

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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**COST–BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF BUS TRANSPORT IN KUMBAKONAM REGION OF TAMIL NADU**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study analyzed the costs involved in the operation of bus services of the TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I and benefits extended to its passengers. The study reveals that the TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I has been rendering good services to the public in their operating area despite certain limitations. But the passengers in the study area were not satisfied with the operating and service efficiency of the study unit as there exists a big gap between the expectations and perceptions of the passengers. The study suggests that mini buses may be operated in large number and more frequently to fulfill the transport demand of the commuters and to minimize revenue losses. Instead of sticking on to the scheduled times, the operation of the buses be budgeted on zero base, wherever there is no competition from private operators. The Corporation may think about diversification of business in the lines of courier service, parcel service along with regular bus service to improve its revenue as these lines are highly potential. The Corporation can allow the sites both inside and outside the buses suitable for advertising to gear up the non operating revenues. The number of Non-stop buses without conductors is to be increased to minimize losses. Conducting frequent training programmes, for crew members will improve the quality of services and cordial relationship between the crew and the passengers. Besides rendering service to the people by extending bus services to economically unviable routes, it should also endeavor to earn profit by increasing the bus fare atleast to cover the total fixed and operating costs and to fulfill the expectations of its stake holders and to emphasis more on Passenger - Friendly services.*

**KEYWORDS**

bus transportation, Kumbakonam.

**INTRODUCTION**

Transport plays a crucial role in the economic development of a nation and the social and cultural life of its people. It provides a vital link between production centers, distribution areas and the ultimate consumers. There are five principal modes of transportation in India, i.e., rail, road, air, ocean and inland water transport. In road Transport, the bus transport is the primary mode which provides effective link to each and every part of the country.

**TAMIL NADU SCENARIO**

The nationalization of passenger road transport service in Tamil Nadu commenced with the takeover of all routes in Madras city in 1948. At present there are 8 State Transport Undertakings functioning under the administrative control of the transport department. These undertakings with a fleet strength of 21,169 buses provide one of the largest network of bus services in the country.

**TNSTC KUMBAKONAM DIVISION I**

The present study relates to Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation, Kumbakonam Division I. This Corporation came into existence on 1st March, 1972 with its head quarters at Kumbakonam.

The objective of the Corporation is to provide efficient, economical and coordinated transport facility to the public in the jurisdiction of Thanjavur, Nagapattinam and Thiruvavur Districts.

Presently the Corporation is operating with a fleet strength of 1,246 buses in these districts. About five lakh rural passengers per day are benefited in Kumbakonam Division I by this transportation.

**PROBLEM OF THE STUDY**

At present, the transport services in rural areas do not meet all the requirements of the passengers up to the expected level due to many reasons. The passengers face a number of problems caused by Corporation, crew and co-passengers in connection with their traveling. Ultimately these problems dissatisfy the rural passengers very much. Similarly the Corporation has to encounter a lot of problems in running rural services. The rural road conditions are not as good as towns. Moreover, plying of services in sparsely populated rural areas results in low efficiency and uneconomical return to the Corporation. Ultimately the State Road Transport Corporations are running in heavy losses.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The present study has been taken up with the following objectives

1. To analyze the costs involved in the operation of bus services of the TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I and benefits extended to its passengers.
2. To examine the problems of the bus passengers that they encounter while traveling in the buses in TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I.
3. To investigate the problems of the service provider, TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I.
4. To assess the level of satisfaction of the passengers over the bus services offered by the TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I.
5. To make suggestions to ensure satisfactory bus services by improving the functioning of the TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I a 'Passenger-Friendly' one.

In the Cost – Benefit Analysis, Cost analysis is carried out in the study with the help of various components of cost data for the past 20 years and Benefit analysis is carried out in terms of passenger satisfaction.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study is empirical in nature. Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Secondary data were collected from a wide spectrum of sources such as books, magazines, Government Reports, Records of TNSTC and Websites of various transport organizations. **The Primary data** were collected from the passengers conducting sample surveys using structured, pre-tested interview schedule.

**POPULATION OF THE STUDY:** The population of the study constitutes the total number of passengers using TNSTC buses in the study area. The passenger population is infinite one.

**SAMPLES FROM PASSENGERS:** From the lists of bus routes from the 20 selected branches of the Corporation 20 routes were selected at random. 20 passengers were selected at random in each route giving due weightage to different age groups. Thus, a total of 400 sample passengers were selected conveniently using stratified random technique.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study has been confined to the TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I only. The study is restricted to services marketing in terms of cost benefit analysis only and nothing is discussed regarding human resource management, financial management, material management etc., of the Corporation.

**COST ANALYSIS**

In case of road passenger transport undertakings the cost of operation of service consists of material cost, personnel cost, motor vehicle tax, depreciation cost, interest cost, and other sundry costs. These cost elements are grouped as variable cost. The fixed cost consists of personnel cost, motor vehicle tax, depreciation cost and interest cost.

**BENEFIT ANALYSIS**

Being a Public Utility Corporation, the TNSTC has to be reviewed by the utility it has extended to the general public. So, the benefits are the transport services offered by the Corporation and the beneficiaries are the general public. So, to analyse the benefits derived from the Corporation, the beneficiaries are surveyed and their opinion in terms of satisfaction levels about the services, (the benefits) are recorded.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

**Cost of Operations:** The rising cost of operations on account of increasing prices of inputs without matching increase in fares, Inefficiency in operations, constraints of financial resources, organizational inadequacies, procedural delays, shortage of essential materials, etc. were enlisted as the problems encountered by the Corporation in discharging its services.

**Reasons for Loss:** The TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I has been incurring losses due to various reasons such as hike in the price of diesel, tyres and tubes, spares etc., increased fixed cost due to increase in the wage bill, quarterly tax of town buses and cut throat competition from the private operators.

**Inadequate Service:** The problems with respect to the Corporation include the problems of inadequate services, poor conditions of buses in rural routes, and unreasonable waiting time at bus stops.

**Regular Commuters:** Students and employees, being the regular commuters, are only 28.25 per cent in the study area. Labourers and businessmen constitute nearly half of the total passengers.

**Average Distance Travelled:** 78.75 per cent of the total passengers travel only a distance of less than 20 Kilo meters. The average distance travelled per passenger is 13.33 km only.

**Passenger Comforts:** The overall satisfaction of the respondents is negative as majority of them (56 per cent) were dissatisfied with it. The adult group is the most dissatisfied group.

**Punctuality and Regularity:** 58 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with punctuality and regularity of the bus services operated in the study area.

**Safety and Reliability:** 56.50 per cent of the total respondents were dissatisfied with the safety and reliability measures provided in the buses operated in the study area.

**Satisfaction with Crew:** 55 per cent of the respondents were dissatisfied with the crew members.

**Social Responsibility:** 55.75 of the total respondents were satisfied with the social responsibility of the bus operators in the study area.

**SUGGESTIONS**

**To Clean Better:** The Corporation shall pay due attention to clean the buses and water service them regularly and properly. The rate fixed for cleaning buses may be increased so as to attract the cleaners who are doing the work on contract basis.

**To Arrange Seating Comfortable:** The Corporation shall see that the seats in the buses are well designed, suitably sized and adequately cushioned to suit all the categories of passengers especially old people.

**To Improve Ventilation Facility:** The Corporation shall instruct the body building units to design the body of the buses with adequate ventilation facility. Air coolers may be fitted in the buses to improve airflow inside the buses.

**To Make Mobility of Window Shutters:** The sideways moving windows may be replaced by upward or downward moving windows.

**To Avoid Foot Board Travelling:** The Government shall take steps to eradicate foot board travelling which is illegal. There are court orders not operate buses without doors, but still buses are operated without doors. If doors are fixed, there is no room for foot board travelling.

**To Control Cancellation of Services:** The Corporation shall see that no one night or early morning service be cancelled. Whatever be the reason, the scheduled trips should not be cancelled particularly during nights especially in single route services.

**To Ensure Spare Bus Service:** The Government shall take steps to ensure spare bus services during regular vehicles are kept away from their routes. Permits be granted only to these operators, who are capable of operating spare bus services without cancelling trips.

**To Ensure Safety Provisions:** The Government shall see that safety provisions are ensured in the buses. Emergency exit must be provided in all the buses.

**To Control Speed:** Speed control devices must be fixed in all the buses. The Government should strictly implement the orders already passed in this regard.

**To Minimize of Revenue Losses:** Linking remote area with feeder services and trunk roads by plying **mini buses** frequently may fulfill the transport demand of the commuters. Instead of sticking on to the scheduled times, the operation of the buses be **budgeted on zero base**, wherever there is no competition from private operators.

**To Solve the Problems of the Passengers:** The problems of the passengers such as undue waiting time, not stopping buses at scheduled places, failure to pick up privileged passengers, overcrowding etc., can be solved to a greater extent by proper planning and effective supervision.

**To Improve the Quality of Service:** Poor courtesy of the crew members creates bad image for the Corporation. Conducting frequent training programmes, seminars, and workshops for crew members on fuel consumption, accidents, breakdowns, and also in human relations will improve the quality of services and cordial relationship between the crew and the passengers.

**To Improve the Revenue:** The Corporation may think about **diversification of business in the lines of courier service, parcel service** along with regular bus service to improve its revenue as these lines are highly potential.

**To Improve the Non-operating Revenue:** The Corporation shall take steps to allow the sites both inside and outside the buses suitable for advertising to the advertising agencies. This will definitely gear up the non operating revenues of the Corporation.

**CONCLUSION**

To conclude, it is clear from the study that the TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I has been rendering good services to the rural masses in their operating area despite certain limitations. But the passengers in the study area were dissatisfied though not totally but to some extent with the operating and service efficiency of TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I. There exists a big gap between the expectations and perceptions of the passengers. Still they, as tax payers, consumers and customers expect some more efficient and adequate bus services. So, the TNSTC Kumbakonam Division I has still a long way to fulfill their expectations. Besides rendering service to the people by extending bus services to economically unviable routes, it should also endeavor to earn profit atleast to cover the total fixed and operating costs and to fulfill the expectations of its stake holders and to emphasis more on **Passenger - Friendly** services.

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