

6.2. Ports, Lighthouses and Shipping

A country's sustained growth of economy depends on adequate availability of infrastructure. Ports offer the cheapest mode of transport for bulk cargoes across continents. Tamil Nadu has a coastline of about 1000 Kms. Along this coastline, there are three major ports viz., Chennai, Ennore and Thoothukudi and 15 minor ports. The major ports are setup under the Major Port Trust Act 1963 and come under the control of Government of India whereas the minor ports are covered under the Indian Ports Act 1908 and come under the control of the State Government. Existing ports, both major and minor have to be provided with infrastructure facilities to help them function efficiently in a competitive environment. New ports will also have to be developed in tandem with industrial requirements. Investment for these initiatives will have to be raised both from public and private sector.

New Minor Port Development Policy

The Government of Tamil Nadu, realizing the need to improve/ develop the port facilities to serve the increasing needs of industry, trade and commerce, revised the existing port policy and came out with the new 'Minor Ports Development Policy' in 2007.

The salient features of the New Minor Port Development Policy of Government of Tamil Nadu are to increase the share of Tamil Nadu in the Export and Import sector, in national and international Trade and Commerce, in post-liberalisation and globalization era, to decongest the major ports at Ennore, Chennai and Thoothukudi and improve the productivity and efficiency of minor ports, to cater to the needs of increasing traffic of Southern States by providing efficient facilities and services and to support the country's domestic and international trade, to create sufficient infrastructure facilities to handle 25% of India's total cargo in Tamil Nadu Maritime limit, to provide port facilities to promote export oriented industries and port based industries along the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu, to promote port based thermal power plants by providing exclusive port facilities to import different kinds of fuels, to decongest highways

by providing facilities for coastal shipping of passengers and cargo traffic along the East Coast of nearly 1000 kms. to promote tourism by providing facilities for leisure and water sports activities along the coast line, to provide facilities to encourage ship building, repairing, breaking and manufacture of cranes and floating crafts; and to facilitate optimum utilization of the port infrastructure developed in the State.

Tamil Nadu Maritime Board

The Tamil Nadu Port Department, which was administering, controlling, regulating and managing the minor ports in Tamil Nadu, was converted as the Tamil Nadu Maritime Board under the Tamil Nadu Maritime Board Act, 1995 (Tamil Nadu Act 4/96) with effect from 18.03.1997. The Tamil Nadu Maritime Board is responsible for developing a number of captive ports for the dedicated use of industries.

The Board recognizes the need to improve industrial activity, which forms the backbone for port development. It is taking measures to expand and develop the existing ports, while at the same time identifying new green field sites. In tune with Government Port policy and the emerging shipping trend, new initiatives have been taken for setting up joint ventures in containerization, and captive ports for handling of liquid and chemical cargos. Techno Economic Feasibility Studies have been initiated and Master Plans drawn up to develop the minor ports in tune with guidelines, to properly access their full potential.

Minor Ports in Tamil Nadu

Captive Ports in Tamilnadu are Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Pamban, Rameswaram, Vallinokkam, Kanyakumari, Colachel and Koodankulam. Conventional Ports in Tamilnadu are Kattupalli, Ennore Minor Port, Thiruchopuram, Thirukkadaiyur, Punnakkayal and Manappad. The conventional ports are mostly riverine ports where ships anchor in the midstream and cargo is transported through barges. In the captive ports, most of the cargo is liquid cargo, which is handled through a buoy mooring system, and the cargo transfer is through pipelines.