

IN-LAND WATER TRANSPORT IN UGANDA

This consists of three main components namely: Wagon ferry services on Lake Victoria, Short-distance road vehicle ferries acting as road bridges and informal sector operations by individually owned canoes.

Before Uganda's extensive truck road system was developed, water transport was a major form of transportation from Southern Sudan to Butiaba in Masindi district then, criss-crossed by road to Masindi Port, onto another steamer up to Namasagali and thereafter, continuing by rail or road to Kampala

CURRENT STATUS

- ✓ Most of the water transport occurs on Lakes and a few rivers.
- ✓ Various ferries have been introduced on water bodies for instance Nakiwogo ferry (between Nakiwogo in Entebbe and Kyanvubu in Wakiso), MV Ssesse and MV Pearl between Bukakata (Masaka) to Luuka in Kalangala on Lake Victoria, MV Kyoga 1 and 2 (between Namasale in Amolator to Zengebe in Nakasongola on Lake Kyoga,.
- ✓ Water transport on Uganda's open water bodies has not been significantly developed for transport.
- ✓ Most boats on Ugandan lakes are obsolete and unlicensed.
- ✓ There are a few modern ships in operation on Lake Victoria.
- ✓ UNRA is operating and maintaining 10 ferries.
- ✓ Most of the water transport operators are done by private owners of boats.
- ✓ It is characterized by poorly developed docking sites and ports.

THE MAJOR WATER TRANSPORT ROUTES

- ✓ Portbell -Kisumu, Port Bell-Jinja, Jinja -Mwanza, Nakiwogo-Kalangala, Portbell-Bukoba, Jinja-Ssesse Islands, Lambu-Bugala on Lake Victoria.
- ✓ Lwampanga-Namasale, Bukungu-Ilale, Masindi Port-Kungu, Bukungu-Galiraya, Namasale-Zengebe, etc on Lake Kyoga.
- ✓ Kashaka-Kasenye, Kayinja- Mashoro, Kayinja-Mahyoro and Kahendero-Hamukungu on Lake George.
- ✓ Katwe-Rwenshama, Katwe-Kazinga, Kayanja-Rwenshama, Katwe-Kisenye on Lake Edward
- ✓ Butiaba-Buliisa, Butiaba-Mahangi, Ntoroko-Butiaba and Wanseko-Panyimur on Lake Albert.
- ✓ Bufundi- Kagazama, Bufundi-Hisesero on Lake Bunyonyi.
- ✓ Lalopi-Adjumani, Obongi-Sinyanya between Moyo and Adjumani, Laropi – Umi Moyo and Adjumani, etc across Albert Nile.
- ✓ Katunuru-Kazinga on Kazinga channel. See figure 19:4

The use of skilled labour in form of engineers has stimulated construction of several roads like Mbale-Kapchorwa road and Kampala-Hoima road.

Presence of large capital for investment in road construction. This explains why several roads like Nebbi-Arua-Koboko road, Musita-Lumini road and Jinja-Kamuli road have been upgraded.

Relative political stability has attracted foreign firms that have invested in purchasing of modern water vessels as seen on Lake Victoria, Lake Edward and Victoria Nile

The availability of adequate capital to invest in water transport for example use of modern ships such as MV Kalangala and MV Pearl on Lake Victoria.

The use of modern technology in building water transport vessels. This can be evidenced at Masese and Luzira on Lake Victoria.

The supportive government policy that encourages water transport for example creation of a conducive political atmosphere and liberalization of water transport have attracted private investors in water transport as seen on Lake Victoria and Lake Kyoga.

The skilled labour to work in the water transport sector has brought about efficient management of water transport on Lake Victoria and Albert Nile.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF IN-LAND WATER TRANSPORT

POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

Water transport has promoted internal and external trade between Uganda and her neighbours. Trade between Kenya and Tanzania is facilitated by Lake Victoria while trade between Uganda and DRC is mainly facilitated by Lake Albert and Lake Edward leading to generation of foreign exchange.

Water transport has promoted international relationship between Uganda and other countries through international trade, for instance, water transport on Lake Albert and Lake Edward has promoted cooperation between Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo. This has created peace and harmony.

Water transport promotes the development of tourism, for example Kazinga channel between Lake Edward and George is an important link to Queen Elizabeth National Park. Tourists are carried by the Ferry to the different sections of the park. Lake Mburo also enables tourists travel and visit the various sections of Lake Mburo National Park leading to generation of foreign exchange.

It leads to the generation of government revenue through taxing the cargo over the water and brand new engines. This is evident on water bodies such as Lake Albert and Lake Victoria. This revenue is used in the construction of infrastructure.

It provides employment opportunities to various people leading to improved standard of living. Many people are employed as captains and pilots on ferries across the Albert Nile between Obongi in Moyo and Majili in Adjumani, Wanseko ferry on Lake Albert between Wanseko (Buliisa) and Panyimur in Packwach.

In-land water bodies have promoted the development of the agricultural sector for example food stuffs including vegetable, cassava and matooke are now easily transported over Lake Victoria to the mainland in the areas of Jinja, Bugiri, Kampala, Entebbe among others.

Water transport facilitates the development of manufacturing industries, for instance, crude oil obtained from the oil palm plantations in Kalangala is transported to BIDCO industries in Jinja via Lake Victoria.

It promotes the development of towns and ports with their related advantages. For example, Port Bell, Jinja port, Kasenyi, Bukakata and Masese on Lake Victoria have been experiencing improvement in infrastructural activities due to increased water transport on Lake Victoria.

Water transport is important in shipping passengers. It facilitates mobility of people from islands to mainland like MV Kalangala ferry has eased transport to islands such as Kalangala on Lake Victoria to the mainland areas like Entebbe and Kampala. Lake Victoria has facilitated the movement of skilled labour and the palm oil for processing in Jinja. Also, movement of people between Moyo and Adjumani using the Laropi ferry along the Albert Nile between Laropi in Moyo and Umi in Adjumani.

SHORT COMINGS OF WATER TRANSPORT

Water transport encourages smuggling on shared water bodies. Most of the fish caught in Uganda's water finds its way in DRC and Kenya using various water transport routes on Lake Albert and Lake Victoria respectively. This leads to loss of government revenue.

Water transport is generally slow leading to delays in the transportation of goods and commodities. This has limited the transportation of perishable products like milk and vegetables from Ssesse, Kome and Buvuma islands to the mainland via Lake Victoria.

Water transport on Lake Victoria and Albert is vulnerable to accidents, for instance, the Buvuma accident caused by over loading left many people dead when the boat capsized near Lambu landing site on Lake Victoria.

Water transport has led to the growth of urban related social evils such as prostitution and increased crimes. This has led to the spread of HIV/AIDs on land sites and islands such as Kasenyi, Majanji, Masese and Bukakata on Lake Victoria and Katwe on Lake Edward.

It results into inter-territorial conflicts on the shared water bodies of Uganda, for example, the conflict between Uganda and Kenya over the Migingo Island on Lake Victoria. The conflict between Uganda and DRC over the ownership of Rukwanzi Island on Lake Albert.

Water transport has led to water pollution through oil spills which damage the country's aquatic resources like fish. This is common on Lake Victoria, Lake Kyoga, Lake Albert and river Nile leading to depletion of fish.

SELF EVALUATION EXERCISE 19:10

1. Assess the role of the in-land water transport to the economic development of the fishing industry in Uganda.

FACTORS HINDERING EFFECTIVE UTILISATION OF WATER TRANSPORT

PHYSICAL FACTORS

Existence of waterfalls and rapids such as Murchison falls, Itanda falls, Karuma and Kalangala falls along river Nile deter the smooth sailing of boats/ferries.

The occurrence of water weeds such as hyacinth as seen at Luzira, Ggaba, Lambu and Masese landing sites on Lake Victoria. This has disrupted the smooth sailing of vessels because their roots often get trapped in the propellers of outboard engines causing them malfunction like at

Occurrence of floating islands in form of papyrus vegetation (sudds) on Lake Victoria, Lake Kyoga and river Nile, also hinder easy movement of water vessels.

Fluctuations or variations in the water regimes, in that, some waterbodies are seasonal, they dry up during dry season like river Aswa, Okere, river Lia, river Lokutakoli, river Okere and river Okok(Napak) in Karamoja limiting water transport. Some water ways like river Nile, river Mpologoma, Lakes Victoria, Kyoga and Albert experience floods which hamper their usage. Transport at Obonyo landing site on

river Nile was paralysed after a ferry connecting Obonyo to Sinyanya landing site in Adjumani was grounded following the flooding of the river. It left the concrete where the ferry lands deeply submerged in water.

Some of the water bodies for example Lake Kwana, Lake Kyoga, Lake Opet, river Katonga and river Semliki are shallow which limits the use of large vessels.

Rugged landscape in areas around some water bodies due to steep relief like Butiaba escarpment on Lake Albert and steep sides of Lake Bunyonyi. These have limited accessibility to water bodies and establishment of ports and landing sites.

Some of the water bodies such as Kazinga channel, Lake George, Lake Edward and Lake Victoria harbour dangerous wild animals like hippos and crocodiles. These have caused death of people therefore scaring away the passengers from using the water ways.

The presence of swamps on the fringes of Lakes and rivers. The swamp vegetation also harbours dangerous like snakes and crocodiles as seen on the shores of Lake Kyoga, along river Katonga and river Kagera. This limits accessibility and development of port facilities

The narrowness of some rivers like river Rwizi, river Mpanga, river Katonga and river Mpologoma making it difficult to use of big vessels.

The presence of rocky beds in some water bodies such as Lake Victoria and Albert Nile cause for some bigger boats to sail through. They also cause wreckage of boats hence causing deaths of the sailors.

The prevalence of strong winds cause capsizing of boats leading to loss of lives and property. This is rampant on water bodies such as Lake Victoria, lake Albret, Lake Wamala and Lake Kyoga.

Water ways in Uganda are hindered by siltation due to sedimentation and braided, causing shallowness. This has limited the use of large vessels in the waterbodies like Lake Kyoga and Lake George.

HUMAN FACTORS

Water transport is also limited by inadequate capital, which limits the purchasing of modern vessels like out board engines and establishment of modern ports on Lake Victoria and Lake Edward, river Nile, etc.

The poorly developed transport network linking landing sites like Kiyindi and Katosi on Lake Victoria, Iyingo, Lalle, Galiraya, Dei landing site in Nebbi on Lake Albert and Namasale on Lake Kyoga. This hinders accessibility to the waterbodies.

It has also been hindered by insufficient skilled labour force, with few trained pilots and captains to man the boats and ships Lake Albert and Lake Victoria.

Existence of insecurity in form of pirates on waterbodies like Lake Victoria and Lake Edward rob and even kill the water users. Political instability on the water bodies disrupts the operations on water ways. This scares away the water passengers and workers as it was along the Albert Nile and on Lake Kyoga during the time of LRA rebels.

Competition from fast, reliable and flexible transport modes such as road transport has affected the use of water bodies like Lake Mburo, river Nile and river Kagera. Fish from Uganda to D.R.C is transported by road instead of using Lake Edward.

Limited government support to water transport sector explains why most of the water bodies such as Lake Wamala and Lake Albert are inaccessible.

Fatal boat accidents due to the unchecked over loading and use of faulty boats. This is common on Lakes Victoria, Edward, George and Kyoga. In 2005, two of the Ugandan ferries of MV Kabalega and MV Pamba got involved in the mid Lake collision on Lake Victoria. In 2014, 108 people died when a boat carrying Congolese refugees who were escaping from Kwangwali refugee settlement camp in Hoima capsized on Lake Albert. MV Templar boat accident in 2018 near Mutima beach on Lake Victoria claimed the lives of more than 30 people.

Limited technology in ship building and maintenance explains why there is dominance of small boats on water bodies like rivers like Kafu, Mayanja, Mpologoma, etc. It also explains why MV Kalangala, MV Pamba and MV Amani on Lake Victoria were grounded for technical issue.

Disease outbreak limits water transport, for example, the COVID 19 hindered fishing activities on Lake Victoria and Lake Kyoga due to the effect of lock down and curfew.

SELF EVALUATION EXERCISE 19:11

1. Examine the factors which have limited the effective utilization of water transport in Uganda.

STEPS BEING TAKEN TO IMPROVE WATER TRANSPORT

There is construction of modern Piers on different water bodies, for instance, piers have been constructed at Portbell, Masese and Nakiwogo on Lake Victoria and Laropi on the Albert Nile to facilitate loading and offloading of boats.

There is construction and rehabilitation of roads so as to landing sites and ports as to increase accessibility to waterways, for example, Hoima-Kaiso-Tonya road linking Lake Albert and Mukono-Katosi road connecting Lake Victoria.

There is introduction of improved boats with outboard engines as seen on water bodies such as Lake Victoria, Kyoga and Albert, Edward, George and Kazinga Channel. A number of motorable boats are in place thereby easing movement of people and goods.

There is increased sensitization about the use and importance of life jackets reducing deaths Lakes like Lake Victoria, Lake Kyoga and Lake Albert.

Government has been putting stringent laws and imposing strict laws on water transport about over loading and use of faulty boats on Lake Victoria, Lake Edward and Lake Kyoga.

The water weeds on Lake Victoria and river Nile are being removed mechanically, biologically and manually. Similarly floating islands on Lake Kyoga are being removed using mechanical means.

There is introduction of ferries, for instance, the Kabalega Ferry, MV Kalangala that moves across Lake Victoria from Nakiwogo to Kalangala, Ferry from Kiyindi to Kilongo connecting Buvuma Island on Lake Victoria, Kamanga ship from Port Bell to Islands, Nakiwogo ferry between Entebbe and Kyanvubu in Wakiso, Bukakata ferry from Bukakata to Kalangala on Lake Victoria. Laropi Ferry on Albert Nile between Obongi(Moyo) to Sinyanya in Adjumani, Masindi Port Ferry on Lake Kyoga between Masindi and Kungu in Apac, Mbulamuti ferry from Izanhiro in Kamuli to Bugobero in Busana in Kayunga across Victoria Nile, Kiyindi ferry from Kiyindi in Buikwe to Buvuma on Lake Victoria, Wanseko ferry fromWanseko in Buliisa to Panyimur in Pakwach across Lake Albert, MV Kyoga 1 from Zengebe in Nakasongola to Namasale in Amolator and Lake Bisina ferry from Kumi to Katakwi on Lake Bisina. These have provided cheap transport.

Rehabilitation and extension of feeder roads, for example, Nabagareka road links Lake Victoria and Kamuli-Bukungu road linking Lake Kyoga. This has increased accessibility to water bodies.

There is game cropping on most of the water bodies, for instance dangerous animals are captured and relocated from Lakes like Lake Victoria by Vermin guards from Uganda Wild Life Authority (UWA) to areas such as Entebbe wildlife education centre.

The government has ensured security for instance of UPDF to curb rebel activities around Lake Edward, use of marine police on water bodies like Kyoga, Albert, Edward and George which used be insecure.

There has been Privitisation and liberalization of water transport sector so as to attract private investment like MV-Kalangala ferry across Lake Victoria from Bukakata to Kalangala is managed by Kalangala infrastructure services.

Through the Ministry of Transport and Communications, man power is being trained in handling marine vessels on landing sites such as Lake Victoria, Albert Nile, Victoria Nile, etc.

SELF EVALUATION EXERCISE 19:12

1. (a) Explain the factors limiting the use of water transport in Uganda.
(b) Outline the steps being taken to improve water transport in Uganda
2. (a) Examine the factors limiting the use of water transport in Uganda.
(b) What steps are being taken to address these limitations?