

Module 5 Indian waterways, classifications

Water transport in India has played a significant role in the country over all economy and is indispensable to foreign trade.

India is endowed with an extensive network of waterways in the form of rivers, canals, backwaters, creeks and a long coastline accessible through the seas and oceans.

India has about 14,500 km of navigable waterways, which comprise of rivers, canals, backwaters, creeks etc. About 55 million tonnes of cargo are being moved annually by inland water transport. It is a fuel efficient and environment friendly mode.

Waterways are important mode of transport for both passengers and cargo traffic in India. It is the cheapest means of transport and is most suitable for carrying heavy and bulky material. Oceanic routes play an important role in the transport sector in India's economy.

Classifications of waterways

Waterways include linear water features such as rivers, canals, and streams as well as water areas such as lakes, reservoirs, and docks.

There are mainly two different types of waterways.

Inland waterways → Inland waterways comprise of rivers, lakes, canals, backwaters, etc which are navigable.

Sea Routes - Sea Routes are mainly used for transporting goods internationally.

National Waterways

There are 11 National waterways.

Name	River	States	Length of NW (km)
NW1	Ganga Bhagirathi Hooghly River	UP, Bihar Jharkhand West Bengal	1620
NW2	Sadiya-Dhubri Stretch of Brahmaputra River	Assam	891
NW3	Kollam Kozhikode Stretch of westcoast canal and Canal Canal	Kerala	375

NW 8	Aai River	Assam	121
NW 7	Ajay River	W.B.	96
NW 9			
NW 10	Ambari River	Maharashtra	15
NW 11	Anjan nati River Ariag River	Madhya Maharashtra	15
NW 12	Asi River	UP	5.5
NW 13	ARM canah	Kerala Tamilnadu	11
NW 14	Bartani	Odisha	49

Advantages of Inland water transportation systems

- 1 liter of fuel can take 1 ton of cargo upto 180km over waterways as compared to 25km by road or 75km by rail.
- cost of goods transport by water is cheap less than half that by road
- cost of developing waterways is ~~80%~~ higher than the cost of constructing highways.