

## **4.5 INLAND WATER TRANSPORT**

### **1. Navigable Inland Waterways**

A stretch of water, not part of the sea, over which craft of a carrying capacity not less than 50 tonnes can navigate when normally loaded. This term covers both navigable rivers and lakes (natural water courses, whether or not they have been improved for navigation purposes) and canals (water ways constructed primarily for the purpose of navigation). The length of rivers and canals is measured in mid channel and length of lakes, as well as lagoons, is counted as the length between the most distant points between which the transport is performed. An inland waterway forming a common frontier between two countries is reported by both.

National Waterways means an Inland Waterway of India designated as a National Waterway by the Government.

### **2. Major Port vis a vis Non-Major Port**

The words "major", "intermediate" and "minor", do not have a strict association with the traffic volumes served by these ports. As an example, Mundra Port, a newly developed minor port in the state of Gujarat registered a cargo traffic of around 28.8 million tonnes per annum during the financial year of 2008, which is higher than that of many major ports.

The classification of Indian ports into major, minor and intermediate has an administrative significance. Indian government has a federal structure, and according to its constitution, maritime transport falls under the "concurrent list", to be administered by both the Central and the State governments. While the Central Shipping Ministry administers the major ports, the minor and intermediate ports are administered by the relevant departments or ministries in the nine coastal states of West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Several of these 185 minor and intermediate ports are merely "notified", with little or no cargo handling actually taking place. These ports have been identified by the respective governments to be developed, in a phased manner, a good proportion of them involving Public-private partnership.

### 3. INLAND WATER TRANSPORT

The chief data source for this sector is Transport Research Wing of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

As on 31st March, 2007 the total navigable length of waterways in the country was 13731.2 kilometre. Number of inland water vessels increased from 7434 in 2002-03 to 12906 in 2006-07, showing an impressive CAGR of 15% per annum.

Total number of accidents increased from 583 in 2005-06 to 687 in 2006-07. Number of persons killed increased from 742 in 2005-06 to 825 in 2006-07. This shows that suitable safety measures and technology upgradations need to be evolved in IWT to improve safety of passengers.

Central budgetary support for the sector increased from ₹89.9 crore in 2002-03 to ₹150 crore in 2006-07. However utilization of funds is showing a decreasing trend from 87% to 66% during the period. The total state plan outlay during the 10th plan was ₹192 crore compared to central plan outlay of ₹634 crore.

Cargo movement on inland waterways has shown an impressive increase from 9 million tonnes in 2002-03 to 35 million tonnes in 2006-07. Passenger movement during the period increased from 87 million to 107 million.

The maximum freight per tonne kilometer for cargo transport (for the reporting companies) was ₹3.41/- in 2005-06 and ₹2.10/- in 2006-07. This gives us a very broad idea of freight charges because freight charges may vary widely based on cargo type.