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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROAD TO PROGRESS

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#### ABSTRACT

World Bank study estimate that has 15% of Agricultural of Produce is lost between the farm gate and the consumer because of poor roads and inappropriate storage facilities alone, adversely influencing the income of farmers. Poor rural road infrastructure limits the ability of the traders to travel to and communicate with remote farming areas, limiting market access from these areas and eliminating competition for their produce. the investment of 1.2 billion by the Government is supported by Asian Development Bank loan of 800 million to connect 4,200 far –flung communities to crucial markets and services with 9,000 km of all-weather rural roads in these five states by the end of 2017.

#### INTRODUCTION

With the planned efforts on the government in recent years thousands of kilometers of highways between major cities criss-cross India. However, over 40% of country's population and about half of the country's habitations still remain unconnected with rural roads. To upgrade rural infrastructure, the government has formulated a proposal for providing the road connections to more than 38,484 villages above 1000 population and all 20,867 habitations above 500 populations in hilly and tribal areas. To achieve the targets of Bharat Nirman 1,46,185 kms of road length is proposed to be constructed by 2009. This will benefit 66,802 unconnected eligible habitations in the county. To ensure full farm to market connectivity it is also proposed to upgrade 1,94,132 kms of the existing associated through routes. A sum of approximately Rs. 48,000 crore is proposed to be invested to achieve this. The main thrust of research and development (R and D) in the roads sector is to build a sustainable road infrastructure comparable to the best roads in the world. The various components of this strategy are improvement in design, modernization of construction techniques, and introduction of improved material conforming to latest trends, evolving better and appropriate specifications, encouraging development and use of new technologies etc. The dissemination of these matters is done through the publications of new guidelines etc. The research schemes sponsored by the department are generally applied in

nature t which once completed, would enable them to be adopted by user agencies in their work in the field. The areas covered are roads, road transport, bridges, traffic and transportation techniques etc. The department takes the help of various research institutions, academic institutions and universities to implement the schemes. An outlay of Rs. 600 lakh has be provided for R and D in 2007-08. Some of the ongoing major schemes are as follows:

##### Roads

- Development of GIS based National Highways Information system.
- Guidelines for soil mailing techniques in highway engineering.
- Pilot study on effects of overloading on road infrastructure.
- Investigation on field performance if bituminous mixes with modified binders.
- R and D studies on performance evaluation of rigid pavements in high density traffic corridors using instrumentation supported laboratory tests.

##### Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (MGSY)

In order to create durable and permanent assets, an adequate provision for drainage and protection works as well as quality control during construction and maintenance of assets, government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2000 as a centrally

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sponsored scheme to assist the state. The primary objective of PMGSY is to provide connectivity by way of an all weather road to the eligible unconnected habitations as per core network with a population of 500 persons as per 2001 census and above in plain areas. The current source of funds for PMGSY work is cess on High Speed Diesel (Rs. 0.75/litre) budgetary support, ADB funding, world bank funding and NABARD loan, release of funds from 2000-01 to 2013-14. A total amount of Rs. 1,11,368 crore have already been spent under this programme including funding from World Bank and Asian Development Bank. It is proposed to cover during 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan period, overall 50000 km road length by upgradation to consolidate the rural road network under the PMGSY-II programme at an estimated cost of Rs. 33030 crore including administrative and management cost of Rs. 530 crore. The cost will be shared between the centre and the states/Union territories on 75 : 25 basis for the plain areas and 90:10 basis for the special areas. The central share would be Rs. 27022 crore from 2012-13 prices, including administrative and management cost of Rs. 530 crore. The Rural Roads Development Vision Plan (RRDVP) 2025 (formulated in 2007, in its broad assessment of the physical and financial requirements for roads, found that investment in construction, upgrading the maintenance would need to increase from the current level of Rs. 11,000 crore per annum to Rs. 29,000 crore per annum by the 14<sup>th</sup> plan (2022-2027). The vision document stated that the proposed current investment is a mere 0.9 per cent of the GDP and therefore should be considered modest and realistic.

RRDVP observed that 80 per cent of the rural roads are in a poor condition due to a combination of factors including poor quality construction though it has shown some improvement with PMGSY projects. The Rural Roads Development Agency estimated to coordinate and monitor. PMGSY has set up a three tier quality control mechanism with the state governments responsible for the first two. However, in majority of the rural road projects executed on other schemes do not have rigid quality control schemes the result being standards are lacking technically. Thus the increase of rural roads is imperative for the growth and development of the country and its people.

#### The benefits may be summarized as below:

- Poverty alleviation.
- Improvement in the quality of life through better opportunities.

- Improvement in the capacity of work.
- Removal of isolation.
- Linkages to economic activities, health and educational institutions.
- Agricultural development and diversification. Faster development of rural industrialization.

#### Conclusion

Rural roads are the wealth of a nation, a tool for social inclusion, economic development and environmental sustainability. A main bottleneck for local economic development is often a limited and poor quality rural road network. It is quite evident from the plan documents that, private sector participation in road sector has been confined to development, maintenance and operation of specified highways (national and state), expressways, bridges and bypass. Rural roads, particularly those needed to link remote, hilly and backward settlements are hardly profitable to the private operators. Hence without doing any major policy revamp on the development of rural road infrastructure, it is very difficult to expect private sector participation in this area and till that time public investment must have to come in a big way and without any further delay.

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