

RAILWAY TRANSPORT

CURRENT STATUS

- ✓ Railways provide the most effective bulk haulage capacity for the country's exports and imports.
- ✓ Cargo trains have been revamped for example Tororo-Soroti-Lira-Gulu railway line and Namanve-Kampala railway.
- ✓ At present the Passenger trains are not fully operational apart from Kampala-Namanve railway.
- ✓ Railways are a more effective and less polluting means of transport compared to roads.
- ✓ The Uganda railway transport system comprises 1,250 Km of metre gauge track running from Malaba to Kampala(250 Km), Kampala-Kasese (344 Km), Tororo-Packwach(500Km), Busoga loop line (144 Km) and spur lines to Jinja and Port Bell ferry terminals (12 Km)
- ✓ According to national development plan (NDP), the national total rail network has declined from 1,226 km in the early 1990's to 321km of functional rail network.
- ✓ The railway handles between 30-40% of Uganda's bulky cargo to and from the port of Mombasa and Dar-el-saalam.
- ✓ As far as domestic goods are concerned, the railway transports about 0.4%.
- ✓ At present, the only operation railway lines include; Malaba-Kampala(251km),Tororo-Mbale line(61km) and Port Bell-Kampala link (9km)
- ✓ There are plans to jointly construct the Gulu-Atiak-Nimule-Juba railway by Uganda and South Sudan.
- ✓ Currently railway transport network is being managed Uganda railway corporation(URC)
- ✓ Some railway lines, for instance, Kampala-Malaba line (250km) and Tororo- Packwach line are being rehabilitated where the sleepers are replaced with standard gauge.
- ✓ The 25 year concession that had been given to the Rift Valley Railway in 2006 was terminated in 2017 due to poor performance.
- ✓ According to the transport ministry, Uganda used to have 1,266 km of rail roads, but by 2006, the active section had reduced to 330km.
- ✓ Uganda is seeking to upgrade from the meter gauge rail to standard gauge rail.
- ✓ Railway transport is one of the cheapest modes of transport.

DISTRIBUTION OF RAILWAY TRANSPORT NETWORK IN UGANDA

Kampala-Kasese railway line, Tororo-Gulu-Packwach railway line, Jinja-Mbulamuti-Busembatya (Busoga loop line), Kampala-Malaba railway line, and Kampala-Port Bell railway line as seen in figure 19:3.

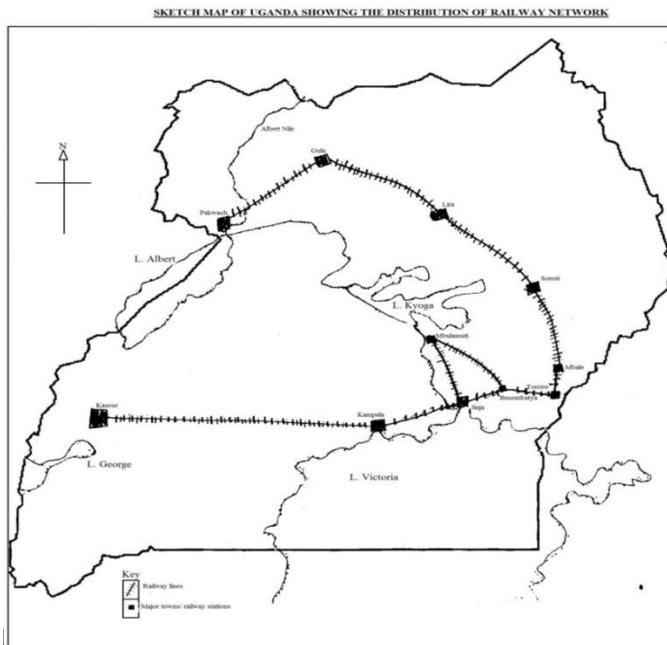


Figure 21:3

CONTRIBUTIONS OF RAILWAY TRANSPORT NETWORK IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF UGANDA

POSITIVE EFFECTS

Railway networks promote internal and external trade. They are used in transaction of trade from one area to another for example the Kampala-Malaba, Tororo-Malaba railway and Kampala-Port Bell railway facilitate external trade through exportation of goods to the neighbouring countries like Kenya and Tanzania.

They enhance international relationship through international trade with other countries. They link Uganda to other countries for example Tororo-Malaba rail network facilitates cooperation between Uganda and Kenya. This has brought about peace and harmony.

They are important in the movement of labour and goods from one area to another, for instance, many people commute to Kampala city, Byogerere, Namanve, Kireka and Mbuya using Kampala-Nambole railway. They also help in movement of goods for instance steel imports for Juba from Mombasa are transported along Tororo-Lira-Gulu railway line. It also provides an efficient cargo transport as seen along Kampala-Port Bell and Kampala-Tororo railway lines.

They lead to opening up of formerly rural areas for example the extension of the railway line from Kampala-Kasese opened up rural areas in Kamwenge, Kasanda, Mityana and Kitagwenda leading to increased accessibility.

Railway transport complements water, road and air transport, for instance the Kampala-Port Bell rail line links Lake Victoria. The Kampala-Malaba railway provides a connection to the port of Mombasa in Kenya via Malaba by rail and Marine through port Bell. The consignments along Tororo-Lira-Gulu line are trans- shipped by road to Juba at Gulu.

They have promoted the development of tourism/research and education. The Kampala-Port Bell and Nambole-Kampala rail lines have facilitated the transportation of tourists to different tourist centres such as Lake Victoria and Kampala industrial centres.

They promote the exploitation of natural resources such as forests, minerals and fisheries. For example, the railway lines such as Jinja-Rippon and Kampala-Port Bell railway lines have boosted fishing activities on Lake Victoria through transportation of dried fish to the mainland. Forest products like timber from islands are distributed to market centres through railway transport routes such as Kampala-Jinja railway and Kampala-Port Bell railway network. Kampala-Kasese railway and Kampala-Jinja rail network enabled the transportation of copper from Kasese to Jinja for smelting.

It boosts the development of the agricultural sector. For example railway transport routes like Tororo-Gulu-Packach line and Busoga railway line enabled the transportation and marketing of cotton and tobacco. This reduced the business expenses in terms of reduced transport costs.

It leads to development of urban centres. Several towns have emerged along railway transport routes, for example, Lugazi, Jinja, Iganga, Busembatia and Tororo towns along Kampala-Tororo rail line and Kamwenge, Kasese and Kyegegwa towns along Kampala-Kasese railway line. This has stimulated development of urban related advantages like increased market.

It helps in the development of the industrial sector through easy transportation of raw materials and finished products. The Kampala-Tororo railway line partly explains the industrial development in areas such as Kampala, Lugazi, Jinja and Tororo. This has facilitated easy marketing of industrial products.

It enables diffusion of ideas or innovations. Railway transport routes such as Nambole-Kampala and Kampala-Port Bell have enabled transfer of new ideas and technology in areas such as Kireka, Mbuya, Bweyogerere and Luzira.

It leads into the generation of employment opportunities for engineers, pilots, accountants and procurement officers. Many people are employed in the rehabilitation of railway transport routes like Kampala-Malaba and Tororo-Soroti-Gulu-Packwach railway lines. This results into improved standard of living.

Railway transport leads to the generation of internal revenue through taxation. This can be evidenced along Kampala-Port bell and Kampala-Malaba railway lines. This revenue is used in the development of infrastructure.

It has enabled the diversification of the economy as the country does not depend on a few sectors like agriculture, tourism and mining but also on railway transport such as Kampala-Port Bell, Kampala-Namanve railway and Tororo-Malaba rail routes. This creates alternative source of employment.

NEGATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RAILWAY TRANSPORT NETWORK

It leads to destruction of the vegetation cover, for instance, the construction Kampala-Tororo-Malaba railway line resulted into destruction of vegetation cover in form of forest leading to loss of biodiversity.

It is associated with accidents resulting into loss of lives. This is common along Kampala-Port Bell railway line and Kampala-Tororo railway.

It results into land degradation in form of destruction of soil structure and mass wasting as seen along the Kampala-Kasese railway and Tororo-Lira-Packwach railway line.

Railway transport causes pollution of the environment through noise pollution from fumes from trains. This can be evidenced along Kampala-Tororo-Malaba railway line.

Railway transport development and rehabilitation is not only expensive but also difficult hence high costs of construction and rehabilitation. This partly accounts for the decline in the use of Kampala-Kasese and Jinja-Mbulamuti-Busembatia railway lines.

It leads to displacement of people, for example, the construction of Kampala-Kasese, Jinja-Mbulamuti-Busembatia and Kampala-Tororo-Malaba rail networks led to displacement of several people.

Railway transport routes like Tororo-Malaba and Kampala-Port Bell railway lines encourage smuggling since they link Uganda to other countries leading to loss of government revenue.

Railway transport along Kampala-Tororo-Malaba rail line is also associated with robbers resulting into death of people and loss of property.

It has accelerated rural-urban migration as seen along Kampala-Tororo-Malaba and Tororo-Soroti-Gulu-Packwach railway lines leading to a decline in the agricultural sector.

SELF EVALUATION EXERCISE 19:8

1. Assess the contribution of railway transport to the development of Uganda.

FACTORS FOR THE DECLINE IN RAILWAY TRANSPORT

The decline in the production of cotton in areas of Gulu, Lira and Soroti resulted into under utilization of the railway network such as the Packwach- Tororo railway line which was left with little goods. Also decline in the production of cotton resulted in under utilization of Jinja-Namasagali, Busembatia railway

The closure of copper mine at Kilembe in 1975 leaving a few economic activities to support the Kasese-Jinja railway. This railway line has been abandoned.

The collapse of the East African Community resulted into the under utilization of the railway network in term of cargo as seen along Tororo-Jinja-Kampala railway and Pakwach-Lira-Tororo railway due to limited funding.

Vandalisation of the railway line to supply local demand in the steel rolling mills in Jinja, Lugazi, Mukono, Kampala and Iganga, for instance, there is a high rate at which rail sleepers along Tororo-Packach railway line are being vandalized. More than 30 percent of the tracks on the Kasese line have been removed and the line vandalized. The Jinja-Mbulamuti-Busembatia has been completely vandalized.

Competition from faster and more profitable modes of transport like road and air transport which have outcompeted the use of railway transport lines such as Kampala-Jinja and Kampala-Namboole railway lines.

Corruption and embezzlement of public funds account for the decline in the railway transport network. There is mismanagement of funds meant for rehabilitation of railway lines such as Kampala-Jinja-Tororo and Jinja-Mbulamuti railway lines. Land belonging to Uganda Railway Corporation along Jinja-Mbulamuti-Busembatia railway and Kampala-Jinja railway has been sold off illegally due to corruption.

The political instability caused by rebel activities in Eastern and Northern Uganda, undermined rail performance and disrupted services. It greatly led to the decline in the cargo and human traffic on Tororo-Soroti-Lira-Gulu-Packach railway.

Loss of confidence in the railway transport network by the public. This is attributed to slow movement of trains, theft and robbery. This accounts for decline in the use of passenger trains along Kampala-Tororo railway line.

Limited skilled labour in form of pilots and engineers has hindered the rehabilitation of railway lines such as Kampala-Tororo-Malaba.

Inadequate capital which leads to low investment, irregular maintenance and non-replacement of old rolling stock. This can be seen along Kampala-Tororo railway line and Gulu-Packwach railway line.

The insufficient managerial capacity accounts for the collapse of the railway transport network. The management of the rail network under the Uganda Railway Corporation is largely characterized by weak human resource capacity of both operation and infrastructural maintenance. Therefore some lines were closed due to technical deficiencies and inadequate traffic volumes especially on Jinja-Mbulamuti-Busembatia and Kampala-Kasese rail lines.

The low level of technology has meant that the railway network is characterized by worn out culverts, wagons and rail sleepers as seen along the Tororo-Soroti-Gulu railway.

Shortage of spare parts for the old locomotives due to closure of the old industries in developed countries like Japan and Germany. This has adversely affected railway productivity and performance along Kampala-Tororo railway and Kampala-Port Bell railway line.

The low traffic volumes on the railway transport network has led to its decline making the costs of operation for the railway transport services high leading to under utilization of Kampala-Tororo railway and Kampala-Kasese railway.

The limited government policy support, for instance, the government has invested predominantly in the road transport limiting improvement on railway transport routes like Tororo-Gulu railway line and Gulu-Packach railway line.

Heavy rains during the wet season lead to the destruction of railway line for at Magamaga along Kampala-Tororo railway.

STEPS BEING TAKEN TO REVIVE RAILWAY TRANSPORT IN UGANDA

Railway transport network, for example, Kisumu-Kampala railway is being used as an important route for the importation of fuel and other commodities like cotton seeds.

There is rehabilitation of sections of the railway line like along Tororo-Soroti line and Kampala-Jinja line by way of replacement of vandalized railway tracks, repair of the rail track, bridges, reinstallation of culverts, replacing railway sleepers and rehabilitation of administrative infrastructure like railway station in Gulu.

There is a complete redesign of the standard gauge railway along Kampala-Malaba railway line(251km).The European Union funded the rehabilitation works on the Tororo-Gulu meter gauge railway line.

The governments of East African countries signed a memorandum of understanding to rehabilitate the railway line in order to strengthen the East African community and the construction of the standard gauge railway connecting all the countries in the East African community

Railway transport, for example, Jinja-Rippon, Kampala-Port Bell railway lines is being used to complement water transport by linking major inland ports to commercial centres.

Efforts have been stepped up to curb vandalisation of the railway through the use of Uganda police force, ISO and private security guards along Jinja-Namusagali-Busembatia line among others. Police arrested vandals in Busoga region and recovered 50 railway slippers that had been stolen along Jinja-Namusagali railway line.

There is restoration of peace in war ravaged areas through the use of UPDF, to wipe out rebel activities. Peace talks has also been carried out.This has helped in defeating the ADF rebels in Kasese and LRA rebels in Gulu, Kitgum, Lira and Soroti.

There was cancellation of concession of the Rift Valley Railway (RVR).The government entered into concession for the operation and maintenance of functional rail systems with Rift valley railways for 25 years from 2006 to 2032. This step was taken as a way of curbing the mismanagement of the railway network.

The government is training skilled labour in form of pilots and engineers, for example, at the Uganda Military Engineering College at Lugazi.

There is establishment of a locomotive workshop at Nalukolongo to facilitate the rehabilitation and maintenance of the railway transport network. In 1987 workers completed construction on the Nalukolongo Diesel Workshop, which repaired locomotives.

SELF EVALUATION EXERCISE 19:9.

1. (a) Account for the decline in the railway transport in Uganda
(b) Outline the steps being taken to revive the railway transport in Uganda.