

# Performance of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in Rural Road Connectivity - A Study

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## ABSTRACT

Rural road connectivity is a key component of rural development. since it promotes access to economic and social services thereby generates increased agricultural income and productive employment opportunities in rural India. As a part of its poverty reduction strategy and to bring about rapid sustainable development and socioeconomic transformation in rural India, and to synergies the various schemes being implemented across the districts of the country, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) was launched by the Government of India to provide rural road connectivity to hitherto unconnected rural habitations. The paper also deals with the challenges of PMGSY and also provided a few suggestions to meet the challenges of rural road construction. At the end a formal conclusion has been arrived at.

**Key Words :** Rural Roads, Rural Connectivity, PMGSY, Road Transport

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is involved with the task of reducing poverty and bringing about rapid and sustainable development and socio-economic transformation in rural India. To enable the process of developing rural India, various schemes are being implemented across the districts of the country. As a part of this, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) was launched on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2000 to increase rural road connectivity with a view to promote greater access to economic and social services and thereby generate increased economic and social opportunities in rural India. The rural road connectivity is a key component of rural development, which promotes access to economic and social services and thereby generating increased agricultural incomes and productive employment opportunities in rural India as well as ensures

sustainable poverty reduction program. This rural connectivity is essential for the overall development of the rural areas. There is a close link between rural connectivity and socio-economic aspects, such as, economic growth, employment, education and health care. Habitations, which are unconnected, do not have availability and accessibility to several facilities and socio-economic services. There are a number of habitations in the country, which are still not connected by All- Weather Roads or are connected with poor quality roads (due to poor construction or maintenance) which cannot be categorized as AWR. The rationale for launching PMGSY scheme is thus, to redress this situation so that certain opportunities and services (employment, educational, health, transport, marketing facilities etc.), which are not available in the unconnected habitation, become available to the residents.

## 2. BRIEF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jain Preeti (2014), in a Paper titled *“Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana: A Path to Inclusive Growth of MP”*, argued that improvement of employment situation was seen in terms of increased work possibilities following the building of PMGSY roads. A great number of housewives have been told that tiny enterprises such as making pickles, papads, sivai, jhadu have been created. And then, he said that rural roads decreased the quick growing rate of poverty and boosted people's participation in the development process.

The Ministry of Rural Development (October 2015) on its study on *“Impact Assessment Study of Improved Rural Road Maintenance System under PMGSY”* viewed that “significant improvements were found in increased employment and income amongst households engaged in other occupation than their own farms. In the habitations where roads have not been maintained a marginal decrease in the gains achieved due to better connectivity was noticed. In sample habitations, when roads are retained compared to control habitations, the savings in time to the site of employment have been found to be larger.

Ghosh Madhusudan (2017) in this study on *“Infrastructure and Development in Rural India”* concluded that the most significant indicators for agricultural productivity and production growth, the elimination of poverty, and human progress in health and education are power, irrigation and roads, access to road quality is more essential than road quality when it comes to bringing about socio-economic improvements in rural regions.

Biswas Rentu and Anwaruzzaman (2018) worked on *“Impact of PMGSY on Socio-Economic Development: A Case Study of Chandpur - Kushabaria Road, Murshidabad District, West Bengal”*, according to the study the impact of 78 per cent of respondent and approximately

22 per cent of respondents believe it has no influence on the development of jobs on the PMGSY route. None of the respondents found that the road had a negative effect on job creation.

### 3. RESEARCH GAP

There are many other studies related to the issue of PMGSY and its role in development of rural roads and connectivity, advantages and challenges. Keeping the time and resource of the researchers in view, such studies or papers have not been reviewed in present study. There is no particular study related to the issue of performance of PMGSY and its role on rural road connectivity. The present paper focuses on the contribution for connecting rural life.

### 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present paper has set the following objectives:

1. To know the concept of PMGSY.
2. To study the role of PMGSY in rural connectivity.

### 5. PAPER SCHEME

This paper is analytical and descriptive in nature. In the paper, the features and maintenance of PMGSY are briefly discussed. A brief review of literature has also been carried. Based on the review the research gap has been identified. The role of PMGSY has been carried based on the secondary data. The paper also deals with the challenges of PMGSY and also provided a few suggestions to meet the challenges. At the end a formal conclusion has been arrived at.

### 6. PMGSY - THE CONCEPT

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) was launched on 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2000 and has now been under implementation for over two decades. It is a fully Centrally Funded Scheme, which primarily initially aimed at providing AWR connectivity to over 1.60 lakh eligible unconnected habitations at an estimated investment of about ` 60,000 crores. The works are executed by the State Governments and monitored by the Ministry of Rural Development through the National Rural Roads Development Agency (NRRDA), set up for this purpose.

#### 6.1. Main Features

**Planning based on Core Network:** Every District has to prepare a Core Network of Roads for planning purposes. All roads under PMGSY are to be prioritized out of the Core Network. The district Panchayat is to be fully involved in selecting road works under the program as per the Guidelines.

**Road's specifications:** Roads are to be built as per the specifications given in Rural Roads Manual published by the Indian Roads Congress (IRC:SP20:2002). Roads are to be properly designed based on climatic and traffic conditions. Provision has to be made for proper roadway width, shoulders and side and cross drains. Detailed Project Reports (DPR) have to be prepared in all cases.

**Scrutiny, Approval and Clearance:** The detailed Project Reports are scrutinized by the State Technical Agencies (STAs) nominated by the NRRDA. The STAs have been selected from among the Indian Institutes of Technology, Regional Engineering Colleges and Government Engineering Colleges of repute. Proposals are to be sent to NRRDA for clearance based on the scrutiny completed by STAs.

**Program Management in States:** Each State has to designate a State level Autonomous Agency to maintain and operate Bank account to receive the project funds from the Ministry of Rural Development. The agency has to appoint a State Quality Coordinator, Financial Controller and IT Nodal Officer to ensure management of various aspects of the program at the state level. The District Program Implementation Units (DPIUs) headed by Superintending and Executive Engineers are to execute the road works in accordance with the program guidelines.

**Tendering:** The works are to be tendered as per the State. Standard Bidding Document approved by NRRDA. Projects should be completed within 9 months except in case of Hilly States where the duration of the project will be for 18 months. Cost escalation, if any, due to overruns or tender premium will be borne by the State Governments concerned.

**Quality:** PMGSY roads are expected to be of the highest quality. A 3-tier quality control system has been envisaged. The Contractor is expected to set up a field laboratory at the worksite and the DPIU functions as the first tier of the quality control. The State Quality Monitor coordinates a second, independent, tier of quality control and the NRRDA enforces a 3<sup>rd</sup> tier of quality control through National Quality Monitors who are informed senior engineers.

**Online Monitoring:** Online monitoring of the program is done using an internet- based software (called OMMS), outputs of which are available on a website ([www.pmgysy.org](http://www.pmgysy.org)).

**Maintenance:** Roads constructed under PMGSY are required to be maintained by the State Governments. The Scheme envisages Performance Guarantee for five years by the Contractor backed by a 5-year maintenance contract.

## 6.2. Maintenance of Rural Roads

It was proposed to connect 160,000 unconnected habitations through AWR under PMGSY by the end of the year 2007. Since, the target has not been achieved in many States, the programme has been extended. In addition; upgradation of existing rural roads has been taken up under PMGSY. As a result, the remaining unconnected habitations (~ 170, 000) will be gradually connected and existing roads in poor conditions will be upgraded. This results in creating a large network of rural roads with total length exceeding 20 lakh km. The PMGSY is a huge Central investment in the State sector as partial poverty reduction strategy. This investment is likely to be useful only if the main rural road network, particularly the rural Core Network is maintained in good condition. All the PMGSY roads are to be covered by 5-year maintenance contracts, to be entered into along with the construction contract, with the same contractor, as per the Standard Bidding Document. Maintenance funds to service the contract will be budgeted by the State Government and placed at the disposal of the State Rural Roads Development Agency (SRRDA) in a separate 'Maintenance Account'. The PMGSY contractors have the liability to maintain the roads for a period of 5 years after the construction. The maintenance of rural roads beyond 5 years will be difficult due to lack of on-hand expertise at local level.

## 7. ROLE OF PMGSY ROADS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural road connectivity is a highly essential requisite for rural development. The PMGSY is expected to enhance overall rural development.

**Agriculture Sector:** Ease access of rural mobility through PMGSY will considerably bring changes in cropping pattern, increase multiple cropping; tractors and agriculture vehicle and motorized implements will be used.

**Employment Opportunities:** Areas with better connectivity of PMGSY roads gives better employment opportunities to rural unemployed. The roads increase on farm and off farm local employment and also increase employment opportunities outside the village due to greater mobility.

**Industrial Growth:** The PMGSY provides for ease supply of raw materials, labor, new technology in rural areas. Agro based industries may also be encouraged.

**Social Interaction:** The roads facilitate frequency the government officials visiting to rural areas, and changes in response to emergency (police, fire, drought, floods) and also may improve the government services in general.

**Transport and Urbanisation:** The PMGSY roads have a major impact on Transport and Urbanisation. Taking a role in improvement in public bus service, increasing in ownership of cars, motorcycles, scooters make changes in non- motorised transport. In addition connectivity may help increase in land prices, sale of land for commercial use and conversation of kaccha house to pacca house.

Also, PMGSY roads benefit enhanced health facilities, increase good educational accessibility and a better quality of life to rural people. Overall that have great accessibility through well- connected roads and decent facilities.

### 7.1 Challenges

The PMGSY has made on remarkable revolution in the rural roads and connectivity, although the project faces many challenges of its own. They are the following:

1. High cost of construction and poor funds provided by the government,
2. Inefficiency of road builders/contractors/planners,
3. Inadequate implementation of road construction,
4. Inconsistent working season and tough terrains,
5. Deficit of materials and manpower.

### 3.2 SUGGESTIONS

Based on the study the following suggestions are made:

1. The respective governments must provide adequate financial support to PMGSY program.
2. With proper guidance and appropriate facilities motivate the road builders to work with efficiency.
3. Considering of the climate, regionality and population of the area the road projects have to be adequately implemented.
4. Timely provision for the materials and labor for the construction should be ensured.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Rural roads in India are low volume roads comprising of both Village Roads (VRs) and Other District Roads (ODRs). The Government of India is financing rural roads construction to improve rural connectivity through Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) with the target of connecting every rural habitation with a budget of Rupees Six hundred billion (Sixty thousand crore). The program is a big success with two lakh kilometers of road work already completed. The program when completed provides connectivity to large number of unconnected rural habitations. But, the maintenance of vast network of rural roads is a major challenge and requires significant annual maintenance budget. The local panchayats and State Governments may not effectively manage the maintenance program due to paucity of funds. Hence, the responsibility of maintenance of rural roads should be with Central Government and the existing setup created to implement PMGSY should be effectively used for maintenance management of rural roads network. Let us all hope for the best.

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