

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.771
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27.07.2015

CONNECTING VILLAGES WITH METALLED ROADS

771. SHRI RAM KUMAR KASHYAP:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that one of the main handicaps with Indian agriculture is the lack of cheap and efficient, means of transportation and lakhs of villages are not well connected with main roads or with market centres;
- (b) whether most roads in the rural areas are un-metalled (bullock-cart roads) and become useless in the rainy season and as such farmers cannot carry their produce to the main market and are forced to sell it in the local market at low price; and
- (c) if so, the steps taken to connect each village by metalled road?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT)

(a) to (c): Yes Sir, It is a fact that at the time of independence, lack of cheap and efficient means of transportation was acute and lakhs of villages were not well connected with main roads or with market centres. Most of roads in the rural areas were un-metalled (bullock-cart roads).

As India launched the era of planned development in 1951, it had very few percentage of all-weather road links. Over the years for development of roads, the long-term 20-year plans viz Nagpur Plan (1943-61), Bombay Plan (1961-81), Lucknow Plan (1981-2001), Road Development Plan Vision: 2021 were formulated by Chief Engineers in-charge of roads under the aegis of the Indian Roads Congress and these served as sound reference framework for the Central and State Governments to formulate their rural road strategies in successive Five Year Plans. A major thrust to the development of rural roads was accorded at the beginning of the Fifth Five Year Plan in 1974, when it was made a part of the Minimum Needs Programme. In 1996, this was merged with the Basic Minimum Services (BMS) programmes. The works of village roads were also taken up under several employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes of the Central and State Governments. Though various programmes were launched, there was largely a misconception that Rural Roads being the lowest category of roads needed no elaborate design and engineering. It was on this presumption that several thousand kilometers of such roads, without proper design and engineering, were constructed in the past, under various plans and programmes including employment generation and famine relief schemes. As a result, rural roads had poor geometrics,

inadequate compaction of embankment and inadequate drainage. Consequently, these roads did not last long.

At National level, the Government's resolve to provide total Rural Connectivity to bigger habitations was indicated in the Address of the President of India to the Joint Sitting of Parliament on 25th October 1999, when a programme of construction of All-weather roads in the rural areas was announced. Subsequently, the Government of India initiated a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)" which was launched on 25th December, 2000 with the specific target of connecting villages through good all-weather roads.

The primary objective of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) is to provide connectivity by way of an All-Weather road (with necessary culverts and cross-drainage structures, which is operable throughout the year), to the eligible unconnected habitations as per Core-Network with a population of 500 persons (as per 2001 Census) and above in plain areas. In respect of 'Special Category States' (North-East, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand), the Desert areas, the Tribal (Schedule V) areas and 88 Selected Tribal and Backward districts as identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs/Planning Commission, the objective is to connect eligible unconnected habitations as per Core-Network with a population of 250 persons and above (Census 2001). The programme envisages single all weather connectivity. In critical LWE affected blocks (as identified by MHA), additional relaxation has been given to connect habitations with population 100 to 249 persons also.

With a view to ensuring full farm-to-market connectivity, the programme also provides for the upgradation of the existing "Through Routes" and "Major Rural Links" to prescribed standards, though it is not central to the programme. In addition, PMGSY-II has also been launched for upgradation of existing selected rural roads based on a prescribed criterion.

In addition, some of the States have launched their own schemes like Chief Minister Gram Sadak Yojana to provide connectivity to the habitations not covered under PMGSY, with the similar specifications of PMGSY, through good all-weather roads.
