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## A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF GST ON GOODS TRANSPORT AGENCIES (GTA) WITH REFERENCE TO TAMIL NADU

**ANAND SHANKAR RAJA M**  
**ASST. PROFESSOR**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**CHRIST (DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)**  
**BENGALURU**

**KRISHNA B**  
**STUDENT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**CHRIST (DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)**  
**BENGALURU**

### ABSTRACT

*The researchers have attempted to study the impact of GST on Goods Transport Agencies (GTA) in select districts of Tamil Nadu namely Erode, Tirupur and Coimbatore. The paper aims to follow a qualitative approach and hence proper review of the literature has been taken into consideration. The review of literature provided a basic understanding on how to proceed with the research work and provided insights to learn new information. Since there are no much articles and published sources on GST and its impact on GTA, the researchers have collected literature reviews from various sources. The study also concentrates on primary data collection using a focus group approach. The study concludes that GST has been finally implemented officially throughout the Indian scenario and has a confused effect. Experts are looking forward to find solution for these problems. Transporters will have to make a significant investment in making technological advancements in the system of booking. Experts must be employed in order to comply with the rules and guidelines of the law. Now is the time to make reforms in business. The researchers have spent quality time to analyze and understand each component concerned with this research work. This research outcome will be favorable to all the connected parties and will be a very strong mechanism for transport agencies. The researchers have concentrated only on Tamil Nadu, which is the limitation of the study. The future researchers can conduct a comparative study and explore various industries and sectors.*


### KEYWORDS

GST effect and impact, goods transport agencies.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

 GST was officially implemented in India during the month of July 2017. This implementation is considered to be a major reform in the domain of Indian taxation system. An article published by (Ernst and Young) says that it is an amalgamation of all central and state government taxes. The double taxation effect and the cascading effect will be relaxed through GST. This helps the common national market says (Desreka, 2017). For different goods and services different tax slabs such as 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28% has been fixed says (Economic times, 2017). (Lourdunathan, 2017) Conducted a qualitative analysis to analyze in depth about GST and its entire related concept.

The researcher has clearly mentioned that there is a mixed response saying that manufacturers have not welcomed GST and this concept has not been fully accepted by the people. The researcher has concluded by saying that GST will bring about a new change and this change is called "one tax one country". Thus, it has to be understood that GST is a very positive concept if it has been understood and used properly by the central and state government. Proper resource and revenue generation is possible through GST if the government shows an improvement in the tax compliance. Before we look at the GST impact on supply chain, it must be understood that supply chain management is vital for the running of business organisations producing and distributing merchandise according to an article concentrating on (How is Goods and service tax (GST) relevant for supply chains?). (The Impact of GST on Supply Chain Management, 2018). Some researchers say that a superior inventory management can be organized in the system by the removal of stock transfer benefits, which has an increased share in direct dispatch on various dealerships (Rajat, 2017). Lead time can be given importance and with more scope for warehouse consolidation for effective inventory management. Tangential decrease in incoming logistics costs – An impact of GST on supply chain will also be seen in the form of tangential benefits for direct out-of-state procurements and logistics costs (Impact of GST on Wholesalers and Retailers, 2017), (ETRISE), (PROFIT BOOKS). These small things have to be considered, as it would help the producers to expand their vendor business in the external environment and gain position that is more profitable. This has been supported by many articles published by (The economic times), (masters India, 2017), (Deskera, 2017), (Santhanam) and (Tax Mantra, 2017). Export business can concentrate well for better cash flow because of the tax exclusion being more streamlined there is more scope for export business and export promotion. At the same time importance has to be given to after-sales distribution models because GST can have a significant impact on storage and retail penetration says (The Indian tax guide), (KPMG, 2015), (Resilium). Taking into consideration the impact of GST on business firms can think and develop their own distribution model, which offers high quality service at a very lower cost or an affordable cost understanding the advantages in the logistic industry due to GST says an article published by (The economic times). This article also makes it clear that, GST is the most powerful tax reform to settle down some negative market conditions. Thus it can be understood that based on the domain it has its own advantages. Some business and sales have been badly affected and an example has been mentioned by an article published by (Indian Times) thus, GST structure has its own dis-advantages. For instance, lowering of tax on coal and capital goods came in as a big surprise for the market. To begin with, there will be more compliance and adjustment costs because the frequency of filing returns has increased for businesses. Further, to claim the input tax credit, compliance will be expected from every single party across the value chain. This may hurt the profitability of the industry in the short run, but in the end, operational efficiency is bound to enhance. It might affect or hurt the profitability position but it has its own pros and cons, according to an article published by (IIFL) stating on how GST works in organised and un-organised sectors. Overall, it is believed that GST will integrate, the economy on a common parlance says an article by (Business standard). It is to be noted that every domain has its own advantages says an article by (QUORA) by discussion on various industries and its relationship with GST effect but in reality it is said by many articles that GST has buoyancy in the economy, (Quora, 2016), (Ajay), (Equity master).

### BACKGROUND OF GTA SERVICE

Goods and Service Tax (GST) rate tariff in India is designed in 6 categories of goods and services. Four main GST rate slabs framed with essential goods, services, Standard goods, services, luxury goods, and services with 5%, 12%, 18% and 28% respectively. Commonly used Goods and Services at 5%, Standard Goods and Services fall under 12%, Standard Goods and Services fall under 18% and Special category of Goods and Services including luxury at 28%. The most essential goods and services attract nil rate of GST under Exempted Categories. Luxury goods and services and certain specific goods and services attract additional cess than 28%

GST (The Times of India, 2017), (The Economic Times, 2018). The levy of Service Tax on Road Transportation Service has always remained a subject matter of uncertainty. Initially, Finance Act, 1997 proposed to tax the services of road transportation, which was subsequently withdrawn after nation-wide strike. Thereafter, in the Budget of 2004, it was proposed to levy service tax on services provided by a GTA in relation to transport of goods by road vide Finance Act, 2004 with effect from 10-9-2004. However, the levy was deferred till further notice again in view of protest by transporters. The Government thereafter constituted a committee to study the matter (Agarwal, 2014). Taking into account the recommendations of the Committee, Notification Nos. 32 to 35 /2004 – ST all dated 3-12-2004 were issued, so as to effectively impose tax on the service of transport of goods by road with effect from 1-1-2005 under reverse charge. The services, which were provided under existing law, it is also applicable in the GST regime with new rates having given some relaxation. Under GST, Transport sector is closely monitored and the tax rates are apt. Transportation sector has accepted the changes made under GST by the government of India.

#### IMPACT OF GST ON LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY CHAIN

The backbone of the manufacturing sector is logistics and supply chain management as it is the mechanism to take the goods to the final consumer. Transportation sector in Indian economy is one of the prime domains for the economic growth and development. In a country like India, demand is always high and consumption is never ending process thus, the supply has to continue without any break for which transportation plays an important role. The risk is always high for the supplier and for the consumer and it consists of many variables such as the fiscal costs and physical supply chain costs. Thus, it has to be understood that the stake is always high. However, GST has a sharp effect though locations will be tax neutral. Large supply chain cost and competences of large organisations and units have to be configured properly. Geographical locations are highly influenced by the differential taxes and this affects the structure of supply chain says an article content by (Capital Float, 2017), stating that GST has a very strong effect and has an impact on the border domain of the logistics business. This effect is expected to continue for few days in future. Warehouses can be consolidated rather than maintaining one in every state, which would be helpful for the logistics firms to avoid central tax. (Livemint, 2017) Says that could affect effectiveness of the logistics segment in the short run, but working competence is bound to improve in the long run. These efforts will help the logistics firms to bring down the overall cost of the product by considering the inventory cost and carrying cost which will affect the final price of the product and bring down the selling price. It has to be understood that the cost saved by the firms because of GST can be used for providing better services. The pre-existing VAT and Service laws had so many complications with regard to transportation service. There was too much paperwork involved, which involved a lot of cost to the service providers. Every document was a physical document, which caused time and cost hurdles. With the implementation of GST regime, transportation industry has been facing a lot of boons and banes. Paperwork has been reduced, cost has been reduced and complications with regard to charging of tax for inter-state supplies have been eradicated. Transit of goods from one place to another has been made easier. Necessity for work force with this regard has been reduced. The concept of E-way bill, which is to be enforced from Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 will make it easier for clearance and transit. Despite these benefits, the transportation industry has been facing many hurdles too with the implementation of GST regime. Day to day business has been severely affected because of confusions and difficulties in adapting to this new tax regime. This study will provide an outlook on the changes, difficulties and opportunities that the GST regime will bring in to the transportation industry. The main concentration of this research intends to provide an outlook on the future scope for transportation service providers with the implementation of one unified tax regime, provide an outlook on the day-to-day issues faced by GTA's with the implementation of GST, to provide suggestions and recommendations to Goods Transport Agencies and the Government to overcome the hurdles created by the new tax regime and finally to analyse the impact on various domains like compliance, liquidity, cost of operations and movement of trucks using descriptive statistics.

#### CONCEPT OF E-WAY BILL

While transporting goods from one place to another, the transporters will have to carry an electronic way bill. When a transporter carries goods worth more than Rs. 50,000 E-way bill must be carried which can be generated with GSTIN in the common portal. (India Today, 2018) also mentions that, the e-way bill mechanism will ensure that the goods that are transported comply with GST law and will prevent tax evasion. This E-way bill will replace the Way bill, which was necessary as per VAT law. If an unregistered person transports goods, he should still generate an E-way bill either by himself or through the transporter. This makes it mandatory to generate an E-way bill while transporting goods for both registered and unregistered dealers. If the consignor or the consignee has not generated an E-way bill, it is the responsibility of the transporter to generate an E-way bill and the same details have also been mentioned by (Batra).

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anita Ratosgi, in her article "Decoding GST for transportation & freight sector" has provided an outlook about the possible impact that GST could have on the transportation sector. The article was published in 2016, a year before the implementation of GST. The article starts with describing how the then indirect tax regime was highly complicated, inefficient and opaque. The article then describes how transport and logistics sector will gain from removal of multiplicity of taxes and availability of additional credits. The article used the information from World Bank, which says Indian corporates can save upto 30-40 per cent of logistic cost with the implementation of one unified tax regime. The article has also thrown light on areas, which needed clarifications like taxability of international freight. This article was one of the first to throw light on how GST could benefit with the implementation of GST. Even though the article was just based on the model framework provided by the Government in 2016, most of the predictions made by the author seem to become reality. Varun Biyani, in his article had predicted the future opportunities in logistics industry and how the GST regime could help the logistics industry. The researcher talks about variables like transit time, paperwork and consolidation, technology, and future scope. GST regime promises a unified market, which has made transit of goods within states easier. This change will enable logistics companies to deliver goods more efficiently, optimize delivery timelines, and improve capacity utilization. The researcher has also discussed how paperwork has been reduced. Since multiple previous taxes have been subsumed by one tax regime, the burden of paperwork has been reduced. This also reduces the cost of transportation. The author also focuses on the future possible technological advancements in the transportation industry. The compliance requirements will make the logistics companies to adopt ERP accounting systems and inventory management systems to remain compliant during all stages. To conclude, the changes in the proposed indirect tax system could reduce transportation cycle times, enhance supply chain decisions which could help the logistics industry reach its potential in terms of matching high-quality service levels and growth. Rajat Arora, from the Bureau of Economic times, has published an article headlined "Logistics sector to gain most from GST as costs will be down by 20%" dated July 05, 2017. The title was a statement by Mr. Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and. The article also discusses about the possible impact of GST on logistics. The calculations made by Economic times say that the costs incurred by the logistics service providers would at least come down by 20 percent. Hassle free transportation was enabled since states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, along with 20 more states, have dismantled border check posts. The article had predicted the average speed of trucks to increase from 20-25 km per hour to 40 km per hour. It also expected the average distance covered by a truck in one day would double with the implementation of GST i.e, from 200kms to 400 kms. This article was published within few days from the implementation of GST, predicting the future opportunities for transportation service providers with the possible decrease in cost. Prabihanga Borpuzari, in his article in The Economic Times, dated June 12th 2017, discusses about the E-way bill concept. The headline of the article says "E-way bill concern: Why moving goods under GST can come to a grinding halt". The article starts by throwing some light on what an E-way bill is. When a transporter carries goods worth more than Rs. 50,000 E-way bill must be carried which can be generated with GSTIN in the common portal. As if the headline says, this article has predicted that the concept of E-way bill would bring in much confusion and would bring transportation of goods to a stagnant position. The article also includes information shared by Mr. Priyajit Ghosh from KPMG. He says that the concept of E-way bill would be a significant challenge to the transportation industry since way bill needs to be generated in real time along with the invoice. Unless a company has the IT system to support and generate way bills in real time, it will be a huge issue. The article also states that the major hindrance with the concept of E-way bill is that, its validity is based on distance. The article concludes with a note that this concept has both a good side and a bad side. The good side is that the implementation of E-way bill will ensure smooth transit of goods between states and would reduce a lot of paperwork and reduce transportation cost. The bad side is that, many transportation service providers lack the technological skill and knowledge to adapt to this new concept. Adapting to this concept would be a major challenge for the service providers. Economic Times Auto published an article, dated July 26th 2017 about how the GST regime would benefit the transport sector. The article compares the scenario that existed during the previous indirect tax with GST. The ministry of Road Transport and Highways let out a statement stating "Monitoring and collection of sales tax at interstate check posts led to major traffic congestion at these points, resulting in slower movement of freight and passenger, and consequently higher costs and pollution." The article also compares India with the United States of America where an average truck covers covers 3

lakh kms in a year whereas an average Indian truck covers only 50,000-60,000 kms. The implementation of GST will reduce the travel time of long haul trucks by at least 1/5th and increase the kms covered by at least 30 percent. The article also discusses about how E-way bill will ensure transparency and reduce paperwork. The articles also quotes an analysis of freight movement before July 1st (Pre-GST) in top 15 states which says that a truck spends 20-30 minutes in borders of states like Rajasthan and Maharashtra whereas it will take 2-3 hours in states like Bihar and Jharkhand. This is expected to be eradicated with the removal of inter-state check posts and implementation of E-way bill.

TABLE 1

The Maharashtra government has announced that the logistics and manufacturing sectors will benefit a lot due to GST. Each state is ranked based on their performance on logistics. The main factors, which have to be taken into consideration, are <b>truck stoppages, anti-competitive practices and export role.</b>	(Jog, 2017)
The new law holds importance to freight, shipping and logistics and it is said that certain variables such as <b>supply of goods and services, input tax credit, time and place of supply, valuation, and provisions for transition</b> plays an important role in logistics.	(Derninger, 2017)
According to the words of ICRA (Senior Vice President), GST will be welcomed and successful for some port players such as CONCOR. He also mentioned that, logistics, as GST will lead to a <b>realignment of warehousing and supply chain requirements of companies.</b>	( Daily Shipping Times , 2016)
Insufficient supply chains of the firms are because of the highly fragmented logistics sector involving 3PL's. Firms in the post GST regime will enjoy added incentives. These incentives can be used to develop <b>its own logistics arm or tie up with the domain experts</b> who are 3PL companies.	(Web Exclusive , 2017)
Transportation plays an important role and it has a huge connectivity with GST. It is important to consider factors such as: <b>Loading/unloading, Packing/ unpacking, Trans-shipment and Temporary warehousing etc.</b>	(Cleartax, 2017)
Any person who provides service in relation to goods transportation by roadways and issues consignment note is called Goods Transport Agency and factors which are very important are service in Relation to Transport and consignment Note.	(Tax guru, 2017)

From the above table it is clear that GST is being rightly used in the transport sector the firms can enjoy many benefits. Thus, all these above advantages are taken into consideration to determine how the respondents respond to these variables. Most of the transport agency owners will take GST in a negative way because they might not know how to use it in a positive way. Thus, many variables has been considered for the qualitative study. These variables are converted into question statement and the same is asked to the respondents to see how they react.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The problem that this paper will study is the impact of GST on the day-to-day business affairs because of the sudden shift to a complete technological base. Indian transportation industry is a mixture of giant corporations, medium scale GTA firms and low scale service providers. While the high level and medium level corporations can manage this sudden shift, the survival of the low-level service providers is at stake. This study aims at providing the problems faced by medium and low level Goods transport agencies in day-to-day conduct of business. An article by (HM Revenue and customs , 2015), conducted a close interview with 12 respondents to draw data and to know the behaviour and attitude towards tax. To find the burden of tax an article by (Noor Sharoja Sapiei, 2013) used a qualitative method has been used. In a very different domain to study the fear and greed in tax policy domain an article by (Christopher Fennell, 2003), have used a qualitative approach. Thus, since it becomes very difficult to use a quantitative methodology, this research employs a pure qualitative study to see how GST has an impact in the transportation and supply chain domain. This justification has been strongly stated here because it is very important from a researcher's point of view on how to provide a solution for the research problem.

#### SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Face to face interaction was made with officials from 32 Goods transport agencies overall in the districts of Erode, Tirupur and Coimbatore. In order to avoid a narrow study, interactions were made with transporters who transport different type of Goods. The breakdown with respect to interactions made in every district has been given below.

#### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is confined only to the domain of logistics and supply chain and the data collection is restricted to three major districts of Tamil Nadu, Coimbatore, Erode and Trippur. This can also be considered as study limitation. But the future researchers have a lot of scope to be extended.

#### SAMPLING METHOD

Sampling has been done based on the convenience of the researcher. Transporters from the districts of Erode, Coimbatore and Tirupur were chosen and interacted with to analyse the impact of GST on Goods Transport Agencies. Since it is very important to know how and what the business owners and agencies feel about GST and its effect in their transportation business a focus group approach has been used. A group comprising 12 members (Transportation agents of Coimbatore, Erode and Trippur have been used to draw data). Many studies in the previous years have used qualitative approach to study on tax. An article published by (Partners, 2015), on "Tax Reform Qualitative Research Findings" which is a pure qualitative approach. Likewise, this research paper has also used qualitative approach. To find the UK Bedroom tax the researchers have used an interview schedule with 38 respondents, (Moffatt, 2016). Thus, in this research interview has also been used at needed situations. Thus it can be understood that this research is a combination of focus group, interview schedule method and content analysis.

### 4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This paper is a qualitative study. With the opinion of transportation service providers a model framework will be prepared to address the problems faced by GTA's. This framework will provide suggestions to the government and GTA is which would help the smooth conduct of business.

### 5. FUTURE SCOPE

The study will be useful for future studies, which will be conducted on the impact of GST, not only on GTA but also on other industries. This study will not only elucidate the problems but also the future scope of expansion and opportunities available for logistics service providers with the positive impact of GST. For example, the cost of providing service is expected to come down by at least 30 percent in the long run. GTA's can utilize these savings for future expansion of business. The study will also predict the future growth of transportation industry with the implementation of GST. This will help the logistics service providers to plan for their future expansion.

### 6. RESEARCH MOTIVATION & ANALYSIS

Logistics and Supply chain management are two inevitable factors in the course of production. Most of the manufacturing concerns outsource logistics services. Any impact faced by the logistics industry will directly affect the course of production of other industries. With the implementation of GST, a lot of industries have been facing delay in production because of delay in delivery of raw materials by logistics service providers. This in turn delays the time of sale. Hence, the demands of the consumers are not met on time. Thus, the confusions amongst goods transport agencies affects the entire supply chain. GTA's have a lot of issues that need to be addressed by the GST council. If not, the entire supply chain will be severely affected. Not many studies have been conducted in this field and not much importance has been given problems faced by logistics service providers with the implementation of GST. Hence, this research paper will address the problems and will provide suggestions in order to overcome these problems and ensure smooth conduct of business.

#### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Qualitative research is a method, which is very popular amongst the social science field. This study is qualitative since the results are arrived from the opinions of officials in Goods Transport Agencies. No financial statements are studied. The responses are recorded and analysed to find out the most common variable that

affects the sample. Interactions were made with 31 transporters from three different districts who deal with different types of goods. The responses have been elucidated in this chapter.

TABLE 2: OUTCOME OF THE QUALITATIVE METHOD BASED DISCUSSION

Cases	Critical Variables	Reasons	Future Scope
Case 1	1. Liquidity 2. Compliance Issues	Clients require more credit period to pay. Hence, liquidity is affected. Returns keep getting rejected due to technical glitches	Turnover is expected to increase but expansion is uncertain because of prevailing liquidity crunch.
Case 2	1. Liquidity. 2. Compliance 3. Sudden shift to technology	Liquidity of clients is affected which directly affects payment. Payments are delayed. Having practiced conventional methods of book keeping, sudden transition to technology involves a lot of cost and employees must be trained accordingly	Future is at stake since the organisation is not dynamic. A lot of investments are required to advance technologically.
Case 3	1. Registration 2. Lack of Expertise 3. Compliance 4. Shortage of funds	It is a low level transportation firm which used to operate in the unorganized sector. Forced to register with the enforcement of GST. Lacks experts to take care of legal aspects. Lacks funds for carrying on business.	Future expansion is merely possible. Will have to merge with other GTA's in order to survive.
Case 4	1. Liquidity	A well-established transportation firm Only problem is liquidity since all industries face liquidity crunch and hence, payments are being delayed.	If it surpasses this short period of liquidity crunch, future expansion of business is possible since cost of operations are expected to come down.
Case 5	1. Compliance 2. E-way bill	Had initial problems with registration. Returns are being continuously rejected. return filing consumes a lot of time. Could not generate E-way bill due to technical glitches during the trial period.	Partners feel that the cost of operations will reduce by 25 percent in another year. Hence, this savings can be used for expansion.
Case 6	1. Liquidity 2. Lack of clients	Liquidity crunch because of delay in payment. The organisation charges 12 percent GST to avail ITC. This costed them to lose few of their customers since competitors charge only 5 percent.	Survival is at stake. Should provide discounts and come up with advancement in services, which will attract customers.
Case 7	1. Return filing 2. Increase in Cost	Returns keep being rejected. Technical glitches in the server. Costs have increased because of digitalizing the system of book keeping for the purpose of GST.	Future expansion is possible with the possible reduction in cost.
Case 8	1. Liquidity 2. Compliance	Just like other, major problems are liquidity crunch and compliance issues.	Future expansion is possible once liquidity crunch is over.
Case 9	1. Hit on turnover 2. Liquidity	Textile industry is severely hit by GST. Hence, the numbers of orders received by GTA's have reduced. This has reduced the turnover. Moreover, liquidity has been hit affecting day-to-day business.	If textile industry survives this hit and revives, there is scope for expansion.
Case 10	1. Survival 2. Unorganised sector	Being a low level transporter who deals in the unorganized sector, business is severely affected and runs on debt.	No future scope. Will either have to sell or merge with other GTA's.
Case 11	1. Hit on turnover 2. Compliance 3. E-way bill 4. Liquidity	Turnover has come down by 40 percent in the month of October. Complications regarding E-way bill seem to be a challenge to the business. Liquidity crunch has severely affected day-to-day business.	The hit on turnover will take a brief period of time to recover. Changes must be made in the method of operations in order to reduce cost.
Case 12	1. Return filing 2. E-way bill	Being a well established GTA, the business faces only two issues. Return filing because of technical issues. Complications regarding E-way bill seem to be a challenge since no one has a clear picture about it.	Once the law settles, the business will flourish with the reduction in cost and increase in turnover. Since they deal with all types of goods, it is easy to survive in the market.
Case 13	1. Hit on turnover 2. Liquidity	The hit on turnover of textile products has affected the turnover of the transporter. Liquidity crunch because of delay in payments.	Future is unpredictable. Depends on the survival of textile industry.
Case 14	1. Unorganised Sector 2. Unregistered clients	Since the transporter deals with unregistered dealers, the liability of paying GST is on the transporter which increases complications.	Must move to the organised sector to survive.
Case 15	1. Compliance 2. Hit on turnover	Returns are getting constantly rejected. Turnover has come down by at least 40 percent compared to the previous year.	Future is unpredictable.
Case 16	1. Lack of clients 2. Hit on turnover	Clients who are into textile industry have stopped production. So the turnover has fallen drastically.	Must find a new set of clients in order to survive.
Case 17	1. Liquidity crunch 2. Lack of Expertise	Lacks expertise to work on filing of GST returns. Auditors are inefficient.	Future is unpredictable.
Case 18	1. Liquidity crunch 2. Hit on turnover	Being one of the well established GTA's in the district, liquidity is the only major problem. Turnover has decreased because of decrease in production	Has a vast range of clients. If the production increases, future expansion is possible.
Case 19	1. Hit on turnover 2. Liquidity	Wood and wooden products have become expensive under GST. Hence, demand for wood has come down to some extent. Hence, turnover has decreased. Liquidity crunch since clients need more credit period.	Wood will always have demand. This is a short term fall. Hence, future expansion is possible
Case 20	1. Compliance 2. E-way bill	Liquidity is not a problem in this case. Since E-way bill is a totally new concept, the transporter feels it to be a challenge.	Future expansion is possible.
Case 21	1. Compliance 2. Liquidity	Just like other transporters, compliance and liquidity crunch seem to be the major problem.	Future expansion is possible. Must narrow down to a certain permanent clients in order to prevent uncertainty.
Case 22	1. Higher Rate of GST 2. Lack of clients 3. Liquidity	Since it is a startup, the transporter charges 12 percent GST in order to claim ITC on capital goods. Since competitors charge only 5 percent, it is difficult to get clients.	Expand client base. Secure funds in order to curb liquidity crunch. Future expansion is possible since the promise better services.
Case 23	1. Hit on turnover 2. Liquidity	Turnover has fallen since price of steel has increased. Input cost for production of steel has increased. Hence steel industry faces liquidity crunch more than any other industry.	Liquidity crunch is short term. Steel will always have demand since it has no substitute. Future expansion is possible.

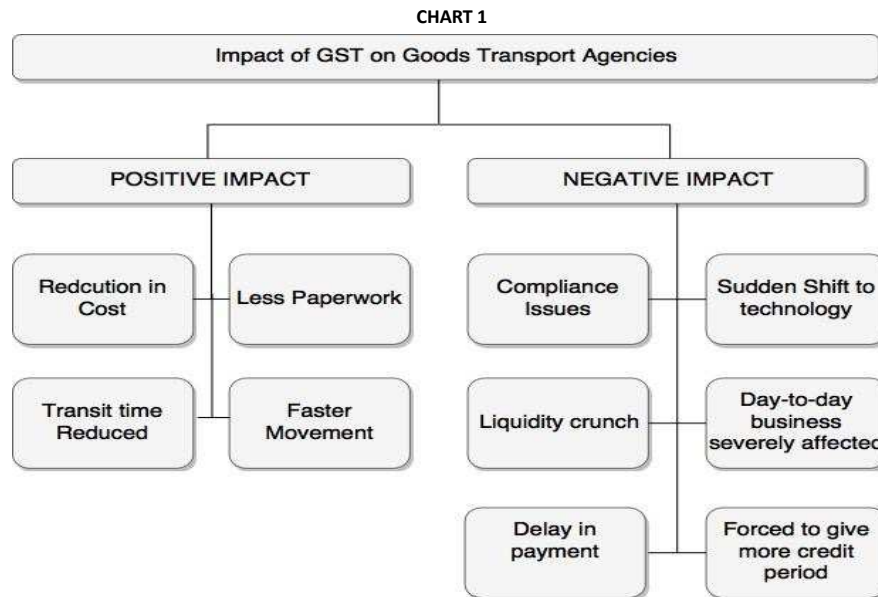


Cases	Critical Variables	Reasons	Future Scope
Case 24	1. Hit on turnover 2. Liquidity	Turnover has fallen down by 30 percent. Liquidity crunch because of the prevailing shortage of funds in steel industry.	Future expansion is possible if it survives the current liquidity crunch.
Case 25	1. Unorganised Sector 2. Hit on turnover 3. Lack of expertise	Since the GTA deals with the unorganised dealers of steel, turnover has witnessed a drastic fall. Being a low level transporter, compliance issues are being faced because of lack of expertise.	Future is at stake. Must make a lot of advancements to survive.
Case 26	1. Hit on turnover 2. Compliance 3. Liquidity crunch	Cement industry has been severely affected by GST. Prices have increase and so has cost of production. Hence, the payments to GTA are delayed.	Cement has no substitute. The fall is short term. Hence, future expansion is possible.
Case 27	1. Compliance 2. E-way bill 3. Liquidity	Since E-way bill is a very new concept, the transporter feels it to be a challenge. Short-term liquidity crunch because of hit on production.	Since the GTA has a vast range of clients, future of the business has no threat.
Case 28	1. Liquidity 2. Decrease in turnover	Short term liquidity crunch. Turnover has fallen because of decrease in production of steel.	Future expansion is possible.
Case 29	1. Hit on turnover 2. E-way bill	Price of plastic products saw huge rise in the initial months of GST. Hence, demand reduced in the first four months. This had an impact on turnover. E-way bill being a new concept will be a challenge.	Prices have now come down since GST rates have been reduced. Industry is recovering. Future expansion is possible.
Case 30	1. Hit on turnover 2. Compliance	Turnover saw a drastic fall in the initial months. Compliance issues are being faced because of returns constantly getting rejected.	Future expansion is possible since cost of operations will come down.
Case 31	1. Liquidity 2. Compliance	Being one of the well established GTA in the district, short term liquidity seems to be the only major problem. Compliance issues are being faced since filing of returns consumes a lot of time.	Survival of business would not be a problem. Future expansion of business is possible since costs are expected to come down.

**MODEL FRAMEWORK**

A model is the demonstration in graphic form. Based on literature reviews and personal interactions with various transportation firms, this paper will assess both the positive and negative impact faced by Goods Transport Agencies with the implementation of Goods and Service Tax. The various variables that will be studied in the paper are listed down in the following flowchart.

**THE TWO-BRANCH MODEL**



**Note:** This model work belongs to the original work of Krishna B and Anand Shankar Raja M.

The above model work talks about two branches, which talk about two different aspects. One being the positive impact of GST on GTA and the other being negative impact. The model simplifies the variables that are going to be studied in this research. The variables mentioned in the model framework have been explained in this chapter.

**INTERPRETATION FOR THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

The cost incurred by GTA (Goods Transportation Agencies) has come down by almost 10 percent with the implementation of GST. Further, it is expected to come down by at least 30-40 percent in the end. With the implementation of E-way bill from 1st February 2018, many documents have been replaced by one single E-way bill. Plant to CFA cost is expected to come down from 2-4% to 1-3%. Hub warehousing cost is expected to come down from 1-2% to 0-1%. The major outbound logistics cost is expected to come down from 5-8% to 4-7%. GST has eliminated all the paperwork that had to be filed during the Pre-GST era. E-way bill has reduced the Waybill, which was a physical document. E-way bill is a completely electronically generated document, which will replace various documents like lorry receipt, state permits, state waybills etc. Before the implementation of GST, an average truck would spend at least 2-3 hours in a check post, which caused a lot of delay in transit and delivery of goods. The implementation of GST will reduce the travel time of long haul trucks by at least 1/5th and increase the kms covered by at least 30 percent. The average speed of trucks has increased from 20-25 km/hr to 40-45 km/hr with the removal of check posts in various locations. Clearance is now happening faster than it used to. An average truck, which would cover 100-150 kms per day during the pre-GST era, now covers at least 200-250 kms per day. This is also expected to increase with the enforcement of E-way bill from 1st Feb 2018 since average waiting time for vehicles will reduce, as verification processes will be online.

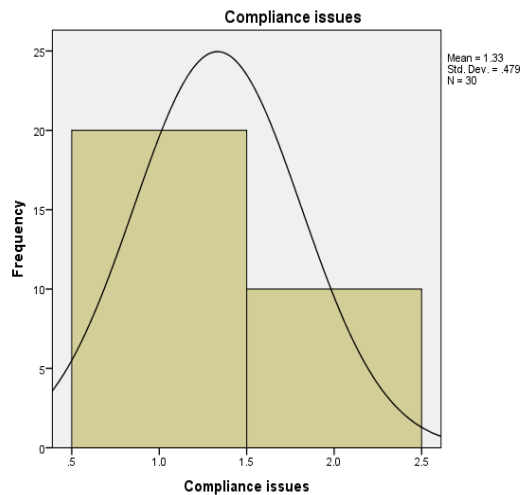
Transport industry officials face many compliance issues since everything has now been made online. Transport industry is vital and inevitable. The Government website server also faces many technical glitches which delays delivery of goods. GST returns of GTA's are constantly rejected every month for majority of transporters, which hinders the course of business. GST promotes online registrations and cash-free transactions. Transport industry being an offline industry finds it very difficult to completely shift to an online platform. They lack proper human and technical resources. This sudden shift to a technological platform will involve

a lot of cost. Moreover, with the implementation of E-way bill, it will become compulsory for all transporters to register online. Small-scale transporters who deal in a low level will be severely affected because of this. The liquidity crunch in the economy after demonitisation and GST has severely affected the transport industry. Transport industry survives on cash transactions. The sudden liquidity crunch forces the GTA's to run their business on credit. They are running short of money to fund their costs for future orders which puts the survival of the industry at stake. Transport industry depends on the business of its clients. Other industries, which are severely affected by GST, delay their payments. This is one of the major causes for liquidity crunch in transport industry. Transporters are forced to give more credit period to their clients since they are severely affected by this new tax regime. The effect on one industry will indirectly affect the transport industry since it depends on the survival of other industries. Some unscrupulous traders who are resorting to 'zero business' claims and evading taxes are exploiting the closure of commercial tax check-posts on state borders following the GST regime. Many products like iron, oil, stone chips and granite are being transported between Andhra Pradesh and Telengana. These products move from one commercial tax circle to another and one state to another without paying any GST. With enormous confusions and technical glitches, day-to-day business had been severely affected. Although experts say that this is temporary, transport industry is facing a hard time in overcoming these hurdles. The accrued income keeps increasing but the payment for these services are not being received on time. This makes it difficult to carry on further business. E-way bill, being a complete new concept, will bring in much confusion and put a halt to transport of goods in the initial stages. One of the major inputs for transporters is Diesel. The GST council has not notified petrol and diesel. Hence, the previous VAT laws govern them. Input tax credit cannot be claimed on the excise duty and VAT paid for fuel since the transporter does not collect any tax other than GST from his customers.

**IMPACT BASED ON VARIOUS DOMAINS**

**Compliance**

**GRAPH 1**

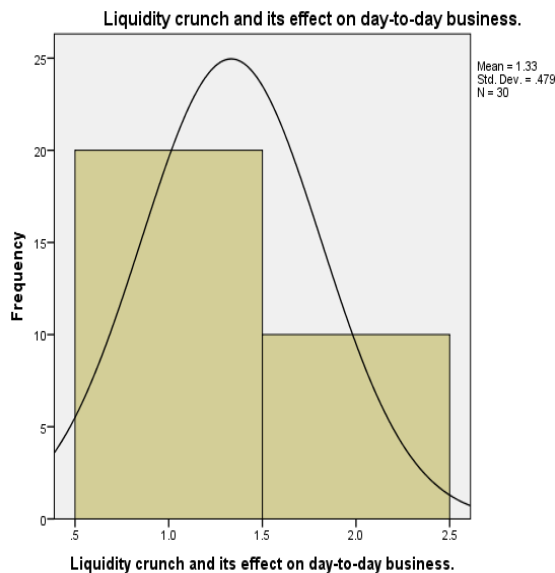


More than 70 percent of the respondents face compliance issues with regard to registration, return filing, generating E-way bill etc. The reasons for these issues have been listed below:

1. Technical glitches in the GST portal
2. Lack of Expertise in GTA's
3. Continuous rejection of GST returns by the Server
4. Time consumption
5. Sudden shift to a complete technological based taxation system
6. E-way bill being a complete new concept in several states.

**Liquidity Crunch**

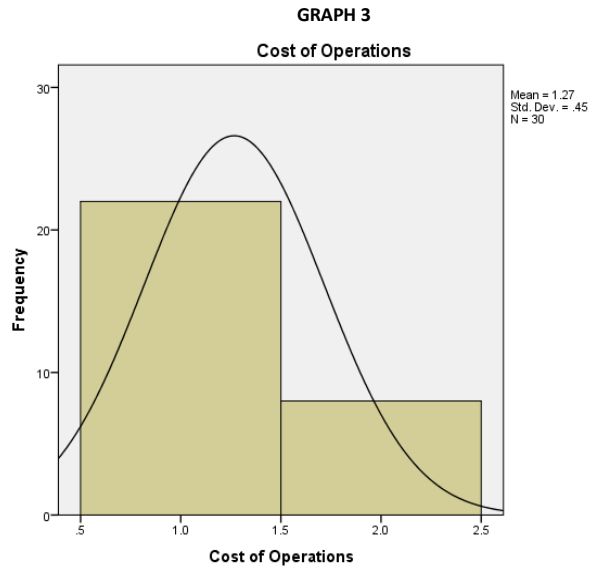
**GRAPH 2**



The economy as a whole has been facing a severe liquidity crunch since demonitisation and GST implementation. GTA's have been severely affected since most of the transactions are on cash basis and this has severely affected the day-to-day business. Since most of the industries that GTA's deal with face severe liquidity crunch, payments are being delayed by the clients. Hence, accrued income keeps increasing and income received remains stagnant. Clients seek more credit period

than they used to. GTA's which earlier used to provide 1 month credit period are now forced to provide a credit period of at least 3 months. Moreover, GTA's which charge GST on forward charge basis, will have to pay GST out of their own pockets since payment by the clients are delayed and paid after the due date for GST payment.

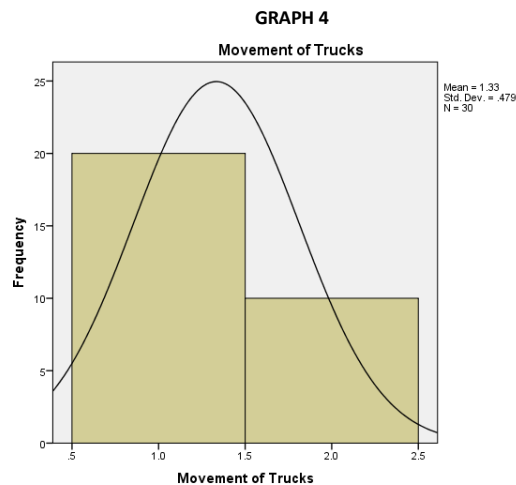
**Cost of Operations**



Although experts say that cost of operations have come down, based on the interactions made, GTA's claim that there has been an increase in cost. But this increase in cost is because of the short term inflation and it expected to come down soon. The reasons behind increase on cost are have been listed below.

1. Most of the GTA's charge 5 percent GST without ITC. Since GTA involves capital goods like trucks, vans and other commercial vehicles. ITC cannot be claimed by those who charge 5 percent GST. Majority charge only 5 percent in order to provide a better price to the clients.
2. One of the major inputs for GTA's is fuel. GST is not charged on fuel. They are charged with CST and VAT. Credit cannot be claimed on these taxes since GTA's do not collect any VAT. Hence, these add up to the increase in cost of operations.
3. Since the implementation of GST, the economy has been witnessing inflation. Hence, the cost of inputs have increased, wages have increased and standard costs have also increased.

**Movement of Trucks**



With the removal of check posts at several states, movement of trucks has become more feasible and fast. Transporters claim that the delivery time has decreased to a great extent. Clearance is more fast and entry in states takes lesser time. For example, A consignment from Delhi to Mumbai would take at least 5 days in the pre-GST era. Now, it takes less than 3 days. Moreover, the number kilometre has increased by at least 50-100 kms on an average. This also has an impact on the cost since the mileage per litre has also decreased. The transit time is expected to decrease more with the mandatory implementation of E-way bill.

**7. FINDINGS**

This study aimed at elucidating the impact of GST on Goods Transport Agencies. After analyzing the data collected from transporter, the following results were revealed. Transport industry was one of the most organized sectors before the implementation of GST. With the enforcement of GST, many unregistered transporters have been brought under the indirect tax regime. The number of registrations has increased to a significant number. The government has made good progress in achieving its objective of bringing all business concerns under the tax regime. A lot of issues are being faced by transporters in complying with the regulations. There has been a major transformation and many low level GTA's find it difficult to comply with these regulations due to lack of expertise. The server keeps rejecting GST returns even if there are minute errors. Since it is completely automated, even small decimal error would end up getting the entire return rejected by the portal. Moreover, E-way bill is to be made mandatory in the coming days. The trial period has revealed that many transporters find it difficult to generating E-way bills because of technical glitches. Owing to this, the government has postponed the mandatory enforcement until notice. Cost of operations has increased to a reasonable extent. This is because of the costs incurred in training employees to the new tax regime and digitalization of book keeping systems in order to comply with return filing. Fuel prices are constantly increasing and taxes paid on fuel cannot be claimed as ITC. This increase in cost is only a short-term rise. Overall cost expected to come down by at least 30-40 percent once inflation settles. Majority of transporters face a liquidity crunch. This is because of the



prevailing liquidity crunch in the economy because of major reforms like demonetisation and GST have been made by the government. This liquidity crunch is expected to settle by the end of 2018. Once this settles, transport industry has a lot of scope in the future.

## 8. SUGGESTIONS

A lot of GTA's lack knowledge about the new tax reform. This is one of the major tax reforms made by the government. Transporters can make use of online materials available, which explain the regulations and guideline. Many workshops are being conducted by the GST council and by many educational institutions. These would help the transporters to overcome the compliance issues. Employ individuals other than auditors for the purpose of GST. Though it adds up to the cost, it would help in eliminating, the burden of GST affecting the course of business. Make use of online softwares, which help in filing returns with just the invoice. Outsource services from individuals who provide services with regard to registration and filing of returns are also possible. Any problems in transportation will affect the entire business says, (Cleartax, 2017) article. Thus, it's the duty of the transportation agencies to consult tax experts to get rid of certain complicated issues. This industry is a very wide industry and plays an important role in economic development (Priya, 2018). Thus, the government also has to take efforts to make clear rules and regulations so that business has no negative impact on development of the economy.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Transporters will have to make a significant investment in making technological advancements in the system of booking. Experts must be employed in order to comply with the rules and guidelines of the law. Now is the time to make reforms in business. The survival of the organisations will be at stake if they still rely upon conventional ideas of doing business. The cost of operations is expected to come down by at least 30-40 percent. Transit time has also come down and movement of consignments has become faster. This shows the future scope and opportunities available for the logistics industry. Transporters must make use of these opportunities and concentrate on future expansion of business. Low level GTA is who deal in the unorganized sector are in a tight spot. They should make many investments to adapt to the upcoming changes. It is highly recommended to merge with other GTA's. This will not only ensure the survival of the organisation but also increases the future scope of carrying on business. The short-term liquidity crunch is a major hindrance for day-to-day operations. Transporters will have to avail loans with their accrued income in order to carry on business. This liquidity crunch will take at least one-ore year to completely settle. If the transporters do not figure out a way to overcome the hindrance, they might end up losing their clients. Though the government is close to achieving its objective of brining all GTA's under the tax regime, many issues need to be addressed with regard to compliance. The GST portal is completely automated. Since transport industry was one of the unorganized sectors, transporters now find it difficult to comply with the portal. The server even for minute decimal errors keeps rejecting GST returns. A separate portal must be established where these rejected returns are given a platform to provide clarifications. This would save a lot of time for the transporters. The GST portal has been facing many technical glitches since day one. The server has crashed several times. More servers must be established since a lot of information is being uploaded and accessed by millions of people in the portal. E-way bill is one of the major challenges for the transportation industry. The transporters feel that various issues need to be addressed by the tax authorities before the enforcement of the new mechanism. Slow moving cargo i.e, heavy cargo which take comparatively a longer period to reach the destination than a normal truck will be severely affected by E-way bill. E-way bill rule mandates 100 km per day movement. Such cargo generally does not travel more than 20 km a day. This must be taken into consideration and it would be better to provide a sort of relaxation for slow moving cargos.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Goods and Service Tax is one of the major tax reforms in the country. Several industries have been affected and transportation industry is of no exception. Problems like fall in turnover, liquidity crunch, compliance issues etc., are temporary. The industries must change with time and in accordance with the law. The economy will revive in less than a year. The E-way bill mechanism has been rolled out since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 for inter-state transport and it will be applicable for intra-state transport from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2018. This mechanism, although is a challenging one, it will prevent and eradicate tax evasion in the long run. From this study, the researchers have understood that, despite several problems, this tax mechanism will be one of the major boons for transportation industry. Once the economy revives, transportation industry will be one of the industries will be benefited the most. Costs are expected to come down and transit time is expected to reduce. Hence, the future holds many opportunities for Goods Transport Agencies in India.

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