

MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Review of Performance of National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA) w.r.t. Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 32nd Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Estimates]

**COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES
(2024-25)**

SECOND REPORT

(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

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(Presented to Lok Sabha on 18 December 2024)



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December 2024/Agrahayana 1946 (Saka)

CONTENTS

Page No.

Composition of the Committee on Estimates (2024-25)	(ii)
Introduction	(iv)
CHAPTER-I Report	1
CHAPTER-II Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government	20
CHAPTER-III Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's reply	31
CHAPTER-IV Observations/Recommendations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee	35
CHAPTER-V Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final reply of Government is still awaited	40

APPENDICES

I. Minutes of the Ninth Sitting of the Committee on Estimates held on 16.12.2024	41
II. Analysis of Action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the 32 nd Report of the Committee on Estimates (Seventeenth Lok Sabha)	43

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES (2024-25)

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3. Shri M. Mallesh Babu
4. Shri Kalyan Banjerjee
5. Shri Pradan Baruah
6. Shri Charanjit Singh Channi
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24. Dr. Rajkumar Sangwan
25. Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
26. Kumari Selja
27. Dr. Bhola Singh
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30. Shri Ve Vaithilingam

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|----|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Shri Y.M. Kandpal | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Lalkithang | Director |
| 3. | Shri Balram Sahu | Deputy Director |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Committee on Estimates (2024-25) having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, do present this 2nd Report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 32nd Report of the Committee (2023-24) on the subject 'Review of Performance of National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA) w.r.t. Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) '

2. The 32nd Report of the Committee on Estimates (2023-24) was presented to Lok Sabha on 2nd February, 2026. The Government furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in the 32nd Report on 9th August, 2024. The draft report was considered and approved on 16th December 2024 by the Committee.

3. An analysis of action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 32st Report of the Committee on Estimates is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI;
16 December 2024
Agrahayana 25, 1946 (Saka)

DR. SANJAY JAISWAL
CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

CHAPTER - I

REPORT

This Report deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Thirty-Second Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Review of Performance of National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA) w.r.t. Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)" pertaining to the Ministry of Rural Development.

2. Thirty-Second Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 2 February 2024. It contained 12 Observations/Recommendations. Action Taken Replies of the Government in respect to all the Observations/Recommendations have been received from the Ministry of Rural Development.

3. Replies to the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report have broadly been categorized as under:-

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:

Recommendation. Para No. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7

**Total -6
(Chapter-II)**

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's reply:

Recommendation. Para No. 8, 11, 12

**Total -3
(Chapter-III)**

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee:

Recommendation. Para No. 3, 9, 10

**Total -3
(Chapter-IV)**

(vi) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final reply of Government is still awaited:

Recommendation. Para No. Nil

**Total -0
(Chapter-V)**

4. **The Committee desire that Action Taken Notes in respect of the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-I may be furnished to them within six months of the presentation of the Report to the House.**

5. The Committee will now deal with the Observations/Recommendations which require reiteration or merit further comments.

Observation/Recommendation (Para No. 3)

Need for dedicated PDs (Project Directors)

6. The Committee, in their Thirty-Second Report had Observed/Recommended as under:

“In the matters of national highways, Project Implementation Units (PIUs) are headed by a Project Director (PD), who, in turn, is supported by various other technical and accounts officers to oversee timely completion of the projects as per prescribed parameters. However, the Committee note that similar is not the case with PMGSY; roads being a State subject. The Committee have observed that the scheme of PMGSY is for rural roads where the implementing agencies are the respective State Governments, who play a major role in selection of roads, processing bids for selection of contractors, construction of roads and oversee the construction of roads/bridges. Taking cognizance of this, the Committee recommend the Ministry to bring a system of appointment of PDs for PMGSY; dedicated leadership for a geographically demarcated area for proper construction vis-à-vis completion of projects. For this the Committee also recommend that the guidelines of PMGSY should be amended to that effect.”

7. In their Action Taken Note, the Ministry of Rural Development have submitted as under:

‘Rural road’ is a State Subject and construction of roads is a responsibility of the State Governments. The Ministry of Rural Development has amended PMGSY guidelines to strengthen States' roles, making them responsible for overseeing implementation, ensuring timely completion and quality control, and coordinating

with stakeholders, while also empowering them to prepare and submit project proposals for approval, enhancing scheme implementation efficiency and effectiveness. The States have duly constituted, well-established State Rural Roads Development Agencies for execution of PMGSY works.

8. The Committee, recognizing the need for dedicated leadership in overseeing construction activities, had recommended the Ministry to bring in a system of appointment of dedicated Project Directors (PDs) for PMGSY projects, similar to the system followed in National Highways Sector to ensure effective oversight of construction and timely project completion and also amending PMGSY guidelines suitably to that effect. The Ministry in their action taken reply have responded by reiterating that ‘Rural Roads’ being a State subject, construction of these roads is the responsibility of State Governments. The Ministry further stated that the PMGSY guidelines have already been amended to strengthen the role of States. The Committee are not satisfied with the response of the Ministry as their suggestion for appointment of PDs has not been addressed in the reply. The Committee therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and once again urge the Ministry to consider the appointment of dedicated Project Directors to enhance and oversee project management and ensure smoother execution of rural road projects for timely execution of rural road infrastructure projects across the country.

Observation/Recommendation (Para No. 4)

Focus on all round development

9. The Committee in their Report had observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee have been informed that Under PMGSY-I, a total of 6,45,189 kilometers of road length (comprising 1,64,686 roads and 7,484 bridges) has been sanctioned to provide all-weather road connectivity to previously unconnected habitations and 6,22,296 kilometers of road length (1,62,558 roads and 6,805 bridges) have already been completed leaving a backlog of 2,128 roads with a total road length of 22,893 kilometers and 679 bridges. Out of this,

981 kilometers of road length and 5 bridges in Chhattisgarh, 659 kilometers of road length and 88 bridges in Bihar are pending for completion. Similarly, under the PMGSY-II, launched in 2013 with the objective of consolidating 50,000 kilometers of eligible rural roads to facilitate more cost-effective transportation of goods and services, a total of 49,856 kilometers of road length (including 6,692 roads and 763 bridges) has been sanctioned. Out of this, 48,609 kilometers (comprising 6,439 roads and 711 bridges) have been completed by July 12, 2023. However, 253 roads covering a distance of 711 kilometers and 52 bridges are awaiting completion with the deadline of March, 2024. The Ministry has cited various factors contributing to this backlog, including inadequate execution and contracting capacity, challenging terrain, adverse weather conditions and security concerns, etc.

The Committee have observed that both under PMGSY-I&II, the roads that are yet to be constructed, are mostly either in North East/Hilly regions or in States like Chhattisgarh and Bihar etc. The Committee are of the strong view that for a balanced development in a country like India full of different terrains, the onus lies on the Ministry to ensure that schemes are well framed/modulated for those “special” regions as well. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to take up the matter of pendency in the construction of roads in the hilly/North East regions with MoDONER and should resolve the issues in conjunction with the State Governments. The Committee also emphasis the need to focus on completion of roads and bridges under PMGSY I&II in the States like Chhattisgarh and Bihar without further delay.”

10. The Ministry of Rural Development, in their Action Taken Reply have submitted as under:

“Under PMGSY-I, a total of 6,44,878 km of road length (comprising 1,64,612 roads and 7,469 bridges) has been sanctioned to provide all-weather road connectivity and 6,24,430 km of road length (1,63, 420 roads and 7,120 bridges) have already been completed leaving a backlog of 1,192 roads with a total road length of 4,699 km and 349 bridges. Similarly, under the PMGSY-II, a total of 49,834 km of road length

(including 6,679 roads and 759 bridges) has been sanctioned. Out of this, 49,014 km (comprising 6,560 roads and 746 bridges) have already been completed as on 09.7.2024. However, 119 roads covering a length of 289 km and 13 bridges are awaiting completion. The Ministry of Rural Development has undertaken several efforts to ensure the completion of sanctioned works under PMGSY-I and PMGSY-II:

- **Regular Monitoring and Review:** The Ministry conducts regular monitoring and review meetings with states/UTs to track the progress of the projects and identify any bottlenecks. The Ministry conducted a regional review meeting for NE Region in the month of February, 2024, to take stock of the pace of work in the region and expedite project completion.
- **Timely Release of Funds:** The Ministry ensures the timely release of funds to states/UTs for the implementation of PMGSY projects, thereby enabling them to expedite the construction works.
- **Technical Support:** The Ministry provides technical support to states/UTs in the form of guidelines, manuals, and capacity-building programs, including workshops on new/ green technologies, to enhance their project implementation capabilities.
- **Coordination with Other Stakeholders:** The Ministry coordinates with other stakeholders, such as Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India, state governments, executing agencies, and contractors, to streamline the project implementation process and resolve any issues that may arise.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** The Ministry conducts public awareness campaigns to educate the local communities about the importance of PMGSY projects and their role in ensuring timely completion.
- **Use of Technology:** The Ministry promotes the use of technology, such as GIS mapping and mobile applications, to monitor the progress of projects and improve transparency and accountability.

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has prioritized the completion of roads and bridges under PMGSY-I and II in Chhattisgarh and Bihar. During different meetings, the issue has been brought to the notice of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoDONER) to address issues in hilly and North East regions. Ministry of Rural Development has also reviewed and modified schemes to better suit the needs of special regions, ensuring balanced development across India's diverse terrains. Additionally, the Ministry has taken proactive steps to address pending road construction issues in challenging regions, including regular monitoring and evaluation of progress.”

11. The Committee, in their Original Report, had expressed concerns about significant backlog in the completion of roads and bridges constructions under the PMGSY-I and PMGSY-II, particularly in challenging regions like hilly terrains of North East India, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. The Committee had noted that there are 2,128 roads with a total road length of 22,893 kms and 679 bridges pending under PMGSY-I and 253 roads covering a distance of 711 kms and 52 bridges pending under PMGSY-II. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that special focus must be made on resolving pendency in Chhattisgarh, Bihar and in the hilly North-East regions in collaboration with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and State Governments. The Ministry, in their action taken reply, has acknowledged the backlog and have initiated several measures to address delays, such as monitoring, release of funds and coordination with various stakeholders. While acknowledging that the Ministry has made some progress in clearing the backlog, the Committee are concerned with the slow pace of construction work, particularly when the original deadline for completion of all these projects was by March, 2024. The Committee note that as on 09.07.2024, there are 1,192 roads with a total roads length of 4,699 kms and 349 bridges under PMGSY-I, and 119 roads covering 289 kms and 13 bridges still awaiting completion. The committee desire that the Ministry must take stronger and targeted actions to expedite the completion of the remaining works under the scheme without any further delay and apprise them about the time bound action taken in this regard.

Observation/Recommendation (Para No. 5)

Need to expedite Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism

Affected Areas (RCPLWEA)

12. The Committee, in their Thirty-Second Report have observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee are informed that out of 12,100 Km. of road length sanctioned in different years since the inception of the scheme in 2017-18 under this vertical, 7851 Km. road length have been completed which account for 65% (approx.) of the target and the rest is to be completed by March, 2024. The Committee are of the view that establishing rural connectivity to bridge the gap in Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas (RCPLWEA) with the mainstream regions is a challenge for the implementing agencies. However, any delay in completing the pending work would have adverse implications not only on the overall development of the region, but also in containing the Left Wing insurgency in those areas. Therefore, the Committee desire that the nodal Ministry should collaborate with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the concerned State Government for better coordination and for completion of the sanctioned work within the targeted timeline.”

13. In their Action Taken Note, the Ministry of Rural Development, have submitted as under:

“Under RCPLWEA, a total of 12,162 km of road length (comprising 1,345 roads and 705 bridges) has been sanctioned and 9,221 km of road length (892 roads and 417 bridges) have already been completed leaving a backlog of 453 roads with a total road length of 2,845 km and 288 bridges.

The Ministry of Rural Development has enhanced coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs and State Governments to ensure timely completion of sanctioned work under the RCPLWEA scheme. Regular monitoring and joint reviews are being conducted to ensure the remaining road length is completed

by March 2025, with a focus on addressing challenges like inadequate resources, security concerns, and difficult terrain in Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas. To ensure successful implementation, MoRD is also building the capacity of implementing agencies, providing necessary guidance, to complete pending work within the targeted timeline. Moreover, emphasis is being laid on constructing high-quality roads that can withstand harsh weather conditions, ensuring long-term connectivity and development in the region. Prioritization is also being given to completing roads in the most affected areas, ensuring the benefits of rural connectivity reach the most vulnerable populations.”

14. The Committee, while acknowledging the significant challenge of establishing Rural Connectivity in Left Wing Extremism Affected Area (RCLWEA), had recommended the Ministry of Rural Development to collaborate with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the concerned State Governments to ensure timely completion of road constructed under the Road Connectivity Project for the Left Wing Extremism affected Area (LWEA) Scheme by March, 2024. The Committee had stressed the importance of road connectivity in bridging gaps in Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas and its critical role in regional development and counter insurgency efforts. The Ministry of Rural Development, in their action taken reply have submitted that 76% of the target has been completed with 9221 kms of roads and 417 bridges completed leaving a backlog of 435 roads with total road length of 2845 kms and 288 bridges. The Ministry cited challenges such as inadequate resources, security concerns and difficult terrain and have set a revised deadline of March, 2025 to complete the backlog. The Ministry also highlighted enhanced coordination with MHA and State Governments, regular monitoring, capacity building measures for implementing agencies and a focus on constituting high quality, weather resistant road. Though the Committee appreciate the efforts made by the Ministry in addressing the backlog, yet they find that Ministry’s reply lacks sufficient clarity on the specific steps taken, particularly regarding security reasons, resource allocation and coordination mechanisms. The Committee would like to know about the detailed framework for coordination between the MHA, Ministry of Rural Development, State

Governments and local agencies, including specific roles of each entity in ensuring timely completion of the sanctioned roads and resolving security issues. While understanding the complexities involved, the Committee urge the Ministry to strictly adhere to the revised deadline of March, 2025 and make every effort to complete the remaining roads and bridges within the extended timeline. The Ministry must continue to work with all stakeholders to address the resources, security and terrain challenges and expedite pending work. The Committee desire to be apprised about the status of completion of the works in Left Wing Extremism affected Area (LWEA) within 6 months of the presentation of this Report.

Observation/Recommendation (Para No. 6)

Need for stringent Quality Assurance Mechanism

15. The Committee in their report had observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that PMGSY envisages a three tier Quality Assurance Mechanism to ensure quality of roads and bridges constructed under the scheme. The first two tiers by PIU and independent Quality Monitors under respective State Governments and the third tier under NRIDA by independent National Quality Monitors (NQMs). The National Quality Monitors inspect projects selected on random basis. To ensure credibility of inspections, independent monitors at second and third tier have to take at least 10 geo stamped digital photographs including one of the field laboratories for each work and to upload it on OMMAS-MIS portal. They also have to ensure that mandatory tests are carried out at specified intervals. In addition, district laboratories and state laboratories have also been established. The Committee note that the first stage of quality assurance undertaken by PIU through an in-house mechanism by supervising the site quality control laboratory set up by the contractor for each package is crucial. Further, the Committee view that inspection by NQM for quality control mechanism at national level under NRIDA from 2017-18 to 2022-23 has been drastically reduced from 23% to 13.61% in terms of number of

inspections undertaken by State level Quality Monitors under SRRDA during that period. The Committee observe that in a comprehensive scheme like PMGSY, there is no unified quality monitoring mechanism, instead there are different quality assurance mechanism with no proper dimensions. In view of this, the Committee urge the Ministry to relook into the PMGSY guidelines and come with a unified monitoring mechanism which encompasses different parameters in place of existing fragmented monitoring mechanism. The Committee are of the view that a unified quality monitoring mechanism shall be indicative of the flaws in the initial stages of construction so that roads and bridges constructed under PMGSY remain navigable till end of its life span of 10 years. The Committee underlines the need for increase in number of field inspections by NQMs in proportion to the inspections undertaken by SQMs. They also strongly recommend that the nodal Ministry and NRIDA should strictly monitor action taken against contractors, who compromise on quality of roads and bridges constructed under PMGSY. The Standard Bidding Document (SBD) should be revised in such a way so as to include stringent provision for reconstruction/ maintenance of damaged roads and bridges at the risk and cost of contractors during its life span. The nodal Ministry and NRIDA should play a proactive role in ensuring due diligence by contractors, instead of leaving it entirely on the State Government.”

16. In their Action Taken Note, the Ministry of Rural Development have submitted as under:

“Quality assurance mechanism under PMGSY starts right from the time of preparation of detailed project report (DPR) which is formulated based on the site conditions and guidelines / specifications developed by Indian Road Congress (IRC), which is the apex body for setting up road and bridge standards in the country. Best engineering practices / technology available in that part of the country is adopted in the DPR. Thereafter, detailed scrutiny of the technical provision of all DPR is carried out by the designated academic institutes, which are nominated as – State Technical Agencies (STA), In addition, selected DPRs

are also scrutinized by Principal Technical agencies (PTA), which are designated IITs / NITs of the country. Procurement of good contractor for executing the project is done through a transparent public procurement process using prescribed standard bidding document (SBD). The provisions of the bidding document are adequately formulated to give stress on construction of good quality projects. As per the SBD, non-establishment of field lab or unequipped field lab established by the contractor are made items of fundamental breach of contract and the contractor in such event is liable to face termination of contract and thus paying heavy penalty.

Further, for the purpose of quality control during the execution process, a three-tier quality control system has been put in place, wherein the primary responsibility of ensuring the quality lies with the Project Implementing Agency (PIU), who normally is a state officer, generally of the rank of executive engineer, who make payment to the contractor. PIU is primarily responsible for ensuring the quality of material being used in the projects and its workmanship meets the prescribed standards, as prescribed in the Specifications and are the part of the agreement between him and the contractor. Since the PIU is the party to the legal contract (Agreement) between the department and the contractor, all powers to enforce the contract provision lies with him and the payment to the contractor is made, as per the provisions of contract, only when the PIU is fully satisfied about the quality of the work done by the contractor. The second and third tier of quality monitoring system is essentially to strengthen the hands of the PIU and give appropriate suggestions to PIU to ensure the quality of work, at each stage of construction. This Ministry has taken a note of the suggestions of the committee and would work for further strengthen the 1st tier of quality monitoring mechanism, in consultation with States/ UTs for further improvement in quality.

As indicated above, the intent of both first and second tier of quality monitoring is to provide hand holding support to the PIU who is primarily responsible for maintaining quality. SQMs being managed by respective State/

UT, it is required that SQM will inspect all works minimum three times during defined stages of execution. The close guidance provided by SQM will enable the PIU for making required interventions at appropriate time. Guidelines have been revised for a unified quality monitoring mechanism, field inspections by National Quality Monitors have been increased, and action taken reports are being intensively monitored.

The standard bidding document (SBD) presently in vogue has inbuilt provision of maintaining the road for 5 years, post completion, which is also the defect liability period for the contractor who has executed the project. If there is any defect observed in the project during the entire defect liability period, the contractor is liable to rectify the defects at his own cost. The release of performance security / security deposit of the contractor is structured in such a way that the risk of poor performance of the projects is covered appropriately.

The Ministry of Rural Development has, accordingly, taken a series of measures to enhance the quality of roads and bridges constructed under PMGSY, to address the Committee's concerns.”

17. The Committee, in their original report, had raised several issues concerning the Quality Assurance Mechanism under the PMGSY. Addressing the fragmented three-tier quality assurance mechanism, the Committee had recommended the Ministry of Rural Development to adopt a uniform monitoring mechanism to ensure quality at each stage of the construction process. The Committee had also expressed concerns about the decrease in inspections by the National Quality Monitors (NQM) from 23% to 13.61% between 2017-18 and 2022-2023 and urged the Ministry to increase the number of inspections conducted by NQMs, besides ensuring strict accountability for contractors, particularly in the form of stringent provisions in the standard bidding document (SBD) for long terms maintenance and reconstructions of damaged infrastructure. The Ministry while acknowledging the concerns of the Committee highlighted the existing multi-tier system of quality control, with the Project Implementing Unit (PIU) as the primary authority for ensuring quality and the

State Quality Monitors (SQMs) providing guidance and supervision. The Ministry also mentions efforts to increase NQM inspections and revise guidelines to enhance the monitoring system. The Ministry also assured that provisions with SBD already hold contractors accountable for defects during the five year defect liability period, with performance closely monitored.

The Committee are happy to note that the Ministry has taken note of the suggestions of the Committee and would work for further strengthening the first tier of quality mechanism, in consultation with States/UTs for further improvement of quality. The Committee also appreciate the Ministry's acknowledgement of the concerns expressed by the Committee and steps taken to enhance the quality assurance mechanism. However, the Committee reiterate the need for more unified and streamlined quality monitoring system, as initially recommended, to eliminate fragmentation and ensure more effective and consistent check across all tiers of constructions. The Committee once again reiterate the need for tightening contractor's accountability by revising the SBD to include stringent provisions for reconstruction and maintenance of damaged roads throughout the entire life span of the road (i.e. 10 years), beyond the defect liability period.

Observation/Recommendation (Para No. 9)

Need for planting of trees on the flanks of roads

18. The Committee in their Thirty-second Report have observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that out of the sanctioned road length of 6,45,189 Km, 6,22,003 Km. has been completed till 31st March, 2023 under the new connectivity and upgradation component of PMGSY-I. There is no mandatory provision for planting of trees on both sides of the roads being constructed under PMGSY-I&II launched in 2000 and 2013 respectively. The reason for non inclusion of tree plantation along the roads constructed under PMGSY, as submitted by the Ministry, is that there is no land acquisition for PMGSY roads

and the land on both sides of PMGSY roads belong to the farmers. Therefore, plantation can be done on land to be donated by farmers.

The Committee have, however, observed that planting of fruit bearing and other substantial trees has been made mandatory under PMGSY-III launched in 2019. The responsibility for planting of trees has been assigned to State/UT Governments by using funds under MGNREGA and other Central State Schemes. Guidelines of Indian Road Congress are to be followed for plantation of trees on flanks of roads constructed under PMGSY-III. The Committee note that construction of majority of rural roads have been completed under PMGSY-I&II, but there is no mandatory provision for planting of trees along the roads constructed under it. Planting of trees along the roads have multifarious advantages like controlling vehicular pollution, checking soil erosion and consequent damage to roads etc. Therefore, the Committee urge the Ministry and NRIDA to amend the guidelines to include monetary support to State/UT Governments for mandatory planting of trees along rural roads constructed under PMGSY-I&II, rather than relying on guidelines of Indian Road Congress and MGNREGA officers. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard.”

19. In their Action Taken Note, the Ministry of Rural Development have submitted as under:

“The PMGSY guidelines (para 21.4) stipulate that planting of fruit bearing and other suitable trees, on both sides of the roads, is mandatorily taken up by the State Governments / Union Territories by using funds under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and other Central and State Schemes.

It is also stipulated under PMGSY that Guidelines on Tree Plantation along Rural Roads (IRC:SP:103-2014), published by Indian Roads Congress should be followed for plantation of trees along the roads constructed under PMGSY-III.

The State Governments are encouraged to converge with MGNREGA and other funds and utilize the expertise of available execution agencies for roadside planting and their maintenance”.

20. The Committee, in their 32nd Report, had expressed concerns about the lack of mandatory provisions for planting trees along roads constructed under PMGSY-I and PMGSY-II (launched in 2000 & 2013 respectively). The Committee pointed out that while tree plantation is mandatory under PMGSY-III, it is not so under phase-I & II of PMGSY, even though most rural roads have already been constructed under these phases. The Committee have urged the Ministry and National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA) to amend the guidelines for the earlier phases to ensure that the plantation is also implemented retrospectively. The Committee had emphasized the importance of providing monetary support to State/UT governments for the plantation of trees along the roads, rather than solely relying on voluntary participation through MGNREGA or other Central and State schemes. The Ministry, in their action taken reply, primarily discusses the provisions under PMGSY-III and the role of MGNREGA and other schemes in supporting the plantation of trees. The Committee are not satisfied with the Ministry’s reply as it does not fully address the Committee’s concerns about PMGSY-I & II, where no mandatory provision for tree plantation exists. The reply also does not mention how the financial support for planting trees in phase I & II will be ensured or what steps will be taken to mandate this action. Given the lack of clarity in the Ministry’s reply regarding the amendment of guidelines for PMGSY-I & II, the Committee reiterate their original recommendation and desire that the Ministry must take concrete steps to develop a clear, actionable plan that ensures the mandatory plantation of trees. The Committee desire to be apprised about action taken by the Ministry in this regard within six months of the presentation of this report.

Observation/Recommendation (Para No. 10)

Need for proper maintenance of roads

21. The Committee in their Thirty-second Report have observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that PMGSY guidelines stipulates that maintenance of roads constructed under PMGSY is the responsibility of State Governments. All roads are to be mandatorily covered by initial 5 years of maintenance contract by the same contractor as per Standard Bidding Document. Maintenance fund to service the contract are required to be budgeted by State Governments and placed at the disposal of State Rural Roads Development Agency (SDRRAs) in separate maintenance account. After 5 years, the roads are required to be placed under Zonal Maintenance Contracts for a further period of 5 years. Under PMGSY-III, Ministry signs MOU with the States for providing maintenance funds for 10 years. NRIDA has also prepared a Policy Framework and Guidance Note for maintenance of rural roads, which needs to be adopted and notified at State level. Financial incentives under PMGSY-III are given to best performing States, which are used for maintenance of roads constructed under PMGSY. The Committee are also informed that e-MARG and Performance Based Maintenances Contracts (PBMC) are also used for ensuring regular maintenance of rural roads. During deliberations, the Committee expressed dissatisfaction over bad condition of rural roads due to lack of maintenance. In certain cases, the roads are caved in or washed away due to floods and other natural calamities during Damage Liability Period (DLP) and the contractor is not liable under contractual terms for reconstruction of such roads. The Committee, therefore, are of the view that Ministry of RD and NRIDA should conduct a survey/data collection regarding all those rural roads constructed under PMGSY-I&II, which are not navigable due to natural calamities during DLP and those which are damaged or abandoned after 5 years of completion of construction. The Committee, further, recommend that the Ministry should include all those roads which are damaged due to natural calamities during DLP for reconstruction under

PMGSY-III. The Ministry should ensure that stringent action is taken against the contractors for unscientific and sub-standard construction.”

22. In their Action Taken Note, the Ministry of Rural Development have submitted as under:

“Rural road' is a State subject and as per the programme guidelines of PMGSY, maintenance of roads constructed under the programme is the responsibility of the State Governments and all road works are covered by initial five-year maintenance contracts to be entered into along with the construction contract, with the same contractor, as per the standard bidding document. Maintenance funds to service the contract are required to be budgeted by the State Governments and placed at the disposal of the State Rural Roads Development Agencies in a separate maintenance account. On the expiry of the 5-year post-construction maintenance, PMGSY roads are required to be placed under zonal maintenance contracts consisting of 5-year maintenance including renewal as per maintenance cycle, from time to time, which are also financed by the State Governments.

National Quality Monitors appointed by the Ministry are also deputed to check the quality of maintenance work on PMGSY roads. If any work is found having unsatisfactory grading, the concerned State Government is informed to get it rectified/ repaired. The quality grading of maintenance is monitored through Online Management, Monitoring and Accounting System i.e. the programme MIS.

To further enhance the focus on the maintenance of roads during the defect liability period and also streamline the delivery of routine maintenance of PMGSY roads, electronic Maintenance of Rural Roads (eMARG) an e-governance solution, has been introduced.

The OMMAS and EMarg enable online monitoring of the status of road maintenance in the country.

State Governments take up repair of roads, damaged due to natural calamities, with the State Disaster Response Agencies. There is no such provision of funds under PMGSY.”

23. The Committee had expressed concerns over the poor condition of rural roads constructed under PMGSY particularly after the expiration of the initial 5 years maintenance period. They noted that some roads were rendered unusable due to natural calamities during the Damage Liability Period (DLP), and left abandoned or damaged without proper reconstructions. The Committee had, therefore, recommended the Ministry to conduct a survey / data collection to identify roads that were not navigable during DLP or were damaged after 5 years and to include these roads for reconstruction under PMGSY-III. The Committee also urged for stringent action against contractors for substandard constructions and better enforcement of maintenance requirements. The Ministry of Rural Development, in their action taken reply, have reiterated that maintenance is the responsibility of State Governments, with an initial 5 years maintenance contract followed by a zonal maintenance contract. The Ministry highlighted the use of e-MARD and OMMAS for online monitoring of road conditions and mentioned that repairs for damage due to natural calamities fall under the jurisdiction of State Disasters Response Agencies (SDRAs). The Committee are not satisfied with the reply of the Ministry, as it fails to address the Committee’s concerns regarding the lack of provision for roads damaged by natural calamities during the DLP. While the Ministry suggests that SDRAs handle such repairs, it overlooks the need for a formalized process under PMGSY to ensure timely and effective reconstruction of these roads. The Ministry’s emphasis on State’s responsibility for maintenance, without additional financial or institutional support for roads damaged by natural calamities or those left in poor condition after the maintenance period, seems insufficient. The Committee’s recommendation for including such road under PMGSY-III has not been addressed by the Ministry. While the Ministry mentioned e-MARG and OMMAS as tools for monitoring road conditions and quality control, the use of these systems does not directly solve the core issue raised by the Committee - roads being abandoned or poorly

maintained post-construction. In view of this, the Committee strongly reiterate their original recommendation and urge the Ministry to conduct a comprehensive survey and ensure that these roads are included for reconstruction under PMGSY-III. The Committee also urge the Ministry to take immediate action to rectify the backlog of poorly maintained roads by providing State Governments with necessary support, including financial assistance, to restore these roads to a navigable condition. The Committee also desire that the Ministry should consider strengthening the accountability of contractors, ensuring that stringent measures are put in place for the reconstruction and maintenance of substandard roads and that action is taken against contractors who fail to meet the prescribed quality standards. The Committee desire to be apprised about the concrete actions taken by the Ministry within six months of the presentation of this Report.

Chapter – II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 1)

Role of NRIDA

The committee noted that NRIDA, nodal implementation agency and technical arm of PMGSY Scheme, has been identified as the vehicle of Ministry of Rural Development for steering the rural road projects by availing funds from international financial institutions like ADB, World Bank etc. NRIDA also plays a crucial role in setting benchmarks for excellence in rural road construction and is expected to explore potential smart solutions to improve delivery capacity of PMGSY on the ground by promoting cost effective Green/ New Technologies without time overruns and cost overruns. Taking into account the role of NRIDA, the committee would urge the implementing agency to explore and utilize IT enabled tools like e-MARG, Meri Sadak APP to enhance transparency across the system.

The Committee have further noted that Meri Sadak APP has been enabled to register citizen feedback/complaint about non-PMGSY roads also. The Ministry has submitted that such feedback/complaints are forwarded to Central Public Grievances Redressal and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) for necessary action. The complaints are forwarded to State Governments for redressal. The Committee feel that there should be a proper mechanism at the nodal Ministry level for analyzing the nature of complaints about PMGSY road registered on 'Meri Sadak App' and therefore, desire a strong redressal mechanism at central level too. As Research is fundamental requirement for excellence in any activity, the Committee further urge Ministry of Rural Development to augment funds for the research and IT solutions so as to uplift the efficiency of the agency.

Reply of the Government

Ministry has established a dedicated cell to analyze complaints received on subject matters of the Ministry. The cell also monitors the redress of complaints on the 'Meri Sadak App'. The cell is also supported by the programme division and NRIDA in taking up the grievances with the States for their timely resolution.

Ministry has made provision for adequate funds to NRIDA during 2024-25 which also includes funding for research and IT solutions in order to leverage technology for better scheme implementation and to enhance transparency, accountability and efficiency. The research initiatives have led to innovative solutions improving rural infrastructure and service delivery. The Ministry, along with NRIDA, is continuously striving to effectively utilize these tools, making the program more efficient, transparent, and citizen-centric.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 2)

Financial Sufficiency

The Committee note that under PMGSY, NRIDA is the vehicle for execution of road projects and leveraging funds from different financial agencies like World Bank, Asian Development Bank etc. Ministry of Rural Development in their written submission has furnished figures of grant in aid received by NRIDA (from ADB & World Bank RRP-II). Grants in Aid from ADB stood at Rs 1.5 crores (BE) for 2021-22 while there was no expenditure incurred for the same period. Further there has no allocation for World Bank for 2021-22 and 2022-23. The Committee would urge the Ministry of Rural Development to explore the way out for restoration of financial assistance from international agencies like World Bank and ADB etc. The committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken by the Government in the regards.

Reply of the Government

The present verticals under implementation in PMGSY have full budgetary support as per the envisaged work programme. The suggestion of the Committee has been noted.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 4)

Focus on All Round Development

The Committee have been informed that Under PMGSY-I, a total of 6,45,189 kilometers of road length (comprising 1,64,686 roads and 7,484 bridges) has been sanctioned to provide all-weather road connectivity to previously unconnected habitations and 6,22,296 kilometers of road length (1,62,558 roads and 6,805 bridges) have already been completed leaving a backlog of 2,128 roads with a total road length of 22,893 kilometers and 679 bridges. Out of this, 981 kilometers of road length and 5 bridges in Chhattisgarh, 659 kilometers of road length and 88 bridges in Bihar are pending for completion. Similarly, under the PMGSY-II, launched in 2013 with the objective of consolidating 50,000 kilometers of eligible rural roads to facilitate more cost-effective transportation of goods and services, a total of 49,856 kilometers of road length (including 6,692 roads and 763 bridges) has been sanctioned. Out of this, 48,609 kilometers (comprising 6,439 roads and 711 bridges) have been completed by July 12, 2023. However, 253 roads covering a distance of 711 kilometers and 52 bridges are awaiting completion with the deadline of March, 2024. The Ministry has cited various factors contributing to this backlog, including inadequate execution and contracting capacity, challenging terrain, adverse weather conditions and security concerns, etc.

The committee have observed that both under PMGSY-I&II, the roads that are yet to be constructed, are mostly either in North East/ Hilly regions or in States like Chhattisgarh and Bihar etc. The Committee are of the strong view that for a balanced development in a country like India full of different terrains, the onus lies on of the Ministry to ensure that schemes are well framed/ modulated for those “special” regions as well. The committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to take up the matter of pendency in the construction of roads in the hilly/ North East regions with MoDONER and should resolve the issues in conjunction with the State Governments. The Committee also emphasized the need to focus on completion of roads and bridges and PMGSY I&II in the States like Chhattisgarh and Bihar without further delay.

Reply of the Government

Under PMGSY-I, a total of 6,44,878 km of road length (comprising 1,64,612 roads and 7,469 bridges) has been sanctioned to provide all-weather road connectivity and 6,24,430 km of road length (1,63, 420 roads and 7,120 bridges) have already been completed leaving a backlog of 1,192 roads with a total road length of 4,699 km and 349 bridges. Similarly, under the PMGSY-II, a total of 49,834 km of road length (including 6,679 roads and 759 bridges) has been sanctioned. Out of this, 49,014 km (comprising 6,560 roads and 746 bridges) have already been completed as on 09.7.2024. However, 119 roads covering a length of 289 km and 13 bridges are awaiting completion. The Ministry of Rural Development has undertaken several efforts to ensure the completion of sanctioned works under PMGSY-I and PMGSY-II:

- **Regular Monitoring and Review:** The Ministry conducts regular monitoring and review meetings with states/UTs to track the progress of the projects and identify any bottlenecks. The Ministry conducted a regional review meeting for NE Region in the month of February, 2024, to take stock of the pace of work in the region and expedite project completion.
- **Timely Release of Funds:** The Ministry ensures the timely release of funds to states/UTs for the implementation of PMGSY projects, thereby enabling them to expedite the construction works.
- **Technical Support:** The Ministry provides technical support to states/UTs in the form of guidelines, manuals, and capacity-building programs, including workshops on new/ green technologies, to enhance their project implementation capabilities.
- **Coordination with Other Stakeholders:** The Ministry coordinates with other stakeholders, such as Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India, state governments, executing agencies, and contractors, to streamline the project implementation process and resolve any issues that may arise.

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** The Ministry conducts public awareness campaigns to educate the local communities about the importance of PMGSY projects and their role in ensuring timely completion.
- **Use of Technology:** The Ministry promotes the use of technology, such as GIS mapping and mobile applications, to monitor the progress of projects and improve transparency and accountability.

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has prioritized the completion of roads and bridges under PMGSY-I and II in Chhattisgarh and Bihar. During different meetings, the issue has been brought to the notice of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoDONER) to address issues in hilly and North East regions. MoRD has also reviewed and modified schemes to better suit the needs of special regions, ensuring balanced development across India's diverse terrains. Additionally, the Ministry has taken proactive steps to address pending road construction issues in challenging regions, including regular monitoring and evaluation of progress. Comments of the Committee please see para no 11 of Chapter-I of this reply.

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 5)

Need to expedite Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas (RCPLWEA)

The Committee has informed that out of 12,100 km of road length sanctioned in different years since the inception of the scheme in 2017-18 under this vertical, 7851 Km road length have been completed which account for 65% (approx.) of the target and the rest is to be completed by March, 2024. The committee are of the view that establishing rural connectivity to bridge the gap in Left Wing Extremism Affected Area (RCPLWEA) with the mainstream regions is a challenge for the implementing agencies. However, any delay in completing the pending work would have adverse implications not only on the overall development of the region, but also in containing the Left Wing insurgency in those area. Therefore, the committee desire that the nodal Ministry should collaborate with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the concerned State Government for

better coordination and for completion of the sanctioned work within the targeted timeline.

Reply of the Government

Under RCPLWEA, a total of 12,162 km of road length (comprising 1,345 roads and 705 bridges) has been sanctioned and 9,221 km of road length (892 roads and 417 bridges) have already been completed leaving a backlog of 453 roads with a total road length of 2,845 km and 288 bridges.

The Ministry of Rural Development has enhanced coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs and State Governments to ensure timely completion of sanctioned work under the RCPLWEA scheme. Regular monitoring and joint reviews are being conducted to ensure the remaining road length is completed by March 2025, with a focus on addressing challenges like inadequate resources, security concerns, and difficult terrain in Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas. To ensure successful implementation, MoRD is also building the capacity of implementing agencies, providing necessary guidance, to complete pending work within the targeted timeline. Moreover, emphasis is being laid on constructing high-quality roads that can withstand harsh weather conditions, ensuring long-term connectivity and development in the region. Prioritization is also being given to completing roads in the most affected areas, ensuring the benefits of rural connectivity reach the most vulnerable populations.

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 14 of Chapter – I of this Report)

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 6)

Need for Stringent Quality Assurance Mechanism

The Committee note that PMGSY envisages a three tier Quality Assurance Mechanism to ensure quality of roads and bridges constructed under the scheme. The

first two tiers by PIU and independent Quality Monitors under respective State Governments and the third tier under NRIDA by independent National Quality Monitors (NQMs). The National Quality Monitors inspect project selected on random basis. To ensure credibility of inspections, Independent monitors at second and third tier have to take at least 10 geostamped digital photographs including one of the field laboratories for each work and to upload it on OMMAS-MIS portal. They also have to ensure that mandatory tests are carried out at specified intervals. In additions, district laboratories and state laboratories have also been established. The Committee note that the first stage of quality assurance undertaken by PIU through an in-house mechanism by supervising the site quality control laboratory set up by the contractor for each package is crucial. Further, the Committee view that inspection by NQM for quality control mechanism at national level under NRIDA from 2017-18 to 2022-23 has been drastically reduced from 23% to 13.61% in terms of number of inspections undertaken by State level Quality Monitors under SRRDA during that period. The Committee observe that in a comprehensive scheme like PMGSY, there is no unified quality monitoring mechanism, instead there are different quality assurance mechanism with no proper dimensions. In view of this, the Committee urge the Ministry to relook into the PMGSY guidelines and come with a unified monitoring mechanism which encompasses different parameters in place of existing fragmented monitoring mechanism. The Committee are of the view that a unified quality monitoring mechanism shall be indicative of the flaws in the initial stages of construction so that roads and bridges constructed under PMGSY remain navigable till and of its life span of 10 years. The Committee underlines the need for increase in number of field inspections by NQMs in proportion to the inspections undertaken SQMs. They also strongly recommend that the nodal Ministry and NRIDA should strictly monitor action taken against contractors, who compromise on quality of roads and bridges constructed under PMGSY. The Standard Bidding Documents (SBD) should be revised in such a way so as to include stringent provision for reconstruction/ maintenance of damaged roads and bridges at the risk and cost of contractors during its life span. The nodal Ministry and NRIDA should play a proactive role in ensuring due diligence by contractors, instead of leaving it entirely on the State Government.

Reply of the Government

Quality assurance mechanism under PMGSY starts right from the time of preparation of detailed project report (DPR) which is formulated based on the site conditions and guidelines / specifications developed by Indian Road Congress (IRC), which is the apex body for setting up road and bridge standards in the country. Best engineering practices / technology available in that part of the country is adopted in the DPR. Thereafter, detailed scrutiny of the technical provision of all DPR is carried out by the designated academic institutes, which are nominated as – State Technical Agencies (STA), In addition, selected DPRs are also scrutinised by Principal Technical agencies (PTA), which are designated IITs / NITs of the country. Procurement of good contractor for executing the project is done through a transparent public procurement process using prescribed standard bidding document (SBD). The provisions of the bidding document are adequately formulated to give stress on construction of good quality projects. As per the SBD, non-establishment of field lab or unequipped field lab established by the contractor are made items of fundamental breach of contract and the contractor in such event is liable to face termination of contract and thus paying heavy penalty.

Further, for the purpose of quality control during the execution process, a three-tier quality control system has been put in place, wherein the primary responsibility of ensuring the quality lies with the Project Implementing Agency (PIU), who normally is a state officer, generally of the rank of executive engineer, who make payment to the contractor. PIU is primarily responsible for ensuring the quality of material being used in the projects and its workmanship meets the prescribed standards, as prescribed in the Specifications and are the part of the agreement between him and the contractor. Since the PIU is the party to the legal contract (Agreement) between the department and the contractor, all powers to enforce the contract provision lies with him and the payment to the contractor is made, as per the provisions of contract, only when the PIU is fully satisfied about the quality of the work done by the contractor. The second and third tier of quality monitoring system is essentially to strengthen the hands of the PIU and give

appropriate suggestions to PIU to ensure the quality of work, at each stage of construction. This Ministry has taken a note of the suggestions of the committee and would work for further strengthen the 1st tier of quality monitoring mechanism, in consultation with States/ UTs for further improvement in quality.

As indicated above, the intent of both first and second tier of quality monitoring is to provide hand holding support to the PIU who is primarily responsible for maintaining quality. SQMs being managed by respective State/ UT, it is required that SQM will inspect all works minimum three times during defined stages of execution. The close guidance provided by SQM will enable the PIU for making required interventions at appropriate time. Guidelines have been revised for a unified quality monitoring mechanism, field inspections by National Quality Monitors have been increased, and action taken reports are being intensively monitored.

The standard bidding document (SBD) presently in vogue has inbuilt provision of maintaining the road for 5 years, post completion, which is also the defect liability period for the contractor who has executed the project. If there is any defect observed in the project during the entire defect liability period, the contractor is liable to rectify the defects at his own cost. The release of performance security / security deposit of the contractor is structured in such a way that the risk of poor performance of the projects is covered appropriately.

The Ministry of Rural Development has, accordingly, taken a series of measures to enhance the quality of roads and bridges constructed under PMGSY, to address the Committee's concerns.

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 17 of Chapter – I of this Report)

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 7)

Need for Participation of Stakeholders

The Committee note that various provisions have been included in the PMGSY guidelines to ensure consultations with Hon'ble Member of Parliament in the Implementation of the scheme including selection and construction of roads. These consultation have been provisioned both at the District Rural Plan (DRRP) finalization and Annual Proposals stages. In addition, at the stage of preparing DPRs, the PIU conducts a transect walk along the road alignment. State Governments are required to arrange joint inspection of ongoing as well as completed works under PMGSY by Hon'ble MPs, Hon'ble MLAs and representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Further, Comprehensive Upgradation cum consolidation Priority List (CUCPL) should be sent to concern MPs with the request that their proposals on the selection of works out of the CUCPL should be sent to the District Panchayat and 15 clear days to be given for the purpose. During the deliberations, the Committee have expressed their concern that though representatives of people are to be taken on board while finalizing the proposal. It has not been the practice. Rather representatives are made to play, merely, a signatory role at the fag end of submission of final list to the nodal Ministry, leaving no time to study and propose changes by Members of Parliament. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to evolve a mechanism to ensure that the procedures are scrupulously followed and proposals received by Ministry of Rural Development from Members of Parliament which are in conformity with the needs of the region are finally included in the list of roads selected for construction under PMGSY. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken by the Ministry in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of Rural Development has given high priority to the recommendations made by Hon'ble Members of Parliament (MPs) regarding the planning and implementation of road works under PMGSY-III. The Ministry issued detailed advisories, including on 16-12-2019 outlining the role of Hon'ble MPs and other elected members in planning and implementation of road works under PMGSY, and

another on 2-6-2020 clarifying the role of Hon'ble MPs in planning and selection of road works under PMGSY-III. The guidelines were reiterated on 22-06-2023 reiterating to all States.

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

Observations/Recommendations (Para No 8)

Need for Promotion of FDR Technology

The Committee are informed that major portion of the roads under PMGSY are still constructed using conventional way, which is costlier in those regions where the lead/haulage charge of aggregates is on the higher side and also in those roads where traffic intensity is relatively higher and require substantial granular overlays. On the other hand, the roads constructed through Full Depth Reclamation (FDR) have increased structural durability, cost effectiveness, shortened construction schedule, minimal air pollution and reduced carbon footprint. The Committee note that the use of FDR technology is limited to certain state like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha and only 7700 Km of rural roads have been/ are being constructed using this technology. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the nodal Ministry and NRIDA should extend expert training and technological support to states for faster adoption of FDR technology for construction/reconstruction of roads under PMGSY.

Reply of the Government

Full Depth Reclamation (FDR) technology is a road rehabilitation method that recycles existing distressed pavement layers into a new, stronger base layer, producing a cemented stabilized layer that behaves like a semi-rigid pavement. A total of 10,180 km of road length has been sanctioned under FDR, with 1,892 km completed so far, including 7 km in Odisha and 1,885 km in Uttar Pradesh. The state-wise road length sanctioned includes Arunachal Pradesh (40 km), Assam (446 km), Bihar (270 km), Himachal Pradesh (643 km), Jharkhand (1,011 km), Kerala (276 km), Madhya Pradesh (21 km), Maharashtra (156 km), Manipur (50 km), Meghalaya (47 km), Mizoram (165

km), Nagaland (477 km), Odisha (75 km), Punjab (410 km), Tripura (237 km), and Uttar Pradesh (5,856 km).

To promote the adoption of FDR technology, NRIDA has conducted workshops in various states, including Uttar Pradesh (22.06.2022 & 27-28th June, 2024), Bihar (18.04.2023), Arunachal Pradesh (18.04.2023), Jharkhand (20.04.2023), Meghalaya (27.04.2023), Nagaland (11.05.2023 & 20.05.2024), Himachal Pradesh (23.05.2023), Maharashtra (22-23 June'23), Odisha (07.07.2023), Punjab and Madhya Pradesh (25.08.2023), West Bengal (22.09.2023), and Sikkim (25.09.2023).

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 11)

Amalgamation with State Policies

The Committee note that rural road connectivity is a key component of sustainable economic activity and poverty alleviation in rural India. To achieve this objective, several State Governments have also launched schemes like MukhyaMantri Gram SadakYojana(MMGSY) and Chief Minister Gram SadakYojana(CMGSY). The Committee have observed that the objectives of these State sponsored schemes and PMGSY are in the tune of rural road construction itself. Ministry of Rural Development has submitted that they do not have status /role in State policies and hence cannot synchronise activities with State specific policies. Taking cognizance of the fact that some States have their own Gram Sadak policies, which are similar to that of PMGSY, the Committee urge the Ministry to work in liaison with State Governments in a bid to simplify and holistically select and ensure the construction of rural roads and its hassle free maintenance. The Committee are of the firm view that Ministry of Rural Development being the nodal Ministry can take a lead role and work with State Governments in the overall interest of building all-weather road network in rural areas.

Reply of the Government

The selection of roads under verticals of PMGSY is undertaken through an elaborate and well defined process. The selection process takes into account the assessed utility of the roads and in meeting the programme objectives.

All data pertaining to rural roads has been uploaded on PM Gati Shakti portal. This will ensure convergence in planning to maximise the efficiency of the upgraded rural roads network. Required coordination is done with the State Governments and issues are addressed related to rural road construction and maintenance.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 12)

Other Issues

The Committee have observed certain issues inherent in the PMGSY guidelines related to selection of roads and bridges constructed but rejected on the basis of inspection report of NQM due to unscientific and defective construction. The Committee are of the firm view that Ministry should investigate the status of old roads and bridges before choosing the new ones for construction under scheme. A firm overview/ status check of already constructed roads/ bridges (under previous schemes/ phases) would be a decisive factor in the matter. A road or bridge “chosen” before hand but yet to be completed should be carried forward under the scheme rather than inclusion of new ones. Similarly, the Ministry should evolve a mechanism to ensure that the roads/ bridges constructed but rejected due to unscientific/ defective construction by the contractor are reconstructed by the same contractor at his own risk and cost.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of Rural Development has a centralized database to track project progress which incorporates a prioritization framework to complete unfinished projects. The database also tracks monitoring of quality at various stages of the project. The Ministry is continuously evolving innovative methods for tracking project progress and quality assurance.

The provisions of the PMGSY agreement have been structured in such a way that if any defect is observed in the projects during the 5 years of defect liability period, the contractor is liable to rectify the defects at his own cost. The release of performance security/ security deposit of the contractor is also structured in such a way that the risk of poor performance of the project is covered appropriately.

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 3)

Need for Dedicated PDs (Project Directors)

In the matters of national highways, Project Implementation Units (PIUs) are headed by a Project Director (PD), who in turn, is supported by various other technical and accounts officers to oversee timely completion of the projects as per prescribed parameters. However, the committee note that similar is not the case with PMGSY; roads being a State subject. The committee have observed that the Scheme of PMGSY is for rural roads where the implementing agencies are the respective State Governments, who play a major role in selection of roads, processing bids for selection of contractors, construction of roads and oversee the construction of roads/ bridges. Taking cognizance of this, the Committee recommend the Ministry to bring a system of appointment of PDs for PMGSY; dedicated leadership for a geographically demarcated area for proper construction vis-à-vis completion of projects. For this the Committee also recommend that the guidelines of PMGSY should be amended to that effect.

Reply of the Government

'Rural road' is a State Subject and construction of roads is a responsibility of the State Governments. The Ministry of Rural Development has amended PMGSY guidelines to strengthen States' roles, making them responsible for overseeing implementation, ensuring timely completion and quality control, and coordinating with stakeholders, while also empowering them to prepare and submit project proposals for approval, enhancing scheme implementation efficiency and effectiveness. The States have duly constituted, well-established State Rural Roads Development Agencies for execution of PMGSY works.

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 8 of Chapter – I of this Report)

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 9)

Need for Planting of Trees on The Flanks of Roads

The Committee note that out of the sanctioned road length of 6,45,189 Km, 6,22,003 km has been completed till 31st March, 2023 under the new connectivity and upgradation component of PMGSY-I. There is no mandatory provision for planting of trees on both sides of the roads being constructed under PMSGSY – I&II launched in 2000 and 2013 respectively. The reason for non-inclusion of tree plantation along the roads constructed under PMGSY, as submitted by the Ministry is that there is no land acquisition for PMGSY roads and the land on both sides of PMGSY roads belong to the farmers. Therefore, plantation can be done on land to be donated by farmers.

The Committee have, however, observed that planting of fruit bearing and other substantial trees have been made mandatory under PMGSY-III launched in 2019. The responsibility for planting of trees have been assigned to State/ UT Governments by using funds under MGNREGA and other Central State Schemes. Guidelines of Indian Road Congress are to be followed for plantation of trees on flanks of roads constructed under PMGSY-III. The Committee note that construction of majority of rural roads have been completed under PMGSY-I & II, but there is no mandatory provision for planting of trees along the roads constructed under it. Planting of trees along the roads have multifarious advantages like controlling vehicular pollution, checking soil erosion and consequent damage to roads etc. Therefore, the Committee urge the Ministry and NRIDA to amend the guidelines to include monetary support to State/ UT Governments for mandatory planting of trees along rural roads constructed under PMGSY –I & II, rather than relying on guidelines of Indian Road Congress and MGNREGA officers. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in the regards.

Reply of the Government

The PMGSY guidelines (para 21.4) stipulate that planting of fruit bearing and other suitable trees, on both sides of the roads, is mandatorily taken up by the State Governments / Union Territories by using funds under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and other Central and State Schemes.

It is also stipulated under PMGSY that Guidelines on Tree Plantation along Rural Roads (IRC:SP:103-2014), published by Indian Roads Congress should be followed for plantation of trees along the roads constructed under PMGSY-III.

The State Governments are encouraged to converge with MGNREGA and other funds and utilize the expertise of available execution agencies for roadside planting and their maintenance.

Comments of the Committee

Please see Para No. 20 of Chapter – I

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 10)

Need for Proper Maintenance of Roads

The Committee note that PMGSY guidelines stipulates that maintenance of roads constructed under PMGSY is the responsibility of State Governments. All roads are to be mandatorily covered by initial 5 year of maintenance contract by the same contractor as per Standard Bidding Document. Maintenance fund to service the contract are required to be budgeted by State Governments and placed at the disposal of State Rural Roads Development Agency (SDRRAs) in separate maintenance account. After 5 year, the roads are required to be placed under Zonal Maintenance Contracts for a further period of 5 year. Under PMGSY-III, Ministry signs MOU with the States for providing maintenance funds for 10 year. NRIDA has also prepared a Policy

Framework and Guidance Note for maintenance of rural roads, which needs to be adopted and notified at State level. Financial incentives under PMGSY-III are given to best performing States, which are used for maintenance of roads constructed under PMGSY. The Committee are also informed that e-MARG and Performance Based Maintenance Contracts (PBMC) are also used for ensuring regular maintenance of rural roads. During deliberations, the Committee expressed dissatisfaction over bad condition of rural roads due to lack of maintenance. In certain cases, the roads are caved in or washed away due to floods and other natural calamities during Damage Liability Period (DLP) and the contractor is not liable under contractual terms for reconstruction of such roads. The Committee, therefore, are of the view that Ministry of RD and NRIDA should conduct a survey/data collection regarding all those rural roads constructed under PMGSY-I&II, which are not navigable due to natural calamities during DLP and those which are damaged or abandoned after 5 year of completion of construction. The Committee, further, recommend that the Ministry should include all those roads which are damaged due to natural calamities during DLP for reconstruction under PMGSY-III. The Ministry should ensure that stringent action is taken against the contractors for unscientific and sub-standard construction.

Reply of the Government

'Rural road' is a State subject and as per the programme guidelines of PMGSY, maintenance of roads constructed under the programme is the responsibility of the State Governments and all road works are covered by initial five-year maintenance contracts to be entered into along with the construction contract, with the same contractor, as per the standard bidding document. Maintenance funds to service the contract are required to be budgeted by the State Governments and placed at the disposal of the State Rural Roads Development Agencies in a separate maintenance account. On the expiry of the 5-year post-construction maintenance, PMGSY roads are required to be placed under zonal maintenance contracts consisting of 5-year maintenance including renewal as per maintenance cycle, from time to time, which are also financed by the State Governments.

National Quality Monitors appointed by the Ministry are also deputed to check the quality of maintenance work on PMGSY roads. If any work is found having unsatisfactory grading, the concerned State Government is informed to get it rectified/ repaired. The quality grading of maintenance is monitored through Online Management, Monitoring and Accounting System i.e. the programme MIS.

To further enhance the focus on the maintenance of roads during the defect liability period and also streamline the delivery of routine maintenance of PMGSY roads, electronic Maintenance of Rural Roads (eMARG)- an e-governance solution, has been introduced.

The OMMAS and E-Marg enable online monitoring of the status of road maintenance in the country.

State Governments take up repair of roads, damaged due to natural calamities, with the State Disaster Response Agencies. There is no such provision of funds under PMGSY.

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 23 of Chapter – I of this Report)

CHAPTER V

**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES
OF GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED**

NIL

**NEW DELHI;
16 December 2024
Agrahayana 25, 1946 (Saka)**

**DR. SANJAY JAISWAL
CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES**

**MINUTES OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES
(2024-2025)**

The Committee sat on Monday, the 16th December, 2024 from 1600 hrs. to 1630 hrs. in Room No. '52-B', First Floor, Samvidhan Sadan, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal - Chairperson

Members

2. Shri Brijmohan Agrawal
3. Shri M. Mallesh Babu
4. Shri Pradan Baruah
5. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
6. Shri P. P. Chaudhary
7. Smt. Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo
8. Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
9. Shri Manish Jaiswal
10. Thiru Dayanidhi Maran
11. Shri P. C. Mohan
12. Shri B.K. Parthasarathi
13. Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy
14. Dr. Rajkumar Sangwan
15. Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
16. Kumari Selja
17. Dr. Indra Hang Subba
18. Shri Manoj Tiwari
19. Shri Ve vaithilingam

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Y. M. Kandpal - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Lalkithang - Director

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee. The Committee then took up for consideration and adoption of the following draft Reports:

- (i) XXX XXX XXX
- (ii) Draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the 32nd Report (17th Lok Sabha) of the Committee on the subject "Review of Performance of National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA) w.r.t. Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)";
- (iii) XXX XXX XXX
- (iv) XXX XXX XXX
- (v) XXX XXX XXX.

3. Thereafter, the Committee adopted the Draft Reports without any modifications. The Committee, then, authorised the Chairperson to finalize the draft Reports and present the same to Lok Sabha.

The Committee, then, adjourned.

APPENDIX-II

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE THIRTY-SECOND REPORT (SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA) OF THE COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

(i)	Total number of recommendations/observations	12
(ii)	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government (Sl. Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7)	6
	Percentage of total recommendations	50%
(iii)	Recommendation/Observation which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply Percentage of total recommendations (Sl. No. 8, 11, 12)	3
	Percentage of total recommendations	25%
(iv)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee (Sl. Nos. 3, 9, 10)	3
	Percentage of total recommendations	25%
(v)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.	0
	Percentage of total recommendations	0%