

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

Rural Road Connectivity is not only a key component of Rural Development in India, it is also recognised as an effective Poverty Reduction Programme. Notwithstanding the efforts made, over the years, at the State and Central levels, through different Programmes, even after five decades of Independence, about 40% of India's villages do not have proper Road Connectivity.

Keeping in view the fact that Rural Roads are vital to economic growth and to measures for poverty alleviation in the villages, Government's resolve to provide total Rural Connectivity was indicated in the Address of the Hon'ble President to the Joint Sitting of Parliament on 25th October, 1999, when a Programme of construction of All-weather roads in the rural areas was announced.

The Rural Roads Programme as a component of the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY) was announced by the Finance Minister in his Budget Speech, 2000-2001.

The Department of Rural Development had in January, 2000, set up a National Rural Roads Development Committee under the chairmanship of Shri Nitin Gadkari to assess the magnitude of



Availability of Roads Ensures Prosperity

the task, the volume of funds required and to suggest Implementation Strategies as also suitable Agencies for the same. The Committee submitted its Report in May, 2000. The gist of its recommendations are enclosed at Annexure-V.

In April, 2000, the Union Cabinet decided that 50% of the Diesel Cess would be set apart for Rural Roads and made available to the Ministry of Rural Development. In December, 2000, Parliament enacted legislation imposing Diesel Cess and earmarking 50% of the Cess to the Development of Rural Roads.

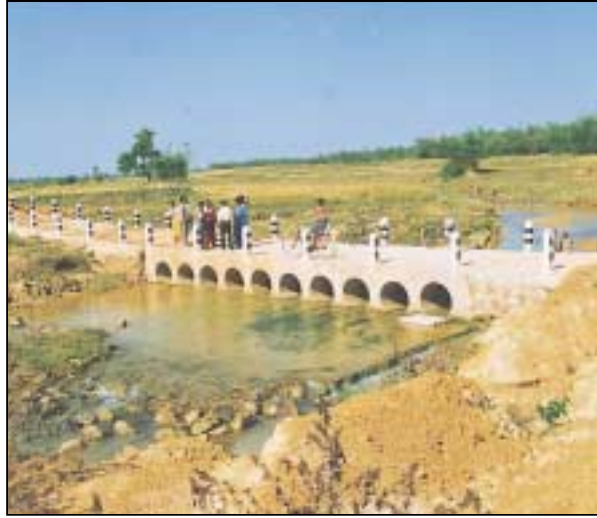
In his Address to the Nation on 15th August, 2000, the Prime Minister stated:

"For the first time since Independence, the Central Government has devised a well conceived and time-bound programme for rural roads. This hundred percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme, which is called the "Prime Minister's Rural Roads Scheme", aims to connect within the next three years, every village that has a population of more than one thousand, through good all-weather roads. By 2007, every village with a population more than five hundred will be similarly connected."

This Ministry, accordingly, drew up a Programme, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) which envisages an investment of about Rs. 60,000 crores to achieve the objectives outlined by the Prime Minister. Since the Diesel Cess to be collected over the next seven years is far less than the requirement, it is proposed to utilize the Cess receipts to leverage further funds, both from the Market as well as from External Funding Agencies. The Scheme also provides for a projectised approach and tight monitoring of the performance by the States. The details of the allocations made to the States/ Union Territories for Rural Roads for 2000-2001 by the Planning Commission are at Annexure-VI.

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 25th December 2000. Guidelines of the Programme have been issued to all the States/UTs on 15th December, 2000. The primary focus of the Programme is on construction of new roads. It is proposed to connect about 1 lakh villages in the next seven years. Besides, upgradation (to

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Rural Road for Accelerated Socio-Economic Development

prescribed standards) about 5 lakh Kilometers of existing roads will be taken up under the Programme, so as to achieve connectivity through a good All-weather roads.

The key elements of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana are as follows:

- ◆ Preparation of Master Plans - District Rural Roads Plans to be generated, based on Block-level Plans;

- ◆ Project Implementation Units to be formed to ensure professional and timely completion;
- ◆ Execution on a Project Mode;
- ◆ Ensuring Standard Specifications, including adequate cross-drainage works;
- ◆ Time-bound Execution - completion in 9-12 months; Penalty clauses for time overruns; No Escalation permitted;
- ◆ Strict Quality Control - independent Monitors to inspect works;

The Programme further envisages --

- ◆ Ready availability of Land for the Roads;
- ◆ Maintenance of the Roads by Panchayati Raj Institutions;
- ◆ Encouraging use of locally available materials for construction of roads;
- ◆ Planting of trees on either side of the roads.

Proposals have been received from several States/UTs and others are expected shortly. Proposals worth about Rs. 658 crores have been approved by the end of January-2001. It is expected that the entire allocation of Rs.2500 crores available for this year, will be released to the States well before the end of the Financial Year.

