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title: Need to relax the population norm fixed under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana for Ladakh region of Jammu & Kashmir.

SHRI THUPSTAN CHHEWANG (LADAKH): Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir State is the remotest and the most difficult Hilly region which remains cut off from rest of the country for six months during winter. The living condition in Ladakh during winter months is extremely harsh. Ladakh is a huge area comprising of 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of Jammu& Kashmir state and is sparsely populated with 3 persons to a square kilometer. We are grateful to Government of India and especially the Ministry of Rural Development for providing funds under PMGSY for road connectivity to remote areas. There are a number of villages in Ladakh with population of more than 100 but less than 150 as required under norms, to qualify for the population criterion as laid down under the norms of PMGSY. The Ministry of Rural Development has relaxed population norm for Naxalites infested areas, North Eastern States by reducing the population criterion to 100. The Nodal Agency for implementation of PMGSY Schemes in Ladakh Region is still insisting on population norm based on 2001 Census Report. Thus, denying many villages of road connectivity under PMGSY.

I request the Government of India and the Ministry of Rural Development to extend the relaxation of population norm in favour of entire Ladakh Region so that the remote villages could also be provided with road connectivity.