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IMPACT OF ROADS AND ROAD CONSTRUCTION ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF A COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT:

Roads are the major means of transportation and communication. They play significant role in the development of the community or society. Major import and export of goods, general transportation and communication services within a community or between communities take place mostly through roads. The efficiency of such function is hugely

dependent on the condition and quality of the road. With this view, the Tamil Nadu state government made an effort towards the construction of roads from Madurai to Dindugal. This study is directed towards the impact of roads and road construction on the socio-economic status of a community directly within the project site. Preconstruction and post-construction conditions of the community were studied and analyzed through collection of various parameters. The study revealed that the construction of roads not only improves the livelihood of the community but also increases the number of educational institutions and health centers as well. More people are also engaged in certain jobs such as carpentry and handloom as they can now easily import and export their goods due to better road condition.

KEYWORDS: Road Construction, Socio-Economic Condition, Communication.

INTRODUCTION:

Road Communication plays a crucial role in promoting economic, social and cultural development of a region. Improvement in road connectivity not only assures the development but also accelerates the process of development of a region. Thus, "road is one of the greatest fundamental institutions of mankind. Its beginnings are almost instructive with man's first quest in search of food,

water, plunder or sheer adventure. It develops with man's advance; it retrogrades with the break-down of a social order." In the modern world, roads have proved to yield profound economic and social significance. In fact, roads can rightly be regarded as barometers to measure the degree of economic advancement and civilization of a nation. In rural areas, the development of roads affects agriculture directly by enlarging the areas under cultivation. Road development also prompts a change in the type of agricultural production by diversion of

cultivation of low cost crops to commercial crops. It encourages the production of protective foods of perishable nature, such as eggs, fruits, vegetables, milk and other dairy products. As these are best produced in rural areas, rapid and efficient transit is essential to ensure their availability in the nearby or far off market centers or urban markets in fresh and good condition in order to fetch remunerative prices. Paucity of good roads in rural areas compels the cultivators to dispose of their produce to the village trader or agent or money lender comparatively at cheap

prices. Good roads would open up the urban markets to the cultivator, which would facilitate marketing of his product at higher prices. Thus, in the rural areas agricultural development goes hand in hand with expansion of roads. Apart from this, it breaks up the isolation of villages, helps in spreading education and creates a general sense of social awakening, promotion of health and various other social services.

INDICATORS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

To identify the rate and level of rural development of the district about fifteen indicators have been identified by the researcher. The major indicators are

- Population density.
- Production of food crops.
- No. of primary schools per thousand populations.
- Percentage of literacy.
- Enrolment of students to higher education.
- Medical unit per thousand populations.
- No. of banks (both commercial and gramin banks) and co-operative societies per thousand population.
- Percentage of population engaged in fishing in cultivation.
- Percentage of agricultural labor to total labor.
- Percentage of irrigated area to total cultivated area.
- Number of fertilizer deposits.
- Number of seed storages.
- Number of markets.
- Number of people having electrified.
- Percentage of people having drinking water facilities to total number of people in the district.

Now a brief description of the selected indicators of rural development is given bellow in order to get an idea of the rural development of the district.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used for the purpose of data collection. Key informants as well as focus group interviews and participant observations were included to acquire qualitative data. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaire. Five villages from dindigul district were selected randomly. From each village, 10 respondents (farmers) were selected at random. Thus in total 50 farmers from 5 villages were selected for the collection of quantitative data. The data were analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age		
Below 30yrs	06	12
31 to 40yrs	12	24
41 to 50yrs	21	42
51yrs & Above	11	22
Gender		
Male	23	46
Female	27	54
Affected Area		
Land	16	32
Building	34	68
Family Monthly Income		

Below Rs.10000	38	76
Above Rs.10000	12	24

Source: Primary Data

From Table-1, the percentage analysis indicates that more than one third (42%) of the respondents age group between 31 to 40yrs, 24% are 31 to 40yrs, 22% are 51yrs & above and remaining 12% are below 30yrs. More than half (54%) of the respondents are female and remaining 46% are male. Majority (68%) of the respondents is affected by building and remaining 32% are land area. Vast majority (76%) of the respondents is family monthly income above Rs.10000 and remaining 24% are below Rs.10000.

Table 2: Association between Family Monthly Income of the Respondents and their Affected Land Area

Family Monthly Income	Affected Land		Statistical inference
	Below 1acre (N=19)	Above 1acre (N=31)	
Below Rs.10000 (n=38)	15	23	X ² =9.341 Df=1
Above Rs.10000 (n=12)	04	08	0.013<0.05 Significant

Research Hypothesis: There is significant association between family monthly income of the respondents and their affected land area.

From Table-2, chi-square test indicates that there is significant association between family monthly income of the respondents and their affected land area. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value. The research hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSION

The impact of good network of roads improves the socio-economic conditions of the villagers significantly. The positive impact of the construction of roads by the state government through the villages improves the livelihood of the people greatly. The construction of proper road channels increases the efficiency of import and export of goods and services to a great extent. As products can now be imported easily, this reduces the price of goods as well. People can now easily transport their products to other places which enhances their production rates significantly. The increased in number of educational institutions as a result of this project also improves the literacy of the villagers. In addition, the improvements made towards medical centers after the project greatly improves the well-being of the villagers.

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