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**ADAPTIVE AND RESPONSIVE MODES OF TRANSPORT FOR RURAL NEEDS:  
A CASE STUDY OF PALAY AND KAMOTE FARMING  
IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BALANGA, BATAAN**

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**Abstract:**

The role of transport in rural development is gaining more attention and becoming a crucial issue for planners and decision-makers. The farmers' need to sell their surplus and acquire the necessary inputs makes transport a crucial factor in this process. The present research paper was undertaken to study the role of modes of transport vis-à-vis farmers' revenues and expenditures and the cultivation pattern. The study attempted to find out if the farmers' revenues were reduced by the lack or inadequacy of the existing modes of transport and the farmers' need for transport. The identification of the role of transport would enable the planners and decision-makers to direct their efforts to bring about equitable development to the rural communities.

The study area chosen was the Municipality of Balanga, Bataan. Balanga is the provincial capital, where most of the services are concentrated. Moreover, most of the dealers and wholesalers operate in Balanga. There are six rural barangays amongst the 25 barangays that comprise the Municipality of Balanga. The town is known for *palay* and *kamote* cultivation.

A sample of (50) farmers were interviewed by the researcher in order to study the transport costs of the agricultural inputs, the transport costs of output and the prices of inputs and outputs. In addition, a sample of rural transport operators was interviewed to find out the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the existing modes of transport. The role of wholesale dealers is clear. Hence, a sample of dealers was also interviewed. The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed to identify the reduction in the potential revenues of the farmers and the needs of transport to boost agricultural production. The study compared the sale prices the farmers get for their outputs of *palay* and *kamote* to the market prices if these outputs were to be sold directly to the market by the farmers. The potential revenues were compared to the revenues the farmers receive. The transport costs the farmers to pay now for their inputs and outputs and the actual transport costs that should be paid were compared.

The study found out that the farmers incur significant reduction in their potential revenues due to selling their output at farm gate prices. These sale arrangements are not attributed to the lack or inadequacy of the existing modes of transport. The farmers could benefit from any improvement in transport services (infrastructure and utilities) if other preconditions are provided; these include the availability of market outlets and credit.

The study concluded that improved accessibility could enhance agricultural productions and revenues, provided that transport is an integrated part of a package program. Kamote farmers sell their output at farmgate arrangement due to low absorption capacity and low prices offered at the local market in Balanga. It was also found that cultivation pattern is not determined by the existing modes of transport, but rather by other factors like land topography.

Recommendations included advocacy of the modification to the existing modes of transport to help the farmers, rehabilitate the rural road network in the town, and launch a program to help the farmers in other aspects like credits, market linkages, and organization. Instead of the importation of ready-made technology to improve transport, the study opts for the modification and adoption of the existing modes of transport to promote agricultural productivity.