

TWENTY-SIXTH REPORT

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(2001)**

THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT)**

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA

Presented to Lok Sabha on 19.12.2001

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 19.12.2001

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2001/Agrahayana, 1923 (Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2001)**

Shri Anant Gangaram Geete - *Chairman*

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LOK SABHA

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44. Shri Suryabhan Patil Vahadane
45. Vacant

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. | Shri S.C. Rastogi | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Shri K. Chakraborty | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 3. | Shrimati Sudesh Luthra | - | Under Secretary |
| 4. | Shri A.K. Srivastava | - | Committee Officer |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Urban and Rural Development (2001) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present the Twenty-Sixth Report on Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

2. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Department of Rural Development (Ministry of Rural Development) on 13th February, 19th February, and 1st August, 2001.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 11th December, 2001.

4. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Department of Rural Development (Ministry of Rural Development) for placing before them the requisite material in connection with the examination of the subject. They also wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Department who appeared before the Committee and placed their considered views.

5. They would also like to place on record their sense of deep appreciation for the invaluable assistance rendered to them by the officials of the Lok Sabha Secretariat attached to the Committee.

NEW DELHI;
14 December, 2001
23 Agrahayana, 1923 (Saka)

ANANT GANGARAM GEETE,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Urban and Rural Development

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

1.1 Rural connectivity is a key component of rural development in India. Rural roads contribute significantly to generating increased agricultural income and productive employment opportunities, alongside promoting access to economic and social services. As admitted by the Government in their written note, inspite of the efforts made over the years by them as well as by the State Governments through different programmes, about 40% of the villages in the country are still not connected by all-weather roads. Besides, even where connectivity is provided, the roads constructed are not of satisfactory quality and they cannot be categorised as all-weather roads.

1.2 The Union Cabinet, at its meeting held on 5th April, 2000 approved a proposal of the Ministry of Surface Transport that 50% of the cess on High Speed Diesel (HSD) would be transferred to the Ministry of Rural Development for the National Rural Roads Programme. An Act of the Parliament has also been enacted in this regard. On 15th August, 2000, the Prime Minister announced about launching of the 'Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana' from 2nd October, 2000. The Yojana was formally launched on 25th December, 2000.

1.3 In pursuance of the objectives of the Government requisite proposals were formulated in the Ministry of Rural Development which envisaged implementation of the Rural Roads Programme as a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme. In the Budget of the year 2000-01, a sum of Rs.2,500 crores was also earmarked for launching a national rural connectivity programme. During 2000-01, the flow of funds for rural roads was an additional central assistance and from the year 2001-02 onwards, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, which is a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme, was launched.

1.4 The guidelines of the programme were issued on 15th December, 2000. The Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi has been identified as the principal technical agency to assist the Department of Rural Development in the implementation of the programme.

1.5 Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is the single most important programme of rural development hitherto undertaken. Keeping in view the importance of Gram Sadak Yojana for the rural parts of the country, the Committee took up the subject for examination to make certain valuable suggestions which would be helpful for the effective implementation of the Yojana. The various aspects involved in the proper and timely implementation of Gram Sadak Yojana have been considered in depth by the Committee and the suggestions/recommendations have been made in this regard in the succeeding paragraphs of the Report. The Committee hope that the Government would accord a careful, considered and serious thought to their suggestions/recommendations and revise the guidelines accordingly so that the objectives of the Gram Sadak Yojana could be realised expeditiously.

CHAPTER II

Objectives of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

2.1 The objective of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is to provide road connectivity, through good all-weather roads, to all rural habitations with a population of more than 500 persons by the year 2007 (end of Tenth Plan period). In the process, all unconnected habitations having a population of more than 1000 persons would be covered in the next three years. In case of hilly/desert tracts, this may not be less than 250.

2.2 While the primary focus of the programme is on construction of new roads, upgradation (to prescribed standards) of existing roads is permitted to be taken up under the programme so as to achieve connectivity through all-weather good roads. In taking up upgradation, the population norms indicated above shall be observed. Upgradation would involve conversion, depending on the need, of gravel roads / water bound macadam (WBM) roads to black-topped (B.T.). Extension of existing roads to the SC/ST habitation in the village would also be covered under upgradation. Upgradation would, however, not cover repair of existing roads.

2.3 The Secretary during the course of oral evidence clarified the objective of Sadak Yojana as below :-

“The objective of the scheme is one connectivity, which is the most economical one”.

2.4 As per the written note furnished by the Ministry, the total number of villages unconnected by roads are 2,58,459. The position is very dismal in the States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

2.5 In the Report of the National Rural Road Development Committee (NRDC) constituted by the Government to assess the magnitude of the task, it has been stated that lakhs of Indian villages and crores of villagers are suffering tragic isolation and prolonged deprivation. Some of the symptoms of such deprivations are enlisted below:-

- (i) Daily 300 pregnant women die as they cannot reach the healthcare centres in time from their villages;
- (ii) Lakhs of rural children cannot reach the schools during rainy season;
- (iii) Perishable agricultural produce cannot reach the markets in time leading to heavy losses to the farmers;
- (iv) A large number of cattle die in veterinary epidemics especially during rainy season because timely help cannot reach them;
- (v) Water tankers cannot reach several thousand drought prone villages leading to migration of rural population in total despair;
- (vi) The public distribution system fails to penetrate thousands of villages leading to malnutrition and infant mortality;
- (vii) Poor connectivity has a high correlation with high levels of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty; and
- (viii) Low levels of accessibility have deprived large number of villages from the equality of opportunity as compared to the urban population.

2.6 In the said Report, 100 districts have been enlisted as most backward and poor, and one of the reasons for their backwardness has been attributed to lack of villages with pucca roads.

The details of the villages to be connected under the Gram Sadak Yojana

2.7 As per the information furnished by the Government, the overall position in respect of rural connectivity is as below:-

Total number of unconnected villages	:	2,71,436
Number of unconnected villages with Population 1000 and above	:	39,251
Number of unconnected villages with Population below 1000	:	2,321,85

As per the latest status report regarding connectivity it is observed that the total number of unconnected villages is 2,58,459 (see Appendix – I).

2.8 When asked about the number of unconnected villages having a population of less than 500, the Government have stated that the precise number of such unconnected villages is presently not available. Besides as regards data pertaining to the actual total length of roads required to provide total connectivity to all the villages, it has been submitted by the Government that they do not have the figures. However, the estimates are that the average length of road required for each village would be about 4 kms.

2.9 The Committee find that Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana whose objective is to provide total rural connectivity is the most important programme of rural development hitherto undertaken. The importance of the programme makes it imperative that the Yojana be carefully conceived and meticulously executed so that it does not suffer the fate of many other programmes of rural development being undertaken at present in the country.

2.10 While noting the criteria of population for providing connectivity under the Gram Sadak Yojana, the Committee find that the criteria of having a population of more than 250 in hilly, desert and tribal areas should be reconsidered keeping in view the fact that in difficult areas, the population is scattered and most of the villages have a population of less than 250. Since the difficult areas need more attention under the Sadak Yojana, it may not be justified if most of the villages/village clusters remained uncovered by the Yojana. The Committee further find that the Government are yet to collect the vital data regarding the number of villages having a population of less than 500, and the number of villages in difficult areas and their population. They recommend that the set norms of population of more than 250 in case of hilly, desert and tribal areas including North Eastern States may be reviewed when the necessary data is available.

2.11 In the guidelines the expression ‘habitation’ has not been defined. The Committee recommend that the term ‘habitation’ should be defined to mean connectivity of any road under the Yojana which would benefit a population cluster of at least 250/500/1000 as the case may be.

2.12 The concept of ‘multiple connectivity’ should not exclude shorter roads being provided where ‘single connectivity’ involves long distances.

2.13 The Committee note that the National Rural Road Development Committee (NRRDC) in their report have listed 100 districts as backward and poorest districts in the country for lack of connectivity. The Committee feel that to do justice with these backward and poorest districts, and to check further deterioration in their condition, top most priority be accorded under the Sadak Yojana to provide connectivity to these districts.

CHAPTER III

Delay in finalisation of the various aspects relating to the implementation of the Sadak Yojana

3.1 The Gram Sadak Yojana was finally launched on 25th December, 2000. During 2000-2001, the flow of funds for rural roads was an additional Central Assistance and from the year 2001-2002, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana will be considered as a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

3.2 As per the written note furnished by the Department the following crucial aspects which are needed for the implementation of the Sadak Yojana are yet to be finalised by the Government :

- (i) the modus operandi for releasing funds for the Sadak Yojana is under finalisation;
- (ii) Programme Implementation Units for formulation of District Rural Roads Plans are yet to be set up in each district in the respective States;
- (iii) the process of identifying reputed institutions to provide technical assistance to the implementing authorities in the respective States is underway;
- (iv) the final decision with regard to the manner of release of funds to State Governments is yet to be taken;
- (v) to equip PIUs with necessary computer software is likely to be arranged in the next financial year;
- (vi) the final decision in respect of allowing cost incidental to the execution of roads such as telephone and other office expenses and cost of travel etc. is yet to be taken;
- (vii) the scheme of incentives/disincentives to States/Districts is yet to be worked out;
- (viii) the data regarding the number of villages having difficult areas like hilly areas is yet to be provided by the State Governments;
- (ix) the preparation of District Rural Roads Plans is yet to be completed;
- (x) the guidelines regarding utilisation of EAS and JGSY funds in such cases as to avoid duplication of expenditure are yet to be issued;
- (xi) the training Institutes to be engaged to provide training to the personnel engaged in the implementation of Sadak Yojana are yet to be decided;
- (xii) the suitable procedure in respect of maintenance of roads by Panchayats is yet to be evolved.

3.3 When asked how the Government would ensure the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in view the fact that the broad parameters for implementation of the Yojana are still to be finalised, the Government have stated that the basic framework required for implementation of the provisions is in place. In a massive programme like this, there would be some elements which would be progressively finalised.

3.4 The Committee regret to note that though the Sadak Yojana was announced in March 2000 and formally launched on 25th December, 2000 the parameters for implementation of the Yojana are still to be finalised. The Committee feel that in the absence of the broad parametres needed for implementation of the scheme, the

outlay released to the State Governments for the implementation of Sadak Yojana could be utilised by them in making payment for the roads already constructed under the different ongoing Centrally Sponsored/State Sector Schemes. The Committee, therefore recommend that to prevent any diversion of funds by the State Governments the parameters for implementation of the Yojana should be finalised without any further delay and the Committee be apprised accordingly.

CHAPTER IV

Definition of all-weather roads

4.1 While defining the all weather roads the Government have submitted as below: -
“An all-weather road is a road which is negotiable during all weathers except at major river crossings. This implies that the roadbed is drained effectively by adequate cross drainage structures such as culverts, minor bridges, and causeways. The pavement should be negotiable during all weathers, but this does not imply that it should be paved or surfaced or black-topped.”

4.2 The Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development during the course of oral evidence, while clarifying the type of roads to be constructed under Sadak Yojana stated as below:-

“Clearly the position is that these roads will be black top unless there are some peculiar conditions. Gravel roads are possible and permissible under these guidelines, but they do not last very long especially in high rainfall areas. I was saying that we want to give guaranteed connectivity. We do not want to be told that the road could not function for three months. But we are not covering big projects. That is something which we cannot sustain under our programme. We will provide for all other works and they would be black top roads. We are entirely open to the approach of the State Governments in evolving their own mechanisms for assessing and generating proposals. At the district level, we did not go into the details because we felt that there must be some degree of convergence at the State level, Zilla Parishad, Chairman and Collectors”.

4.3 In the Report of the National Rural Road Development Committee, the all-weather roads have been defined as under:-

“As per the definition in the Minimum Needs Programme, an all-weather road is one having a metalled water bound macadam (WBM) surface with cross drainage works and minor bridges. The thickness of metalling is barely 9 inches. Cross drainage works are those bridges with waterways of less than 6 metres. The minor bridges are those with waterways between 6 metres and 30 metres. However, even minor bridges are rarely constructed. Causeways or paved dips are preferred in most cases.”

“It is the experience, however, that such metal roads with thin metal crust do not last even for one year. With the great growth of agriculture and easy availability of motor vehicles, any roads constructed in the rural areas immediately attract bus and truck traffic. It is also quite common to see farmers and rural folk travelling in various kinds of motor vehicles on these roads. The WBM road was basically never meant to carry heavy and fast pneumatic-tyred traffic. It was invented to replace old stone block type roads to take care of animal drawn iron-tyred vehicles. In the initial stages of development of motor vehicles, these roads served fairly well with good maintenance and a very light traffic of motor vehicles. Now, however, they ravel in no time under the heavy and fast pneumatic-tyred motor vehicle traffic. In hilly areas with even slightly more rainfall, the flowing surface rain water washes out all the binding material and the metal then ravel in no time. To make matters worse, the crust thickness adopted are not enough to take the

weight of heavy vehicles where the subgrade, i.e., the soil on which the metal crust is built, has a poor strength. The Government, therefore, usually gets blamed for building poor roads or even for corruption.

It is, therefore, suggested that under this new programme the Government should provide at least a thin asphaltic wearing coat on sufficiently thick metal crust. The thickness of metal crust and the exact type of asphaltic wearing coat would vary from situation to situation depending on several local factors like the soil, the rainfall, the terrain and the availability of good metal as well as the density of expected traffic.”

4.4 While noting separate definitions of all weather roads given by the Government and N.R.R.D.C. under the Sadak Yojana, the Committee would like that the type and the width of the roads constructed under the Yojana should be according to the traffic and needs of a particular area. It should be ensured that the roads constructed are durable. While deciding about the width and other parameters of road by the implementing agency, they should also take care of the demands of the area in the near future that can be 10-15 years from the construction of the road. Necessary guidelines in this regard should be issued by the Government. The Committee would like the Government to work in close coordination with N.R.R.D.C. and would stress that the crust of thickness adopted should be sufficient enough to take the weight of heavy vehicles. In hilly areas, the roads should not be inundated by slight rainfall causing damage due to washing of binding materials and raveling of metals. Further, the Committee also desire that the suggestion given in N.R.R.D.C. Report in this regard should be taken into consideration.

CHAPTER V

Requirement of funds

5.1 When asked for the estimates regarding the cost of construction of one kilometre of road in plain as well as in difficult areas, it was submitted by the Government that the cost of construction of 1 km of road in plain as well as in difficult areas depends on various factors such as pavement design, number of cross-drainage works, etc. In general, it ranges from Rs.10 to Rs. 12 lakhs. In hilly/difficult areas, this figure would be higher.

5.2 As per the guidelines of the Gram Sadak Yojana, 50% of the cess of High Speed Diesel would be earmarked for this Programme. As regards the requirement of funds for Sadak Yojana, it is estimated that the number of villages/habitations, having a population of more than 500 persons, to be covered under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, would be about 1 lakhs. In addition, about 5 lakhs km of existing roads may require upgradation. Based on an estimation of the average length of road per village and the cost of construction at 4 km and Rs.10 lakhs per km respectively, and the cost of upgradation at Rs.5 lakhs per km, the requirement of funds for Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana may be around Rs.60,000 crores.

5.3 The State-wise consumption of High Speed Diesel (HSD) for the year 1999-2000, as provided by the Oil Coordination Committee, is enclosed (see [Appendix-II](#)).

Order of priority under Sadak Yojana

5.4 As per the manual for preparation of District Rural Roads Plans, the priority, under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, would be accorded to unconnected habitations. Only after all unconnected habitations in a District have been covered, the upgradation of roads in already connected habitations can be taken up. Here again, priority would be accorded to habitations connected by gravel roads. The order of priority to be followed under the Yojana is as below :-

Sl. No.	Population size	Category
1.	1000 or more	Unconnected to roads of desired specification
2.	500-999	Unconnected to roads of desired specification
3.	1000 or more	Gravel to desired specification
4.	500-999	Gravel to desired specification
5.	1000 or more	WBM to desired specification
6.	500-999	WBM to desired specification

5.5 The details of allocation for the year 2000-2001, as communicated by the Planning Commission are enclosed (see [Appendix-III](#))

5.6 When asked how the Government propose to utilise the entire amount of Rs. 2500 crores during the current financial year, it was submitted by the Government that they have, so far, approved project proposals for Rs.658 crores pertaining to 17 States and one Union Territory by the end of January, 2001. Project proposals have been approved to the full extent of allocation in respect of the States of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. State Governments are in the process of sending project proposals and the Empowered Committee is holding regular meetings to clear the project proposals. It is expected that approvals to utilise the entire amount of the Rs.2500 crores will be issued before the end of the current financial year.

5.7 When asked for the reasons for delay in launching the programme it was stated by the Government that they had constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Nitin Gadkari, which submitted its Reports in May 2000. The process of consultation with different Ministries/Departments and the State Governments took some time.

Utilisation of funds earmarked during 2000-2001

5.8 The Government have stated that while a sum of Rs.672.26 crores was made available to the States for completion of ongoing road works under the erstwhile Basic Minimum Services Programme, the remaining amount was released for road work pertaining to new connectivity and upgradation (see Appendix-IV). According to available information, States like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh have largely utilized the funds made available for completion of incomplete BMS works. Other States are likely to do so in the next few months. As regards the project proposals pertaining to new connectivity and upgradation, after technical scrutiny by the Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi, the State Authorities have prepared the detailed estimates and tender notices have also been issued. In States such as Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana, tenders have also been finalised and works have commenced. A few works are reported to have even been completed in the State of Rajasthan. From the available information it is expected that tenders are likely to be finalized by the end of July, 2001 and works commenced immediately thereafter and completed largely by December, 2001. As regards the allocations for the year 2001-2002, it is stated that a sum of Rs.2500 crores has been earmarked for the Sadak Yojana in the grant of the Ministry of Rural Development under the State plan.

5.9 When asked for the basis of allocating funds to different States/UTs for the Gram Sadak Yojana, it is stated by the Government that the allocation to the States is based on a formula wherein, inter alia, a weightage of 75% has been accorded to need (share of unconnected habitations in the State in the total unconnected habitations of the country) and 25% to coverage (share of connected habitations in the State in the total connected habitations of the country). No State has been allocated less than Rs.20 crores, except Goa which, alongwith the Union Territories (except Andaman and Nicobar Islands) has been allocated Rs.5 crores for the year 2000-2001. Further unlike other rural development programmes, there is no concept of unspent balances under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. Although funds are being released during February/March 2001, the guidelines indicate that they will be transferred to the concerned DRDAs within 15 days of release by the Government of India. The funds will be non-lapsable at the DRDA level.

5.10 When asked how the Government would ensure that the money is released by the State Government to DRDA within 15 days of release by the Government of India, the Secretary, during the course of oral evidence stated:

“They should give us and the Finance Ministry an undertaking from the State Finance Secretary that this is going to be done.”

5.11 When further asked whether the Government have taken care of the position of difficult areas like North-Eastern States and different hilly States while distributing funds

to different States/UTs, it is stated, that notwithstanding the criteria, the North-Eastern States of Mizoram, Nagaland as well as Sikkim and Jammu and Kashmir have been allocated a minimum of Rs.20 crores. The total allocation to the North-Eastern States exceeds 10% of the total allocation, which is normally followed in other Programmes.

5.12 When asked whether the Government have thought of covering villages having population of less than 500 or 250, which are not covered under the existing guidelines, but are important from agriculture or trade point of view, the Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development during the course of oral evidence submitted that if road is necessary from the point of view of marketing and medicine, that may be included in the scheme.

5.13 As per Manual for preparation of District Rural Roads Plans, the unconnected habitations are to be connected to nearby habitations or to another existing all weather road so that services (educational, health, marketing facilities etc.) which are not available in the unconnected habitations become available to the residents.

5.14 As per the allocation of funds to different States/UTs during 2000-2001 there is no mention of Delhi and Chandigarh. When asked for the reasons for not including Delhi and Chandigarh in the said programme, it is stated that Delhi and Chandigarh were not included in the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana because they are not covered under the other programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. A proposal to include Delhi under this programme is, however, under active consideration.

5.15 The Committee note that out of Rs.2500 crore earmarked for the Sadak Yojana during 2000-2001, an outlay of Rs.672.26 crore was made available to the States for completion of ongoing road works under the erstwhile Basic Minimum Services Programme and as per the information made available to the Committee, the funds have largely been utilised in some of the States. The Committee would like to be apprised about the utilisation position in all the States/Union Territories. The Committee also find that the remaining outlay has to be utilised by the State Governments for providing new connectivity. To ensure the proper utilisation of outlay earmarked under the Sadak Yojana, the Committee would like that the Government should monitor the position of utilisation of funds in various States to ensure that the funds are utilised only for providing new connectivity to achieve the objectives of the Yojana. The Committee would like to be apprised about the latest position of releases and utilisation of funds in respect of States/districts for providing new connectivity. Moreover the Committee urge the additionality of amount spent under the Basic Minimum Service Programme for Sadak Yojana.

5.16 While noting the norms of the Government according to which weightage of 75% is given to unconnected habitations in the country, the Committee find that there may be States having almost good connectivity, but the position of the roads in those States may be very poor. Further, the progressive States like Kerala and Maharashtra are mostly contributing towards the cess which is the main source of funding for the Sadak Yojana. To give justice to all the States, the Committee would like that the Government should review the criteria and some weightage should be given to the States or districts where the position of roads is poor although connectivity is good.

5.17 The Committee further note that the Union Territories of Delhi and Chandigarh have found no place in the Sadak Yojana although they have certain rural areas. The Committee are not able to appreciate the rationale given by the Government that these Union Territories are not covered by other programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. The Committee find that the rural development programmes like ARWSP are being implemented in the rural areas in these Union Territories. They also note that the proposal to include Delhi and Chandigarh in the Sadak Yojana is under active consideration of the Government. The Committee, therefore, would like that the decision in this regard is taken favourably without any further delay.

5.18 While appreciating the initiative taken by the Government to make the grants under the Yojana non-lapsable so that the unspent amount appropriated for a particular year is available for expenditure in the subsequent financial years, the Committee would like to caution the Government against accumulation of huge unspent outlay with the State Governments as in the case of other rural development schemes/programmes. They would like that the balance should be maintained between appropriations and actual outlay in a particular year.

5.19 The Committee find that there is a need to take the issue of construction of roads in difficult areas like hilly States including North-Eastern States in an entirely different perspective because the cost of construction of roads in difficult areas may be higher than the plain areas. Besides, the problem of insurgency in some of the North-Eastern States, Jammu and Kashmir and other insurgency affected areas would further affect the cost of construction of roads. The Committee would, therefore, like that all these facts should be taken into consideration while deciding the release of outlay for a particular State.

The Committee further observe that there are hundreds of villages in the country which, though having population of less than 500 or 250 are agriculturally prominent or important from the trade point of view. The Committee therefore, recommend that while adopting the criteria for rural connectivity, economic importance of such villages should also be kept in mind.

5.20 The Committee find from the material made available to them by the Government, that at least Rs.60,000 crores at present price level will be required to attain the objective of the Yojana, that is the total rural connectivity at an average of 4 km. road per village at the rate of approximately Rs.10 lakh per kilometre. At the present rate of appropriation for the Yojana, i.e. Rs.2500 crore per annum, it will be nearly a quarter century before this goal is achieved. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should treat rural connectivity on a particularly high priority in seeking additional funds from international financial organisations such as World Bank and Asian Development Bank etc., and by raising bonds to achieve the objectives within the stipulated time period i.e. by the end of Tenth Plan. The Committee may be kept informed from time to time about the progress made in this direction.

CHAPTER VI

Implementation of the Yojana

As per the guidelines, there will be an Empowered Committee at the Central Level and each State Government/UT Administration would identify one or two suitable agencies to be designated as executive agencies. At the district level, the programme will be planned, coordinated and implemented through executing agencies. A programme Implementation Unit (PIU) entirely directed towards this Programme will be set up in all the districts concerned. All PIUs will be manned by competent technical personnel from amongst available staff or through deputationist and no new post will be created for the purpose.

6.2 When asked whether the Government have ascertained the views of the State Governments on the implementation of the Sadak Yojana, it was stated that a meeting was held with all the concerned State Secretaries on 13th June, 2000 wherein the views of the State Governments were elicited. Subsequently, a workshop was held on 4th and 5th September, 2000 at Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi which was attended by some State Secretaries as well as engineers from all the State Governments. The guidelines issued under the programme have been sent to all the State Governments. State Governments are accordingly sending their proposals.

6.3 When enquired whether the Government have ensured from each State Government about the availability of staff for implementation of the Sadak Yojana, it was mentioned that during discussions as well as in the guidelines, it has been stated that the programme will be implemented with the existing staff. No State Government has expressed any reservations in this regard.

Executing Agencies

6.4 As per the guidelines of the Sadak Yojana, each State Government/UT Administration would identify one or two suitable agencies to be designated as executing agencies. The details of the executing agency in each of the State/UT Government are given at Appendix-V. It is observed that in most of the States the executing agency is PWD. In some States like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the executing agency is Rural Development Department. While in Andhra Pradesh, the Yojana is being implemented by Panchayati Raj Implementing Department, in West Bengal, Zilla Parishad is the executing agency. In Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadar & N.Haveli, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep, the Yojana is being implemented by PWD and Panchayati Raj Institutions. Thus, there is wide variation in deciding the executing agency in different States/UTs.

6.5 When the attention of the Secretary during the course of oral evidence was drawn towards involvement of some of the private agencies in identification of road the Secretary made it clear as below:

“These organisations have no place in our scheme of things. x x
x x our plan is very clear. It involves ‘Panchayat Raj Institutions and
elected representatives’.

Transfer of funds to implementing authority

6.6 As per guidelines, the cost of approved projects will be released to the concerned DRDAs through the State Governments in two instalments for the year 2000-2001. Further as per the guidelines, State Governments are required to transfer the funds within 15 days to the DRDAs. In order to ensure that the funds are not diverted, DRDAs could maintain the same in a separate Bank Account. As per the Government's written replies this will be monitored once funds are released by the Ministry of Finance. The Executing Agency is required to complete the project within 9-12 months from the date of the approval.

6.7 When asked for the modus operandi for releasing funds for the Sadak Yojana, the Government stated that the modus operandi for the future is under finalisation.

6.8 When asked for the difficulty in transferring the funds directly to the DRDAs/Implementing Agency, the Government have stated as under:

“For the year 2000-2001, the funds for the programme are part of the sum of Rs.5000 crores earmarked under the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY). This provision has been reflected in the Demand No.30 – Ministry of Finance, as transfer to State and Union Territory Governments. The Estimates are included under Major Head “3601” and Major Head “7601” as Block Grants and Block Loans for State Plan Scheme. These funds are released to the States/UT Governments.”

6.9 While clarifying the role of DRDA in the execution of Sadak Yojana, the Secretary during the course of oral evidence submitted as below:

“DRDA is an agency to bank the funds. Any other use that is being made of DRDAs is informal and xxxxxxxx not desirable xxxxxxxx They have no role for implementation or formulation in the scheme.”

Preparation of Block Master Plan by the Programme Implementation Units

6.10 Each State has been asked to identify an executing agency for the execution of the Programme. The executing agency is expected to set up the Programme Implementation Unit (PIU) in each District. The preparation of the Master Plan for each Block is the responsibility of the Programme Implementation Unit.

Ten Steps in Preparation of District Rural Roads Plan

6.11 The ten major steps in the preparation and finalisation of the District Rural Road Plan are as under:-

- (1) Constitution of the Team
- (2) Preparation of Database
- (3) Map preparation
- (4) Preparation of list of unconnected habitations and the selection of the optimal road link
- (5) Consideration and approval by the Intermediate level Panchayats

- (6) Submission of the Block Level Rural Roads Plan to the District Planning Committee/Chief Executive Officer/District Collector
- (7) Scrutiny by the District Planning Committee/Chief Executive Officer/District Collector
- (8) Consideration and approval by the District Panchayat
- (9) Forwarding of the District Rural Roads Plan to the State Level Standing Committee
- (10) Vetting of the District Rural Roads Plan by the State Level Standing Committee

Approval of Block Plans by the Intermediate Panchayat

6.12 The Draft Block Plan would be presented before the Intermediate Panchayat by the leader of the team preparing the Draft Rural Roads Plan for the Block. In this meeting, Revenue Officers of appropriate level, who has knowledge of the area, may also be called. The Plan should be finalised by the Intermediate Panchayat. Any changes made by the Intermediate Panchayat, should be separately mentioned and reasons, thereof, should be indicated.

Submission of the Block Rural Roads Plan to the District Planning Committee

6.13 The team will, after obtaining the approval of the Intermediate Panchayat, submit the Block Rural Roads Plan to the District Planning Committee, where these have been constituted. In its absence, the Plan would be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer/District Collector with the original map, all the formats and tables. The team would record its views in case it feels that the Intermediate Panchayat has deviated from the guidelines in this regard.

Role of the District Planning Committee

6.14 After the Rural Roads Plan have been received from all the Blocks, the same would be scrutinised by the Chief Executive of the District Planning Committee/Chief Executive Officer/District Collector. He would be assisted by a Committee comprising of the head of the District Programme Implementation Unit (Member Secretary), Superintending Engineer/Executive Engineer PWD, Executive Engineer, Rural Engineering Service and senior officers of the Revenue/Rural Development Departments, as Members. They should look into the deviations, if any, made by the Intermediate Panchayat and the justifications therefor. They must ensure that the road plan is according to the road index, calculated as per the weightages fixed by District Panchayat, and also the proposals of the MPs and MLAs have been duly considered. If any provision made by Intermediate Panchayat or the Committee preparing the original plan, is not as per the guidelines, such provisions should be changed, the reasons, thereof, should be mentioned clearly.

Consideration and approval by the District Panchayat

6.15 The Draft District Rural Roads Plan would then be presented to the District Panchayat by the Chief Executive of the District Planning Committee. MLAs and MPs

should be specially invited to this Meeting. Members of the Committee, which prepared the District Rural Roads Plan, should be present in the Meeting. It should be discussed and adopted by the District Panchayat, with such changes, as may be considered appropriate, but strictly within the framework of this manual. If the District Planning Committee has any reservations about the changes proposed by the District Panchayat, their views should be mentioned clearly.

Selection of variables by the District Planning Committee

6.16 The District Panchayat (or the DRDAs, where the District Panchayat do not exist) shall be the competent authority to select the variables best suited for the District, categorise them and accord relative weightage to them. This shall be done before the work commences with respect to the preparation of the District Rural Roads Plan and shall be communicated to all concerned, so that the task of preparation of the District Rural Roads Plan can be accomplished in an objective manner. This is the responsibility of the District Panchayat.

But, since PMGSY envisages only single connectivity, it is necessary to choose the most economic and efficient road link. The choice of road link to a connected habitation or all weather road (which ensures access to a habitation which serves the needs of the residents of unconnected habitation) is determined by the road index of the respective road links. The road link which has the highest road index should be preferred.

Forwarding of the District Rural Roads Plan to the State Level Standing Committee

6.17 After approval by the District Panchayat, the District Rural Roads Plan, along with the District Priority List, would be forwarded to the State Level Standing Committee.

Vetting of the District Rural Roads Plan by the State Level Standing Committee

6.18 The District Rural Roads Plan would be vetted by the State Level Standing Committee, headed by the Chief Secretary/Additional Chief Secretary, as the case may be. The Committee could call the Chief Executive Officer/District Collector to present the Plan before the Committee. This Committee should go into the details of the Plan and priorities and links decided by the District Panchayat. The changes made by the District Panchayat and reservations, if any, of the District Level Committee, can also be discussed. The State Level Standing Committee should ensure that priorities decided by the District Panchayat, as well as direction of the Government of India, have been followed in preparing the District Rural Roads Plan in totality and the proposals of the MPs have been duly considered. The Plan, after it has been vetted by this Committee, would be the final District Rural Roads Plan. A copy of the District Rural Roads would be sent to Government of India for record.

6.19 The District Rural Roads Plan would, henceforth, constitute the basis for preparation of project proposals under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana as far as that particular District is concerned. The State Governments would be required to attach

the approved Block Rural Roads Plan and the District Priority List along with the project proposals under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana for the year 2001-2002. Only then the proposals would be considered by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

6.20 The project proposals received from the State Governments would be cleared by the Empowered Committee at the Central level. While no time-limit has been fixed for clearing the projects received from the State Governments by the Empowered Committee, the Empowered Committee is meeting regularly to consider the project proposals received from the States. It is informed by the Department that the Committee met seven times between 19th December, 2000 and 31st January, 2001.

Involvement of Panchayats in the implementation of Sadak Yojana

6.21 As regards the involvement of Panchayat in the implementation of Sadak Yojana it is submitted in the written note that the proposals under the Programme, particularly from the next year, would be based on the District Rural Roads Plan, based on Block level Master Plans. It is proposed that the Block Plan would be placed before the Intermediate Level Panchayat. The District Rural Roads Plan, prepared after integrating the Block Level Plans, would be similarly placed before the District Panchayat for consideration and approval. The Panchayats would also periodically review the progress of the Programme. It has further been submitted that every opportunity would be given to the Gram Panchayats to make their suggestions before the Block Level Master Plans are prepared. It is expected that the Intermediate Level Panchayats, while scrutinizing the Master Plan, would take into account the requirements indicated by the Gram Panchayats. It is, however, to be noted that the programme seeks to provide connectivity to habitations through one all-weather good road. The District Rural Roads Plan would be placed before the District Panchayat for consideration and approval.

6.22 Para 9.3 of the guidelines stipulate that all the road works will be subjected to social audit by way of discussion in the Gram Sabha . In addition, the Intermediate and District level Panchayats would also be advised to monitor the programme periodically.

6.23 When enquired whether any thought has been given to entrust the responsibility of implementation of the Yojana to the Panchayats in view of the article 243G of the Constitution, it is stated by the Government that in May, 2000, State Governments have been addressed to identify one or two executing agencies for carrying out the works. West Bengal has identified the District Panchayat as the executing agency.

Maintenance of roads constructed under Sadak Yojana

6.24 As per the guidelines, the roads constructed under the Yojana would be of very high standards and would require no major repairs for at least next five years after the completion of construction. In order to realise this objective, suitable clauses relating to performance guarantee shall be included in the contract documents.

6.25 The State Governments have to include suitable clauses in the tender/contract documents, imposing an obligation on the part of the contractor to ensure that the roads do not require major repairs for the specified period of time. Some State Governments have indicated, during discussions, that performance guarantee could be imposed for a period of 2-3 years.

6.26 Para 7.1 of the guidelines stipulates that the rural roads constructed/upgraded under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana will be maintained by the concerned Panchayati Raj Institutions (District Panchayat/Intermediate Panchayat). Para 7.2 of the guidelines also envisage the involvement of local people's participation in the maintenance of rural roads. The Department propose to evolve suitable procedures in this regard.

6.27 When enquired about the source to finance the maintenance of roads during the first five year and thereafter, it is submitted by the Government that the funds for maintenance of roads would be remitted by the State Governments that as indicated in Para 7.1 of the guidelines.

Involvement of local MPs and MLAs in the implementation of the programme

6.28 As per para 3.4 of guidelines, it has been stipulated that the Master Plan would be approved taking into account the views and suggestions of the local Members of Parliament and Members of State Assembly. The Secretary, Rural Development during the course of oral evidence submitted as below :-

“The proposals of MPs and MLAs would be taken into account by the team preparing the Draft Rural Roads Plan for the Block. A specific list would be made of the roads suggested by the MPs / MLAs and remarks indicated whether they are included or not; if not, the reasons thereof. The team would then prepare the Draft Rural Roads Plan for the Block. XX XX XX XX The Draft District Rural Roads Plan would then be presented to the District Panchayat by the Chief Executive of the District Planning Committee. MLAs and MPs should be specially invited at this meeting.”

It has also been submitted by the Government that Minister of Rural Development has also addressed a letter on 19th December, 2000 to all the Chief Ministers, drawing their attention to this provision and requesting adherence to the same. He has also written to all the Members of Parliament requesting them to send their suggestions, regarding the road works to be taken up, to the concerned State Government.

6.29 The Committee find that although the Yojana for providing total rural connectivity is described as Gram Sadak Yojana, yet the role of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat in planning and implementing the Yojana is negligible. Another noticeable feature of the Sadak Yojana is that although the Gram Panchayat has no role in planning and implementing the Sadak Yojana, yet they have been burdened with the maintenance of the roads without ensuring their financial capacity to perform such a vital task. Further, the responsibility of social audit has been entrusted to the Gram Sabha. The Committee would like to draw the attention of

the Government towards Constitutional provision in this regard. Article 243B of the Constitution provides for the constitution of Panchayats at village, intermediate and district level and article 243G of the Constitution stipulates that the functions of the Panchayats at all levels shall be “the preparation of plans” and the “implementation of schemes for economic development.” Further, the Eleventh Schedule (Entry 13) to the Constitution, specifies roads as a key recommended function of the Panchayats. Moreover, article 243 ZD provides for a District Planning Committee, elected largely from amongst and by the members of the Zila Parishad and Municipalities who will undertake the task of consolidating the plans prepared at different levels of Panchayats and Municipalities. Keeping in view the Constitutional provisions as well as the fact that the Government is responsible for ensuring the due implementation of Part IX and IXA of the Constitution relating to the Panchayats and Municipalities respectively, the Committee would like that the Government should ensure that the Sadak Yojana is planned and executed by Panchayats.

6.30 As per the guidelines of the Sadak Yojana, the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations would identify one or two suitable agencies to be designated as executing agencies. As per the list furnished by the Government, the Committee find that in almost all the States, the executing agency is the PWD. Only in West Bengal, the executing agency is Zila Parishad. Further in Andhra Pradesh, Panchayati Raj Engineering Department is the executing agency. While appreciating the stand taken by the Government to implement the Sadak Yojana with the existing staff with the State Government’s Public Departments, the Committee are not in favour of giving the total responsibility of execution of the Yojana to PWD. They feel that as per the Constitutional provision, the executing agency for constructing roads under the Sadak Yojana should be Panchayats. The Committee, therefore, would like to recommend that the Sadak Yojana should be executed by Panchayats, as is being done in West Bengal to ensure the people’s participation. Further the mechanism for using the staff of the State Government’s Public Departments by the executing agencies, that should be Panchayats, be suitably evolved by the Government.

6.31 The Committee find that the preparation of the Master Plan for each block is the responsibility of the Programme Implementation Unit to be set up by the executing agency. In this regard, the Committee would like to recommend that the identification of roads to be constructed under the Sadak Yojana should be done by the Gram Sabha at which suggestions should be invited for the rural roads to be undertaken/constructed. These suggestions should then be deliberated upon by the Gram Panchayat (not the Sarpanch acting on his own, but the whole of the Gram Panchayat considering the proposal). The proposal of the Gram Panchayats should be forwarded to Intermediate Panchayats after taking into account any technical advice as may be rendered by authorities concerned. The Committee feel that entrusting the responsibility of identification of roads to the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayats would make the Sadak Yojana a people’s programme. This would further make the people of the village more responsible towards various important

aspects like maintenance and social audit of the roads constructed under the Yojana. Not only that, it would be rather easier for the executing agency to persuade the village public when there is a need to acquire land for construction of roads.

6.32 As regards the role of Intermediate Panchayat in preparation of Master Plan, the Committee would like that the proposals submitted by the Gram Panchayats under the jurisdiction of a particular Intermediate Panchayat should be consolidated especially checking on whether the habitations covered include a satisfactory proportion of Dalit/ST villages/habitations. The Gram Sadak Yojanas of all the Intermediate Panchayats should then be consolidated at the level of District Planning Committee, which, by its very composition has a proper balance of popular representation and of Government technical advisers. Where the District Planning Committees are still to be elected as per Constitutional provisions, the Zila Parishad could function as District Planning Committee for this purpose, with appropriate participation of representatives of the Municipalities in the District and Government technical advisers.

6.33 The Master Plan for the District then should be finalised by the State Government reflecting as far as practicable the wishes of the Panchayats in this regard and adjusting the District Master Plans according to the set norms as per guidelines of the Sadak Yojana.

As regards the finalisation of Master Plans, the Committee find that it will take lot of time and as such they recommend that instead of finalising District Rural Plans of all the districts in a State, the State Government should send the plans in lots i.e. as soon as the District Rural Development Plan of a particular district is finalised it should be sent to the Centre for release of funds. To ensure timely release of funds, State Government should earmark the district-wise allocation on the basis of their requirement well in advance and there should be time limit of three months for release of funds. The Committee feel that by following the said practice, Sadak Yojana would not suffer due to non-availability of Comprehensive District Plans of all the Districts in a State.

6.34 The Committee find that the outlay for the Sadak Yojana will be released by the Central Government to the respective State Governments and State Governments are required to transfer the funds within 15 days of receipt to the DRDAs. The Committee fail to understand the rationale of transferring the funds to State Government who will then transfer funds to DRDAs who have no place in the implementation and formulation of the Yojana, as acknowledged by the Secretary during the course of his oral evidence. As stated by the Secretary himself, the role of DRDA in the Sadak Yojana is the role of the agency to bank the funds. The Committee would like that instead of releasing the funds to the State Governments, the funds should directly be transferred to the Implementing Agency to avoid any delay in the implementation of the Yojana. It is also recommended that funds should be maintained in a separate bank account to ensure that the funds are not diverted as is reportedly being done under Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana.

6.35 The Committee further find that a large number of agencies are involved in the Sadak Yojana. They have their apprehension that involvement of so many agencies would delay the implementation and further lead to confusion. In this regard, the Committee would like to urge the Government to minimise the involvement of number of agencies to the extent possible.

6.36 The Committee are not satisfied with the guidelines relating to involvement of local MPs and MLAs in the implementation of the Sadak Yojana. They note that the local MP/MLA is held responsible for the utilisation and development of these type of funds in his constituency. However, in identification and execution of the Sadak Yojana, he has a very marginal role to play. The Committee feel that the Identifying Agency will consider the proposals of local MPs and MLAs only when it is mandatory on their part to do so. To ensure this, it should be stipulated in the guidelines that the certificate of the local MP and MLA should be essential before finalising the plan at block level to ensure the proper utilisation of the funds under the Sadak Yojana. The Committee further recommend that a proportion of the Yojana funds should be earmarked for MPLAD Scheme and equivalent State Assembly Schemes. Besides local MPs and MLAs should be members of the State level Standing Committee set up under the Sadak Yojana. They also urge that it should be stipulated in the guidelines that the meetings of the said Standing Committee should be convened only after seeking the convenience of local MPs/MLAs, as far as possible.

6.37 The Committee also desire that complaints and suggestions in respect of execution and implementation of the Sadak Yojana as made by MPs to the Central Ministry of Rural Development are given due priority by the Government.

Multiplicity of schemes being implemented for construction of Rural Roads

6.38 Rural Roads at present are being constructed under several other schemes like NREP, RLEGP, JRY, IJRY, BMS, EAS, MPLAD etc.

When asked how the coordination will be maintained in view of the multiplicity of schemes to be implemented for the same purpose, the Government in their written note have submitted that NREP, RLEGP and IJRY no longer exist. As regards the BMS, it has been brought out in the Budget Speech of the Finance Minister for the year 2000-2001 that it is being merged under the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana. JRY has since been restructured into Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana for which funds are released only to the Village Panchayats. Expenditure under this programme is likely to involve only internal roads.

6.39 Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, the effort is to provide connectivity to habitations, having a population of more than 500 persons, through a all weather good road, by way of either new construction or upgradation. Under the Employment Assurance Scheme, other roads can be taken up. The Department of Rural Development will be issuing guidelines regarding utilisation of EAS funds (and also JGSY funds) in such a way as to avoid duplication of expenditure. When asked about the details of the guidelines, it is stated that the Government are in the process of finalising the details of such guidelines which are expected to be issued in next few weeks. Further when enquired whether any thought has been given to bring all schemes being implemented so far, under the Sadak Yojana, it is submitted that the objectives of the JGSY and EAS are entirely different from those of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

6.40 While noting the details of the involvement of various schemes like JGSY, EAS, MPLAD Scheme etc. in the task of construction of rural roads, the Committee would like that the Government should ensure that to avoid duplication and confusion in this regard there should be proper coordination amongst various agencies. The Committee urge that necessary guidelines in this regard should be issued without any further delay. Besides, the Committee find that sometimes payment for the same work is made from different sources. They urge the Government to ensure that there is no overlapping with other Yojanas of the projects with the projects under the Sadak Yojana.

Provision regarding compensation for land acquisition under Sadak Yojana

6.41 When enquired about the provision made with regard to the compensation for land acquisition under Sadak Yojana, the Secretary during the course of oral evidence stated as below:

“the guidelines which have been enforced do not provide for land acquisition because these cases are found indeterminate in nature. Most of the State Governments whom we spoke felt that they would undertake this responsibility.”

6.42 As regards environment and forest clearance for constructing roads, the Secretary submitted as below:

“In the case of the involvement of forest land for construction of roads, prior clearance of the competent authority is needed under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 which is statutory. The Ministry has already delegated powers to its six regional offices to decide on the proposal involving the forest land up to five hectares within a time frame of four weeks provided the proposal is complete. However, construction of such roads needs to be avoided in wildlife sanctuaries and national parks.”

6.43 When the attention of the Secretary was brought towards the long period taken by the forest Department for clearance of the schemes, he stated that efforts were made by them to get the exemption in this regard.

6.44 The Committee are apprised that State Governments have no objection to shouldering the responsibility of providing compensation for land acquisition under the Yojana. However this matter needs to be clearly reflected in the guidelines so that there is no scope for dispute on compensation for land acquisition, if any, in future. Mere verbal assurance from the States will not be enough. Further, while noting that the Government are making efforts to get the exemption regarding clearance of the competent authority in the case of forest land for construction of roads, the Committee would like the Government to pursue further to decide the matter at the earliest.

Monitoring of the Sadak Yojana

6.45 As per the guidelines, the Ministry of Rural Development would evolve a suitable software for an on-line management system. The State authorities are advised to equip the PIUs with necessary computer hardware to enable online monitoring. The cost of the hardware may be included in the project cost.

6.46 When asked whether any estimate has been made in respect of equipping the PIUs with suitable software in this regard, it is submitted by the Government that the costs to be incurred on IT support to the Programme will be very modest, but will considerably benefit the programme. It would enable monitoring by different agencies including by the public representatives.

6.47 Further, when enquired whether any time limit has been fixed to equip the PIUs with necessary computer software, it is submitted that this is likely to be arranged in the next financial year.

Suitable software for on-line management and monitoring system

6.48 When asked about the progress with regard to the development of software in the respective districts to equip the PIUs with necessary computer hardware, the Government have stated that C-DAC, Pune has already developed some software for the Public Works Department of Maharashtra which would also be useful for the 'Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana'.

6.49 Further when enquired about the position in the State/UTs other than Maharashtra it is submitted that C-DAC, Pune have not developed software for State/UTs other than Maharashtra.

The representatives of the Department of Rural Development during the course of oral evidence stated as below :-

“The Local Technical Agency is the supervising organisation. We have already indicated that independent monitors will be there, So , it will monitor the programme. We are looking at a system wherein, in case any irregularity is found, we would secure the payment of that work to be stopped. XX XX XX XX. We are also envisaging that the Panchayati Raj Institutions, Intermediating Panchayats as well as District Level Panchayats would be reviewing the programme from time to time.”

Quality of roads to be constructed under the Yojana

6.50 As per the guidelines, the roads constructed under this programme are expected to be of very high standard.

Para 4.3 of the guidelines stipulates that the road works, including the cross-drainage works, will be executed as per the technical specifications prescribed by the Ministry of Surface Transport / Indian Roads Congress.

6.51 When asked about the steps being undertaken to ensure the quality of roads to be constructed under the Yojana, it is stated by the Government that this is sought to be assured through effective supervision by the PIUs quality control units of the executing agencies, as well as independent monitors that would be engaged under the programme.

6.52 Para 4.3 of the guidelines indicate that use of locally available material should be encouraged. Further the representatives of the Department of Rural Development during the course of oral evidence stated as below :-

“Under this programme, we are thinking in terms of bringing out a quality control manual so that each contractor knows what tests he is supposed to conduct, and the executing agency, the PIUs will ensure that these tests are conducted.”

6.53 As the Gram Sadak Yojana is the most important programme of rural development and is 100% Centrally Sponsored Programme, it is essential that it is monitored properly to ensure the fulfilment of the objectives of the programme. The monitoring is further necessary to avoid duplication of payment by several agencies for a single road and also to ensure that the roads are constructed strictly according to the guidelines. Further the quality of the roads has also to be ensured. To achieve the said purposes, the Committee urge the Government to gear up the existing monitoring mechanism of the Sadak Yojana. Besides, the monitoring by the officers in the Central Ministry has further to be geared up. There should be a separate Cell in the Department of Rural Development whose main task should be to make surprise visits at the sites to ensure that the Yojana is implemented properly. Further, the monitoring by independent monitors is another aspect that needs to be taken care under the Yojana. The Committee would also like that the findings of the independent monitors should be reviewed by the Government to ensure the proper implementation of the programme in different States/UTs. Besides these measures, the Committee feel that local MPs/MLAs can play an important role in monitoring the Sadak Yojana. To ensure their involvement in monitoring, the Committee recommend that there should be a District Level Vigilance Committee under the Chairmanship of a local member of Parliament from Lok Sabha. Other local M.P.s/MLAs should also be members of the said Committee. The modalities for constitution of such Vigilance Committee should be evolved by the Government and necessary guidelines issued in this regard and the Committee be apprised accordingly.

6.54 The Committee further find that local people can play an important role in monitoring the Sadak Yojana. As recommended in earlier paragraphs, the involvement of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat in the programme would ensure the involvement of local people in the Sadak Yojana. The involvement of common man with the Yojana would automatically ensure social audit. Besides, the Committee would like that after completion of a road under the Yojana the details regarding the cost, date of starting of construction, date of completion etc. should be displayed at the site to ensure transparency in the implementation of Sadak Yojana. Technical assistance for the Gram Sadak Yojana and training to the personnel engaged in the implementation of the Sadak Yojana

6.55 The Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi has been identified as a principal technical agency to assist the Department of Rural Development in the implementation of the Yojana. It is proposed to associate several reputed institutions, located in the States with different aspects of execution of the Sadak Yojana.

6.56 When asked about the basis for identifying the institutions located in the States to provide technical assistance to the implementing agencies, it is stated in the written note furnished by the Government that this would be based on the infrastructure and technical manpower available in the institutions.

6.57 Further when enquired whether any reputed institutions have been identified so far to provide technical assistance to the implementing authorities in the respective States, it is stated that the process is under way.

The Secretary, Department of Rural Development during the course of oral evidence submitted as below:

“We have identified a number of technical institutions in the States which will help us and which are already helping us in finding the features. IIT, Kharagpur is one of the agencies. We go to the Universities and other technical institutions, We are expanding this list.”

Training to the personnel engaged in the implementation of the Sadak Yojana

6.58 When asked whether any arrangement has been made for providing training to the personnel engaged in the implementation of the Sadak Yojana, it is submitted by the Government that this is envisaged under the programme.

When enquired about the details of the training institutes to be engaged to provide training to the personnel engaged in the implementation of the Sadak Yojana, it is submitted that the training institutions will be those which possess necessary expertise and infrastructure facilities and will be decided in consultation with the State Governments.

6.59 The Committee find that the Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi is the principal technical agency to assist the Central Ministry in the implementation of the Sadak Yojana. Besides, the process of involving several reputed agencies is under way. The Committee urge the Government to finalise the list of technical agencies/institutions to be involved under the Sadak Yojana because these agencies would play an important role in the Sadak Yojana. Besides the Committee would also like that the Government should identify such technical agencies in the respective States. Further the students of various Engineering Universities can help in making the field surveys and giving their technical suggestions in the matter. The Government should formulate the necessary guidelines for their involvement and the Committee be apprised accordingly.

NEW DELHI;
14 December, 2001
23 Agrahayana, 1923 (Saka)

ANANT GANGARAM GEETE,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Urban and Rural Development

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl.No.	Para	Observation/Recommendation
1.	2.9	The Committee find that Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana whose objective is to provide total rural connectivity is the most important programme of rural development hitherto undertaken. The importance of the programme makes it imperative that the Yojana be carefully conceived and meticulously executed so that it does not suffer the fate of many other programmes of rural development being undertaken at present in the country.
2.	2.10	While noting the criteria of population for providing connectivity under the Gram Sadak Yojana, the Committee find that the criteria of having a population of more than 250 in hilly, desert and tribal areas should be reconsidered keeping in view the fact that in difficult areas, the population is scattered and most of the villages have a population of less than 250. Since the difficult areas need more attention under the Sadak Yojana, it may not be justified if most of the villages/village clusters remained uncovered by the Yojana. The Committee further find that the Government are yet to collect the vital data regarding the number of villages having a population of less than 500, and the number of villages in difficult areas and their population. They recommend that the set norms of population of more than 250 in case of hilly, desert and tribal areas including North Eastern States may be reviewed when the necessary data is available.
3.	2.11	In the guidelines the expression 'habitation' has not been defined. The Committee recommend that the term 'habitation' should be defined to mean connectivity of any road under the Yojana which would benefit a population cluster of at least 250/500/1000 as the case may be.
4.	2.12	The concept of 'multiple connectivity' should not exclude shorter roads being provided where 'single connectivity' involves long distances.
5.	2.13	The Committee note that the National Rural Road Development Committee (NRRDC) in their report have listed 100 districts as backward and poorest districts in the country for lack of connectivity. The Committee feel that to do justice with these backward and poorest districts, and to check further deterioration in their condition, top most priority be accorded under the Sadak Yojana to provide connectivity to these districts.
6.	3.4	The Committee regret to note that though the Sadak Yojana was announced in March 2000 and formally launched on 25 th December, 2000 the parameters for implementation of the

Yojana are still to be finalised. The Committee feel that in the absence of the broad parametres needed for implementation of the scheme, the outlay released to the State Governments for the implementation of Sadak Yojana could be utilised by them in making payment for the roads already constructed under the different ongoing Centrally Sponsored/State Sector Schemes. The Committee, therefore recommend that to prevent any diversion of funds by the State Governments the parameters for implementation of the Yojana should be finalised without any further delay and the Committee be apprised accordingly.

7. 4.4 While noting separate definitions of all weather roads given by the Government and N.R.R.D.C. under the Sadak Yojana, the Committee would like that the type and the width of the roads constructed under the Yojana should be according to the traffic and needs of a particular area. It should be ensured that the roads constructed are durable. While deciding about the width and other parametres of road by the implementing agency, they should also take care of the demands of the area in the near future that can be 10-15 years from the construction of the road. Necessary guidelines in this regard should be issued by the Government. The Committee would like the Government to work in close coordination with N.R.R.D.C. and would stress that the crust of thickness adopted should be sufficient enough to take the weight of heavy vehicles. In hilly areas, the roads should not be inundated by slight rainfall causing damage due to washing of binding materials and ravelling of metals. Further, the Committee also desire that the suggestion given in N.R.R.D.C. Report in this regard should be taken into consideration.

8. 5.15 The Committee note that out of Rs.2500 crore earmarked for the Sadak Yojana during 2000-2001, an outlay of Rs.672.26 crore was made available to the States for completion of ongoing road works under the erstwhile Basic Minimum Services Programme and as per the information made available to the Committee, the funds have largely been utilised in some of the States. The Committee would like to be apprised about the utilisation position in all the States/Union Territories. The Committee also find that the remaining outlay has to be utilised by the State Governments for providing new connectivity. To ensure the proper utilisation of outlay earmarked under the Sadak Yojana, the Committee would like that the Government should monitor the position of utilisation of funds in various States to ensure that the funds are utilised only for providing new connectivity to achieve the objectives of the Yojana. The Committee would like to be apprised about the latest position of releases and utilisation of funds in respect of States/districts for providing new connectivity. Moreover the

Committee urge the additionality of amount spent under the Basic Minimum Service Programme for Sadak Yojana.

9. 5.16 While noting the norms of the Government according to which weightage of 75% is given to unconnected habitations in the country, the Committee find that there may be States having almost good connectivity, but the position of the roads in those States may be very poor. Further, the progressive States like Kerala and Maharashtra are mostly contributing towards the cess which is the main source of funding for the Sadak Yojana. To give justice to all the States, the Committee would like that the Government should review the criteria and some weightage should be given to the States or districts where the position of roads is poor although connectivity is good.
10. 5.17 The Committee further note that the Union Territories of Delhi and Chandigarh have found no place in the Sadak Yojana although they have certain rural areas. The Committee are not able to appreciate the rationale given by the Government that these Union Territories are not covered by other programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. The Committee find that the rural development programmes like ARWSP are being implemented in the rural areas in these Union Territories. They also note that the proposal to include Delhi and Chandigarh in the Sadak Yojana is under active consideration of the Government. The Committee, therefore, would like that the decision in this regard is taken favourably without any further delay.
11. 5.18 While appreciating the initiative taken by the Government to make the grants under the Yojana non-lapsable so that the unspent amount appropriated for a particular year is available for expenditure in the subsequent financial years, the Committee would like to caution the Government against accumulation of huge unspent outlay with the State Governments as in the case of other rural development schemes/programmes. They would like that the balance should be maintained between appropriations and actual outlay in a particular year.
12. 5.19 The Committee find that there is a need to take the issue of construction of roads in difficult areas like hilly States including North-Eastern States in an entirely different perspective because the cost of construction of roads in difficult areas may be higher than the plain areas. Besides, the problem of insurgency in some of the North-Eastern States, Jammu and Kashmir and other insurgency affected areas would further affect the cost of construction of roads. The Committee would, therefore, like that all these facts should be taken into consideration while deciding the release of outlay for a particular State.

The Committee further observe that there are hundreds of villages in the country which, though having population of less than 500 or 250 are agriculturally prominent or important from the trade point of view. The Committee therefore, recommend that while adopting the criteria for rural connectivity, economic importance of such villages should also be kept in mind.

13. 5.20 The Committee find from the material made available to them by the Government, that at least Rs.60,000 crores at present price level will be required to attain the objective of the Yojana, that is the total rural connectivity at an average of 4 km. road per village at the rate of approximately Rs.10 lakh per kilometre. At the present rate of appropriation for the Yojana, i.e. Rs.2500 crore per annum, it will be nearly a quarter century before this goal is achieved. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should treat rural connectivity on a particularly high priority in seeking additional funds from international financial organisations such as World Bank and Asian Development Bank etc., and by raising bonds to achieve the objectives within the stipulated time period i.e. by the end of Tenth Plan. The Committee may be kept informed from time to time about the progress made in this direction.
14. 6.29 The Committee find that although the Yojana for providing total rural connectivity is described as Gram Sadak Yojana, yet the role of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat in planning and implementing the Yojana is negligible. Another noticeable feature of the Sadak Yojana is that although the Gram Panchayat has no role in planning and implementing the Sadak Yojana, yet they have been burdened with the maintenance of the roads without ensuring their financial capacity to perform such a vital task. Further, the responsibility of social audit has been entrusted to the Gram Sabha. The Committee would like to draw the attention of the Government towards Constitutional provision in this regard. Article 243B of the Constitution provides for the constitution of Panchayats at village, intermediate and district level and article 243G of the Constitution stipulates that the functions of the Panchayats at all levels shall be “the preparation of plans” and the “implementation of schemes for economic development.” Further, the Eleventh Schedule (Entry 13) to the Constitution, specifies roads as a key recommended function of the Panchayats. Moreover, article 243 ZD provides for a District Planning Committee, elected largely from amongst and by the members of the Zila Parishad and Municipalities who will undertake the task of consolidating the plans prepared at different levels of Panchayats

and Municipalities. Keeping in view the Constitutional provisions as well as the fact that the Government is responsible for ensuring the due implementation of Part IX and IXA of the Constitution relating to the Panchayats and Municipalities respectively, the Committee would like that the Government should ensure that the Sadak Yojana is planned and executed by Panchayats.

15. 6.30

As per the guidelines of the Sadak Yojana, the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations would identify one or two suitable agencies to be designated as executing agencies. As per the list furnished by the Government, the Committee find that in almost all the States, the executing agency is the PWD. Only in West Bengal, the executing agency is Zila Parishad. Further in Andhra Pradesh, Panchayati Raj Engineering Department is the executing agency. While appreciating the stand taken by the Government to implement the Sadak Yojana with the existing staff with the State Government's Public Departments, the Committee are not in favour of giving the total responsibility of execution of the Yojana to PWD. They feel that as per the Constitutional provision, the executing agency for constructing roads under the Sadak Yojana should be Panchayats. The Committee, therefore, would like to recommend that the Sadak Yojana should be executed by Panchayats, as is being done in West Bengal to ensure the people's participation. Further the mechanism for using the staff of the State Government's Public Departments by the executing agencies, that should be Panchayats, be suitably evolved by the Government.

16. 6.31

The Committee find that the preparation of the Master Plan for each block is the responsibility of the Programme Implementation Unit to be set up by the executing agency. In this regard, the Committee would like to recommend that the identification of roads to be constructed under the Sadak Yojana should be done by the Gram Sabha at which suggestions should be invited for the rural roads to be undertaken/constructed. These suggestions should then be deliberated upon by the Gram Panchayat (not the Sarpanch acting on his own, but the whole of the Gram Panchayat considering the proposal). The proposal of the Gram Panchayats should be forwarded to Intermediate Panchayats after taking into account any technical advice as may be rendered by authorities concerned. The Committee feel that entrusting the responsibility of identification of roads to the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayats would make the Sadak Yojana a people's programme. This would further make the people of the village more responsible towards various important aspects like maintenance and social audit of the roads constructed under the Yojana. Not only that, it would be rather easier for the executing

agency to persuade the village public when there is a need to acquire land for construction of roads.

17. 6.32 As regards the role of Intermediate Panchayat in preparation of Master Plan, the Committee would like that the proposals submitted by the Gram Panchayats under the jurisdiction of a particular Intermediate Panchayat should be consolidated especially checking on whether the habitations covered include a satisfactory proportion of Dalit/ST villages/habitations. The Gram Sadak Yojanas of all the Intermediate Panchayats should then be consolidated at the level of District Planning Committee, which, by its very composition has a proper balance of popular representation and of Government technical advisers. Where the District Planning Committees are still to be elected as per Constitutional provisions, the Zila Parishad could function as District Planning Committee for this purpose, with appropriate participation of representatives of the Municipalities in the District and Government technical advisers.

18. 6.33 The Master Plan for the District then should be finalised by the State Government reflecting as far as practicable the wishes of the Panchayats in this regard and adjusting the District Master Plans according to the set norms as per guidelines of the Sadak Yojana.

As regards the finalisation of Master Plans, the Committee find that it will take lot of time and as such they recommend that instead of finalising District Rural Plans of all the districts in a State, the State Government should send the plans in lots i.e. as soon as the District Rural Development Plan of a particular district is finalised it should be sent to the Centre for release of funds. To ensure timely release of funds, State Government should earmark the district-wise allocation on the basis of their requirement well in advance and there should be time limit of three months for release of funds. The Committee feel that by following the said practice, Sadak Yojana would not suffer due to non-availability of Comprehensive District Plans of all the Districts in a State.

19. 6.34 The Committee find that the outlay for the Sadak Yojana will be released by the Central Government to the respective State Governments and State Governments are required to transfer the funds within 15 days of receipt to the DRDAs. The Committee fail to understand the rationale of transferring the funds to State Government who will then transfer funds to DRDAs who have no place in the implementation and formulation of the Yojana, as acknowledged by the Secretary during the course of his oral evidence. As stated by the Secretary himself, the role of DRDA in the Sadak Yojana is the role of the agency to bank the funds. The Committee would like that instead of releasing the funds to the

State Governments, the funds should directly be transferred to the Implementing Agency to avoid any delay in the implementation of the Yojana. It is also recommended that funds should be maintained in a separate bank account to ensure that the funds are not diverted as is reportedly being done under Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana.

20. 6.35 The Committee further find that a large number of agencies are involved in the Sadak Yojana. They have their apprehension that involvement of so many agencies would delay the implementation and further lead to confusion. In this regard, the Committee would like to urge the Government to minimise the involvement of number of agencies to the extent possible.
21. 6.36 The Committee are not satisfied with the guidelines relating to involvement of local MPs and MLAs in the implementation of the Sadak Yojana. They note that the local MP/MLA is held responsible for the utilisation and development of these type of funds in his constituency. However, in identification and execution of the Sadak Yojana, he has a very marginal role to play. The Committee feel that the Identifying Agency will consider the proposals of local MPs and MLAs only when it is mandatory on their part to do so. To ensure this, it should be stipulated in the guidelines that the certificate of the local MP and MLA should be essential before finalising the plan at block level to ensure the proper utilisation of the funds under the Sadak Yojana. The Committee further recommend that a proportion of the Yojana funds should be earmarked for MPLAD Scheme and equivalent State Assembly Schemes. Besides local MPs and MLAs should be members of the State level Standing Committee set up under the Sadak Yojana. They also urge that it should be stipulated in the guidelines that the meetings of the said Standing Committee should be convened only after seeking the convenience of local MPs/MLAs, as far as possible.
22. 6.37 The Committee also desire that complaints and suggestions in respect of execution and implementation of the Sadak Yojana as made by MPs to the Central Ministry of Rural Development are given due priority by the Government.
23. 6.40 While noting the details of the involvement of various schemes like JGSY, EAS, MPLAD Scheme etc. in the task of construction of rural roads, the Committee would like that the Government should ensure that to avoid duplication and confusion in this regard there should be proper coordination amongst various agencies. The Committee urge that necessary guidelines in this regard should be issued without any further delay. Besides, the Committee find that sometimes payment for the same work is made from different sources. They urge the Government to ensure that there is no

overlapping with other Yojanas of the projects with the projects under the Sadak Yojana.

24. 6.44 The Committee are apprised that State Governments have no objection to shouldering the responsibility of providing compensation for land acquisition under the Yojana. However this matter needs to be clearly reflected in the guidelines so that there is no scope for dispute on compensation for land acquisition, if any, in future. Mere verbal assurance from the States will not be enough. Further, while noting that the Government are making efforts to get the exemption regarding clearance of the competent authority in the case of forest land for construction of roads, the Committee would like the Government to pursue further to decide the matter at the earliest.
25. 6.53 As the Gram Sadak Yojana is the most important programme of rural development and is 100% Centrally Sponsored Programme, it is essential that it is monitored properly to ensure the fulfilment of the objectives of the programme. The monitoring is further necessary to avoid duplication of payment by several agencies for a single road and also to ensure that the roads are constructed strictly according to the guidelines. Further the quality of the roads has also to be ensured. To achieve the said purposes, the Committee urge the Government to gear up the existing monitoring mechanism of the Sadak Yojana. Besides, the monitoring by the officers in the Central Ministry has further to be geared up. There should be a separate Cell in the Department of Rural Development whose main task should be to make surprise visits at the sites to ensure that the Yojana is implemented properly. Further, the monitoring by independent monitors is another aspect that needs to be taken care under the Yojana. The Committee would also like that the findings of the independent monitors should be reviewed by the Government to ensure the proper implementation of the programme in different States/UTs. Besides these measures, the Committee feel that local MPs/MLAs can play an important role in monitoring the Sadak Yojana. To ensure their involvement in monitoring, the Committee recommend that there should be a District Level Vigilance Committee under the Chairmanship of a local member of Parliament from Lok Sabha. Other local M.P.s/MLAs should also be members of the said Committee. The modalities for constitution of such Vigilance Committee should be evolved by the Government and necessary guidelines issued in this regard and the Committee be apprised accordingly.
26. 6.54 The Committee further find that local people can play an

important role in monitoring the Sadak Yojana. As recommended in earlier paragraphs, the involvement of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat in the programme would ensure the involvement of local people in the Sadak Yojana. The involvement of common man with the Yojana would automatically ensure social audit. Besides, the Committee would like that after completion of a road under the Yojana the details regarding the cost, date of starting of construction, date of completion etc. should be displayed at the site to ensure transparency in the implementation of Sadak Yojana.

27. 6.59

The Committee find that the Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi is the principal technical agency to assist the Central Ministry in the implementation of the Sadak Yojana. Besides, the process of involving several reputed agencies is under way. The Committee urge the Government to finalise the list of technical agencies/institutions to be involved under the Sadak Yojana because these agencies would play an important role in the Sadak Yojana. Besides the Committee would also like that the Government should identify such technical agencies in the respective States. Further the students of various Engineering Universities can help in making the field surveys and giving their technical suggestions in the matter. The Government should formulate the necessary guidelines for their involvement and the Committee be apprised accordingly.