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THE EVOLVING ROLE OF PORT AUTHORITIES IN FACILITATING GLOBAL TRADE AND LOGISTICS

Global trade and logistics can function and operate only when port authorities provide the desired infrastructure. The authorities play a crucial role in developing and maintaining ports thereby contributing to the social and economic development of the country. The port operators are autonomous bodies that operate in close corroboration with port authorities to undertake all day-to-day operations. The General-Purpose containers, Open Top containers, reefer containers, break bulk, loose cargoes etc. are transferred from the berthing port to the rail terminal or their desired CFS for clearance by the customs clearing agents.

Importance of Port Authorities

With port authorities, we refer to a series of activities performed for the smooth transition of the vessel from one port to another port. Vessel operations can be successful only after port authorities offer supportive infrastructures, connectivity and transfers. Ferries, barges, cruise, and cargo ships are heavily dependent on port operations to

finish their water journey proficiently.

The Shipping Industry is a ubiquitous industry operating all across the globe competing in a challenging business environment. The port authorities' policies focus on seamless



operations whilst keeping time and cost low. The paperwork formalities, cost, security of ports and cargoes, and maritime safety are taken care of by port operators and authorities. Vessel and crew safety is also taken care of by the port authorities. The port operators balance all Incoming and outgoing vessels, containers and cargoes by maintaining clear communications with concerned authorities. The port authorities analyse the travel data of carriers and forecast the approximate ETA and ETD of vessels and containers berthing at the port.

Objectives of Port Authorities

Needless to mention, the port authorities endeavour to minimise disruption in the port. They develop measures to ensure compliance of relevant international instruments relating to the safety and security of ships, protection of the environment and welfare of seafarers.

In the past few years, several developments and changes have been witnessed in port infrastructure, cargo handling, ship repairing and personnel training etc. All the operations

are closely intricate and linked with the world economy and trade. The port authorities make a remarkable contribution to crude oil and petroleum distribution all across the country. The authorities evolved not only the structure but also the pattern of the development under the able guidance of the NLP policy.

Not only the Central Government, but state authorities too invested in ports and transportation sector to cater to large volumes in the port. The government's focus on port infrastructure led to the participation of the private sector in recent times. Several extensive policy guidelines have been laid down for private operators by the Ministry of Port, Shipping and Waterways to provide maximum benefits to the importer/exporter.

Private ports like Mundra and Pipavav Ports ease out the movement of containerized, breakbulk, liquid cargo, and ad-hoc shipments towards North India. The road laid down from Mundra towards North India regions is well developed to ease out road transportation of export/import containers.

More than 28 shipyards have been built out of which 6 are under Central Public Sector, 2 are under State Governments and 20 are under the private sector. The container handling capacity has been bolstered with improved port infrastructure and regular train frequencies from wet ports to ICDs. The National Logistics Policy flagged off by our Hon'ble Prime Minister in September 2022 laid down comprehensive growth guidelines for multi-modal connectivity including Railways, Roadways and vessel movement. A major focus has been laid out to reduce logistics costs by 5% for India's economy to compete in the international market. There is no doubt that the Indian economy is on the right path and road to success. 

