as mobile phones have gained noticeable popularity particularly amongst the youth of the district during the last decade. The Medium Wave (MW) and Short Wave (SW) frequencies can, however, only be received through radio sets with such facilities. The listeners of MW and SW are decreasing and these frequencies are typically used for listening national and international news.

For the television (T.V.) coverage, the district is served by High Power Transmitter (HPT) located at New Delhi. Besides, there are number of cable T.V. operators all over the district to relay various programmes, round the clock, of private television channels including those of local affairs and of foreign countries on payment of monthly fixed fee. DTH (Direct to Home) services are also accessed by a number of subscribers of various companies like Dish TV, TataSky, Airtel etc. on payment of charges on monthly basis. Doordarshan provides its DTH service free of cost to its subscribers.

The number of T.V. owners has increased rapidly in the recent years owing to multiplicity of channels. The number and sale of radio sets has, however, decreased owing to facility of FM reception on cellular sets. Actual number of Radio and T.V. is not available in the district as the television, radio and transistors of all frequency bands and sets have been exempted from license fee.

There is a police control room at Panipat for receiving and transmitting messages. It remains open for twenty-four hours by shifts. There is also a provision for receiving and transmitting message in all the police stations and police lines in the district.

INTERNET

The internet also often referred to as 'The Net' is a global system of interconnected computer networks, consisting of millions of private, public,

academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies. It is an international network of networks that uses the standard Internet Protocol Suite (TCP/IP) to link several billion devices worldwide and carries an extensive range of information resources and services which can be accessed through browsers and web applications. Most traditional communication media including telephone, music, film, and television are being reshaped or redefined by the internet, giving birth to new services such as Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) and Internet Protocol Television (IPTV). Newspapers, books and other print publishing are adapting to website technology, or are reshaped into blogging and web feeds. The internet has enabled and accelerated new forms of human interactions through instant messaging, internet forums, social networking, tweet etc. The internet has revolutionized the computer and communications world like nothing before. Almost all the government offices have been provided with the internet connectivity and they possess and maintain their own websites. The internet is being extensively used by business executives, students and government personnel. In government sector the use is however restricted to senior officers owing to paucity of infrastructure. Students and business executives even use it through their mobile smart-phones, laptops and palmtop computers using various types of connectivity like Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, Local Area Network (LAN) or other cloud services.

The internet has literally bridged the gap of geographic location in the field of communication. It represents one of the most successful examples of the benefits of sustained investment and commitment to research and development of information infrastructure. Beginning with the early research in packet switching, the government, industry and academia have been partners in evolving and deploying this exciting new technology.

The district centre of National Informatics Centre (NIC) at Panipat was set-up in 1993. Since then, it is supporting the district administration in a variety of ways, by installing hardware, developing and implementing need based software and providing training to the officials of different offices in the district.

The Panipat Centre of NIC has been equipped with the latest technology is interlinked with other district centres, the State headquarter at

Chandigarh and Ministries at Delhi. High speed VSATs and leased lines installed in the district help in sharing information and transmitting the data online to help the policy makers in monitoring various schemes and keep up to date information handy.

Notes and References

¹ The Gazetteer of India, Volume III, 1975 p.703

² Nagpur plan is a road development programmes started during conference of Chief Engineers of Provinces and States held at Nagpur from 15 to 18 December, 1943.

³ Karnal District Gazetteer, Part B, Statistical Table, 1935, pp.cxx-cxxi.