

# **PREFERENCE INDEXES FOR GOODS TRAFFIC BY DIFFERENT MODES OF TRANSPORT IN MAHARASHTRA**

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ONE OF THE parameters which needs to be considered in a scheme of rail-road co-ordination is relative preferences shown by users of these transport services for various commodities and distances. These preferences by users reflect not only the competitive prices paid by them but also other advantages they hope to secure by preferring one mode of transport to another. For example, it may be relatively profitable to move certain commodities over long distances by rail, but if the time taken by rail transport is more than the time taken by road transport, it may be desirable to move commodities by road transport. So the preferences reflect a large number of factors which motivate the users to prefer one mode of transport to another. Although competitive rates and tariff influence these preferences, other factors such as time, safety, damages, etc., also get reflected. As it is not possible to isolate the contribution which various factors make and get reflected in the ultimate preferences, the preferences shown by the users have to be considered as they are without implying that these preferences are the end-results of price mechanism.

The important modes of transport in India are motor vehicles, railways and coastal services. Bullock-carts do play a prominent role in the transport of goods but their movement is confined to a radius of 10 to 20 kilometers. If more than one mode of transport is available it would be interesting to build an indicator which would measure in some way the users' preference for different modes of transport. Such indexes would be useful for allocating traffic to various means of transport particularly when an exercise in projecting the future traffic is undertaken. In this article, an attempt is made to evolve a method of construction of such preference indexes which throw light on users' preference for motor vehicles, railways and coastal services. These indexes are built up by making use of data