

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ
(2023-2024)

36

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT)

[Action taken on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-Second Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on "Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana - (PMGSY)" (2022-23) of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development)].

THIRTY SIXTH REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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(Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) (2022-23)
of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development)']*

Presented to Lok Sabha on 18.12.2023

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LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT
AND PANCHAYATI RAJ (2023-2024)**

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1. Shri D.R. Shekhar - Joint Secretary
2. Shri C. Kalyanasundaram - Director
3. Shri Vinay P. Barwa - Deputy Secretary
4. Shri Inam Ahmed - Executive Officer

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (2023-2024) having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present the 36th Report on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-Second Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (17th Lok Sabha) on 'Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)' (2022-23) of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development).

2. The Thirty-Second Report was presented to the Lok Sabha on 27.07.2023 and was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 27.07.2023. Replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received on 26.10.2023.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 12.12.2023.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-Second Report (17th Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given in **Appendix-II.**

NEW DELHI
12 December, 2023
21 Agrahayana, 1945 (Saka)

Kanimozhi Karunanidhi
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Rural
Development & Panchayati Raj

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (2023-24) deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in their Thirty-Second Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)' of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) for the term 2022-2023.

1.2 The Thirty-Second Report was presented to the Lok Sabha on 27.07.2023 and was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 27.07.2023. The Report contained 30 Observations/Recommendations.

1.3 Action Taken Replies in respect of all the 30 Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report have been received from the Government. These have been examined and categorised as follows: -

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:

Serial Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22,
23, 24, 26, 28, 29

Total: 24
Chapter-II

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of replies of the Government:

Serial No. NIL

Total: NIL
Chapter-III

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:

Serial No. 7, 9, 13, 25, 27, 30

Total: 06
Chapter-IV

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited:

Serial No. NIL

Total: NIL
Chapter-V

1.4 The Committee trust that utmost importance will be given to the implementation of the recommendations accepted by the Government. In case where it is not possible for any reasons to implement the recommendations in letter and spirit, the matter shall be reported to the Committee with reasons for non-implementation. The Committee desire that Action Taken Notes on the Observations/ recommendations contained in Chapter I of this Report may be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.

1.5 The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of their Observations/Recommendations that require reiteration/merit comments.

I. Quality of Construction of roads under PMGSY

Recommendation (Serial No. 7)

1.6 With regard to the Quality of Construction of roads under PMGSY, the Committee had recommended as under:-

“The Committee are constrained to note that the quality of road construction under PMGSY is an important issue affecting the entire country. This glaring issue, which casts aspersions on the marquee scheme of the Central Government, has wider ramification on the hopes of rural populace of the country. Building roads build nations as quality roads serve in manifold ways for the prosperity of a country in terms of economic strengthening via boost in domestic trade and commerce, providing employment opportunities and ultimately achieving the goals of development associated with better livelihoods of people. The scheme was launched by the Government with various welfare oriented goals in foresight and has been one of the flagship rural development schemes over the years. On this note, the Committee find the compromise in the quality of construction of roads completely unacceptable and consider this as a punitive act. Instances are galore wherein the attention of the Committee have been drawn towards the poor road materials used in the construction of roads at many places which are not able to sustain the rigours of weather and traffic volume even for one season and are washed away with the onset of monsoon. The Members of the Committee having ground reality experience of their constituencies have time and again raised the nagging issue of poor quality of roads at many locations. Therefore, the Committee beseech upon DoRD to entail stronger measures to ensure that the quality of roads constructed under PMGSY do not get compromised on account of utilization of poor raw materials or other associated reasons so that the noble objective of the scheme to

provide all weather road to rural habitation is achieved without any compromise.”

1.7 The DoRD in their action taken reply have stated as follows:-

“Ensuring the quality of PMGSY works is the responsibility of the State Governments, who are implementing the programme. A three-tiered Quality Control mechanism is in place under PMGSY for ensuring construction of quality road works and durability of road assets under PMGSY including the works undertaken by sub-contractors.

Guidelines to regulate the quality control process have been issued to States from time to time. In order to ensure that people engaged in quality check are adequately proficient and well trained, NRIDA has been conducting proficiency tests of NQMs, SQMs, PIU etc. It has been made mandatory for all personnel engaged as NQM/SQM to pass the proficiency test. Further, their skills are also developed through webinars, seminars or by sending them to various training institutions etc.

To strengthen the quality check mechanism, establishment of field Lab has been made compulsory. These labs are also to be geo-tagged. Unless these are ensured, no payment is allowed to be made against such roads. Also, new version of Quality Monitoring System App has been developed to include e-forms and other initiatives which has strengthened quality monitoring systems. Consequent upon introduction of e-Marg, payment on account of maintenance to the contractor, during the defect liability period, is made commensurate with the quality of roads maintained by him/her through a performance based contract management system.”

Further Observations/Comments of the Committee

1.8 Quality of Construction of roads under PMGSY is an important issue which has a lasting effect on the performance of the Yojana on ground level. The overall achievement of the desired goals of PMGSY primarily depends on the longevity of the roads constructed under the Yojana. Thus, taking into account the nagging issue of poor quality of roads at many locations, the Committee had recommended the Department of Rural Development to entail stronger measures to ensure that the quality of roads constructed under PMGSY do not get compromised due to the utilisation of poor raw materials or

other associated reasons so that the noble objectives of the scheme are achieved. However, from the perusal of the action taken reply furnished by the DoRD, the Committee find that an oft-repeated generic response has been submitted by the Department which, primarily, highlights the responsibility of the State Governments for ensuring the quality of PMGSY works as they are the implementing authorities. The reply also enumerates various quality control processes formulated and issued to States from time to time along with the provision of compulsory establishment of field Labs. The Committee while noting the primary role of the States in the implementation of the Yojana, expects that the nodal Ministry play pivotal role in ensuring all the quality control processes so as to ensure that quality of road construction is not compromised and all the theoretical provisions are being implemented scrupulously at the ground level. Therefore, the Committee while reiterating the recommendation on this aspect urge the DoRD to tighten their grip over monitoring the quality of construction of roads under PMGSY. In this regard, the Ministry should review the issues pertaining to quality of construction in every State/UT and take appropriate measures to ensure that quality parameters are adhered to by the implementing agencies at State/UT level.

II. Issues of Down-Tendering – Bidding of Tenders

Recommendation (Serial No. 9)

1.9 On the issues of Down-Tendering-Bidding of Tenders, the Committee had recommended as follows:-

"The Committee note that bidding through tenders for obtaining projects for construction of roads under PMGSY is an integral part of the scheme as learnt by the Committee while scrutinizing the modalities of the scheme. The contractors who are awarded construction contracts through tenders are, perhaps, the central figures who through their activities more often than not determine the quality of roads constructed under PMGSY. In this context, various reliable

sources and the Members of the Committee have brought to fore the practice of low- tendering, in order to win the bid for acquiring the rights for the construction of projects, under PMGSY. Contractors are expected to render yeoman service to the nation for the welfare of people. Bad quality of works under PMGSY is set in motion from here onwards and the contractor compromise with the quality of work after getting contracts at low quotations. The roads so constructed suffer from early 'wear and tear' and becomes rough for use of the people. Therefore, the Committee recommend DoRD to devise even stronger mechanisms/provisions in the bidding processes, besides the extant ones, to further negate the effect of low bidding, so that quality of road construction does not get compromised in the hands of contractors. Moreover, rigorous monitoring mechanism should be put in place to ensure the quality of road construction as per the specifications mentioned in the contracts."

1.10 The DoRD in their action taken reply have stated as under:-

"In the interest of the quality of roads being built under PMGSY and for protection against Abnormally Low Bids (ALBs), provisions of taking the additional performance security from the contractor have been made in the Standard Bidding Documents (SBD). All States have been advised to deal with cases of ALBs as per SBD provisions which are enumerated as under.

A. Qualification of the Bidder:

To make sure that contractors who are bidding for the works have sufficient backgrounds in execution of good quality works, the following Qualification criteria are laid down in clause 4 of the SBD :-

- (a) Contractor to provide the aggregate monetary value of civil construction projects executed in each of the preceding five years.
- (b) Furnish a record of past involvement in projects similar in nature and scale for each of the past five years. Additionally, include particulars of ongoing or contracted projects, along with endorsements from a relevant authority not lower than the rank of an Executive Engineer or its equivalent.
- (c) Present comprehensive information regarding the technical personnel slated for engagement in the project.
- (d) Confirm that the contract aligns with the qualifications specified in Clause 4.4 B(b) (ii) of ITB for the construction.
- (e) Submit a proposed schedule for construction activities and a Quality Management Plan outlining the anticipated timeline for project

completion in adherence to technical specifications and the stipulated completion period.

B. Additional Bank Guarantee

As per the clause 46, sub clause 46.1 and 46.2 of the SBD, the Performance Security equal to 5% (five percent) of the Contract Price and additional Security for unbalanced bids shall be provided to the Employer.

C. Blacklist/Termination of Contract

As per the clause 52, sub clause 52.1 and 52.2 the Employer can terminate the Contract if the Contractor commits a major breach of contract in terms of quality and other contractual commitments i.e. Failure to correct a specified Defect promptly, Non-maintenance of required Security, Delaying project completion beyond allowable liquidated damages period and Not completing a specified portion of work on time.

It may be noted that SBD already has strict provisions to ensure that good quality contractors are engaged for execution of PMGSY works; however the States/UTs have been further advised to ensure strict technical evaluation during the technical scrutiny of bids."

Further Observations/Comments of the Committee

1.11 The Committee note that bidding through tenders for obtaining projects for construction of roads under PMGSY is an integral part of the scheme. Thus, practice of low-tendering for winning the bid, more often than not leads to compromise in the quality of work resulting in the early 'wear and tear' of the roads. In view of such reported instances, the Committee had recommended the DoRD to devise even stronger mechanisms/provisions in the bidding processes, besides the extant ones, to further negate the effect of low bidding alongwith rigorous monitoring mechanism for ensuring the quality of road construction. In their Action Taken Reply furnished by the DoRD, the provisions for protection against Abnormally Low Bids (ALBs) as made in the

Standard Bidding Documents (SBD) have been provided in detail. Going through the details, the Committee find the provisions more or less adequate in terms of their being written down in the SBD, such as those of Additional Bank Guarantee, Blacklist/Termination of Contract, etc. Despite of such stringent provision put in place by the Ministry, the Committee are concerned to note the instances of poor quality and early deterioration of roads under PMGSY. In this regard, it is expected that these provisions are implemented scrupulously at the ground level. Provisions confined to the manuals alone would perhaps not serve any purpose unless they are being followed in letter and spirit. Therefore, the Committee reiterate the earlier recommendation and further recommend that the DoRD should look into the implementation aspect of their provisions with greater focus and ensure their compliance at ground level for the success of the PMGSY.

III. Subletting to Petty Contractors

Recommendation (Serial No. 10)

1.12 In the context of Subletting to Petty Contractors, the Committee had recommended as below:-

“The Committee note the provision under PMGSY, as informed by the DoRD during evidence, about the sub-letting of works to petty contractors by the main contractor. Acknowledging the intent of creating a wider resource pool for future through this percolation of works to other personnel who gain valuable experience, the Committee through their experience and the information shared with them have acquiesced themselves to the flip side of this practice also. The petty contractors who come into the picture by way of multiple sub-lettings are sometimes not able to maintain the quality of construction and the goals of the scheme. Such practices results in poorly constructed roads, devoid of standard protocols and have adverse effect on the project. Quality check on the working of such petty contractors is the ‘need of the hour’ and proper drafting of norms along-with their implementation for ensuring that the petty contractors work properly is required. Hence, the Committee recommend DoRD to review the

provision of sub-letting and take corrective measures as per manual in this regard. ”

1.13 The following Action Taken Reply has been given by DoRD:-

“As per Standard Bidding Document, for PMGSY works, the Contractor may subcontract part of the construction work with the approval of the Employer in writing, up to 25 percent of the contract price. However, the ultimate liability for delivery of good quality roads lies with the main contractor. The main contractor shall, at all times, be responsible and liable for all his obligations under the Agreement notwithstanding anything contained in the agreements with his Sub-contractors or any other agreement that may be entered into by the Contractor and no default under any such agreement shall exempt the Contractor from his obligations or liability towards the contract. The overall responsibility of maintaining the quality lies with the main contractor and all works are executed following similar quality standards following a three tier quality monitoring system. Based on the periodic monitoring of quality of roads under the 3-tier mechanism, corrective measures, wherever necessary, are taken by the State Governments.”

Further Observations/Comments of the Committee

1.14 While acknowledging the intent of creating a wider resource pool for future through subletting to petty contractors under PMGSY, the Committee also acquiesced themselves of the issues surrounding the letting down in the quality aspect of construction due to such prevalent practice. Concerned about the proper accountability of these petty contractors, the Committee recommended the DoRD to review the provision of sub-letting and take corrective measures as per manual. In their Action Taken Reply submitted by the DoRD, it has been categorically mentioned that as per SBD guidelines for PMGSY works, the contractor may subcontract up to 25 per cent of the contract price of the construction work with the approval of the employer in writing. It has also been stated that ultimately the main contractor shall be responsible and liable for the quality of work. The Committee take into

account the extant modalities and safeguards for ensuring the accountability of the main contractor who sub-lets to the petty contractor as per norms and find the existing procedural mechanisms adequate enough. Even though the periodic monitoring of the quality of roads under the 3-tier mechanisms are steps in right direction, the Committee feel that it is necessary for DoRD to persuade the State Governments to instruct the main contractors to use only the services of competent petty contractors so as to ensure the quality of construction. In this regard, the Committee recommend that DoRD should initiate necessary steps in coordination with State/UT Governments for proper enlisting of such competent petty contractors, which may, serve the interest of the scheme much better in terms of increased accountability and familiarisation with the ethics of welfare oriented work required under PMGSY.

IV. Plying of Heavy vehicles/increase in the thickness of roads

Recommendation (Serial No. 11)

1.15 In the connection of Plying of Heavy vehicles/increase in the thickness of roads, the Committee had made the following recommendation:-

“The Committee opine that PMGSY roads are built under such guidelines which do not take into account plying of heavy tonnage vehicles which nowadays cause immense damage to the rural connectivity roads. In this era of modernization when industrial setups at far flung locales and the construction works of highways often necessitate movement of heavy load bearing vehicles, particularly those of NHAI to also utilise the roads built under PMGSY. Such heavy vehicles cause irreversible damages to the rural roads under PMGSY which are of the mandated thickness of 20 mm. It, thus, becomes imperative to protect and get repaired the existing roads under PMGSY from the damaging NHAI vehicles and increasing the thickness of roads under PMGSY to 30 mm for bearing the load of heavy vehicles that would keep on plying on them in future. In view of the above, the Committee urge DoRD to have urgent meaningful dialogue with the NHAI to ensure that the PMGSY road damage by NHAI vehicles get

mitigated and the damages are repaired by NHAI in accordance with the provisions of PMGSY. Moreover, the need of increasing the thickness of the PMGSY road from the existing 20 mm to 30 mm should also be looked into pragmatically by the DoRD.”

1.16 In regard to the above recommendation, the DoRD in their action taken reply have stated as below:-

“Rural roads are designed for 10 years of design life and future traffic annual growth rate is also taken into consideration while designing the pavement crust. Roads built under PMGSY follows the specifications of IRC especially IRC SP 72:2015 to design the rural roads, IRC SP 72:2015 limits the design traffic to 2 MSA. Load carried by standard axle (single axle, dual wheel) is 8.16 tonnes and tandem axle is 14.9 tonnes. Fully loaded Heavy Commercial Vehicle (HCV) have a rear axle load of 10.2 tonnes and a front axle load half the rear axle load i.e. 5 tonnes and 20 % overloading is considered if overload vehicles are present. Heavier loads than this is not considered in design.

As per IRC SP 72:2015 the surface course recommended is 20 mm OGPC only for higher traffic, The surfacing course (layer) is the upper layer of the flexible pavement and provides the smooth, durable, abrasion-resistant characteristics of a good roadway, retaining adequate friction for road safety. It is normally made from bitumen bound aggregate – asphalt concrete. It will be waterproof and prevent ingress of water into the lower pavement layers, which would adversely affect their strength. These layers must be strong enough not to rut under the action of traffic.

Since the main load bearing layers are the Binder course, Base course and Sub base course, thickness of these layers are more determining factors for the distresses caused in the pavement when heavy vehicles ply over it.

The issue regarding damage of PMGSY roads by heavy vehicles coming from NHAI roads has been taken up with Ministry of Road Transport and Highways firstly by Secretary vide DO letter dated 08.08.2023 and further by Minister (Rural Development) vide DO letter 27.09.2023. Copies of DO letters are attached.”

Further Observations/Comments of the Committee

1.17 The Committee are concerned with the issue of damage caused to the PMGSY roads due to the plying of heavy vehicles particularly those from NHAI roads. Roads constructed under PMGSY to achieve rural connectivity are of utmost importance and as such the damages caused to them by the heavy

vehicles need to be mitigated/taken care of. Taking this aspect into account, the Committee had urged the DoRD to communicate with NHAI to ensure the repairs of roads damaged through their vehicles and also to increase the thickness of roads from the existing 20 mm to 30 mm thickness. Regarding the thickness, the DoRD have provided in their action taken reply the calculation methods for determining the load carrying capacity of the roads built under PMGSY. PMGSY roads follow the specifications which limits the design traffic to 2 MSA and heavier loads more than about 18 tonnes are not considered in their design. In regard to the damage caused to PMGSY road by the heavy vehicles from NHAI roads, the Ministry has taken up the matter with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) first at the Secretary level and then at the Minister level. After going through the reply furnished by the DoRD, the Committee find that loads plying on the roads and future traffic annual growth rate has been taken into account while determining the thickness of the roads under PMGSY. However, the Committee are still of the view that the present situation regarding the necessity for augmenting the load bearing capacity of the road need to be looked afresh and any revision in the specification, if needed, can be incorporated for protecting the roads. DoRD have been pursuing the matter of damage caused by heavy vehicles from NHAI roads with the concerned Ministry as well. In this regard, the Committee feel that a stronger push with more vigour is required through the communicating channels with the MoRTH for reaching to any logical settlement regarding their role in repair and damage reduction of PMGSY roads due to the heavy vehicles from NHAI roads. Therefore, the Committee, while taking note of the efforts of the DoRD in this regard further implore them to increase their momentum for

finding result with the MoRTH. The Committee also hope that MoRTH would furnish their action taken reply on the recommendation of the Committee. A copy of this recommendation may also be sent by DoRD to MoRTH for expeditious action at their end.

V. Inclusion of Road of length 2 Km.

Recommendation (Serial No. 13)

1.18 With regard to the Inclusion of Road of length 2 Km., the Committee had recommended as under:-

“The Committee note that presently road lengths of minimum 3 km are taken up as eligible roads under PMGSY-III. The attention of the Committee was drawn towards demand from various quarters regarding the inclusion of roads of even 2 km as eligible roads under PMGSY-III. The requirement has been felt on account of relevant thorough fare locations getting missed due to the strengthening of minimum 3 km roads uptake for making the main candidate road as minimum 5 km. At this juncture when PMGSY-III has been started, suitable review can be undertaken to meet a populist public demand through minor tweaking of provisions by the DoRD. Therefore, the Committee recommend DoRD to relook into the matter of selection of appropriate road length by reducing the minimum to 2 km and bring about review in their guidelines accordingly so as to provide last mile connectivity to rural habitations.”

1.19 The DoRD in their action taken reply have stated as follows:-

“PMGSY-III envisages consolidation of the existing Rural Road Network by upgradation of existing Through Routes and Major Rural Links that connect habitations to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools, Hospitals.

Links can be made up of two or more roads of variable lengths which can be merged into single candidate road if it makes TR/MRL and gives access to most of the facilities to the majority of the benefitted population. PMGSY-III guidelines specifically state that candidate roads shall preferably be of length not less than 5 kms. Proposing a single road of length 2 km and below is avoided as it mostly benefits only a single habitation thus forming a dead end.”

Further Observations/Comments of the Committee

1.20 The Committee had noted that road lengths of minimum 3 km are taken up as eligible roads under PMGSY-III. Responding to the demands from various quarters that the roads of even 2 km be made eligible under PMGSY-III for greater linkage, the Committee had recommended the DoRD to relook into the matter of selection of appropriate road length by reducing the minimum to 2 km so as to provide last mile connectivity to rural habitations. The Committee find the reply furnished by the DoRD in this regard, that “proposing a single road of length 2 km and below is avoided as it mostly benefits only a single habitation thus forming a dead end”, unsatisfactory in nature and devoid of due diligence. Even if the contention of the DoRD is that lengths of 2 km and below would mostly benefit only a ‘single habitation’, it has perhaps not taken into account that the ‘single habitation’ may comprise of numerous households which would be deprived of the benefits of a connecting road to their shelter. Rural connectivity through PMGSY-III is a wonderful vertical which aims at consolidation of the existing rural road network inside the villages. In case, such parameters are being followed, then the pieces of road length under 3 kms shall remain unconstructed, in their already dilapidated condition as before. At this moment, when the consolidation work is going on, it is perhaps in the fitness of things, if such patches are also covered and linked to proper road network. Thus, the Committee, reiterate their recommendation and beseech upon DoRD to have a rationale and pragmatic view in order to revise and include the roads of lengths of even 2 km under the ambit of PMGSY-III. Further, in this regard, the Committee recommend that the rationale for road length under PMGSY-III should be State specific as per the

requirements and necessities of the different States/UTs rather than a uniform national formula.

VI. Post Construction Maintenance of PMGSY Roads

Recommendation (Serial No. 17)

1.21 Regarding the issue of Post Construction Maintenance of PMGSY Roads, the Committee had recommended as under:-

“The examination of the subject brought to fore a pertinent issue associated with the PMGSY roads being the post-construction maintenance. The Committee find that the usual design life of roads constructed under PMGSY is 10 years and as per the programme guidelines, onus of the maintenance of roads within Defect Liability Period (DLP) (initial 5 years) falls on the Contractor, while post DLP (next 5 years) is the responsibility of the concerned State Government and the funds for the same need to be provided by the concerned State Governments. Here comes the real issue associated with the maintenance and upkeep of PMGSY roads across the nation. The contractors, despite the maintenance provision elucidated in detail in Clause 43 of standard Bidding Document (SBD), more often than not do not pay heed to the enabling provisions and there are abundant instances, wherein non-adherence to the maintenance provision have resulted in the shabby and damaged condition of the PMGSY roads. Having gone through the clauses and other provisions of the scheme, the Committee are of the firm view that mere theoretical presence of such articulated provisions does not seem to deter the erring contractors. The situation demands an iron-fisted approach for stricter implementation of such provisions of PMGSY concerning the post constructed maintenance of PMGSY roads. Therefore, the Committee strongly recommend to DoRD to ensure that the provisions of SBD governing post construction maintenance of roads of PMGSY are complied with in ‘letter and spirit’ so that the roads do not get deteriorated at an early stage, rather serve the purpose of connectivity for a longer period of time. Erring contractors should be short-listed and strict action should be taken to declare them black-listed.”

1.22 The DoRD in their action taken reply furnished to the Committee have stated as follows:-

“eMARG is implemented for five years after construction for online monitoring of maintenance of PMGSY roads. Rigorous monitoring of eMARG implementation during review meetings, pre-EC, EC meetings with States is being done & extension of 5 Year Defect

Liability Period (DLP) in case of poor maintenance of roads has been made mandatory.

For the Post 5 year period i.e. another 5 years after DLP i.e. for a total period of 10 years, eMARG module has been developed, which all States have to follow. The State of Madhya Pradesh has already spent Rs. 644.23 Cr on Post 5 Year Renewal & Maintenance through the module. This will ensure stricter compliance of post construction maintenance.”

Further Observations/Comments of the Committee

1.23 A very important area under PMGSY which attracted the attention of the Committee was that of Post Construction Maintenance of PMGSY roads. Numerous instances of non-adherence to the post construction maintenance provision have been kept on being reported. While the clause 43 of SBD elaborately detail the maintenance provision in the initial 5 years and subsequent 5 years of the construction, contractors/State Government often do not comply with such provision strictly. Thus, the Committee had recommended for compliance with the provision of SBD governing post construction maintenance in letter and spirit and that action be initiated against erring contractors. As per Reply of the DoRD, the States have to follow the eMARG module. Rigorous monitoring of eMARG implementation is being done and extension of 5 years Defect Liability Period (DLP) in the case of poor maintenance of roads has been made mandatory. A case example of the State of Madhya Pradesh has also been cited which has already spent Rs. 644.23 Crore through this module on post 5 years renewal and maintenance. The Committee find that the measures being taken by the DoRD are in the right direction and firmly believe that such steps need to be consistently followed through without any callousness. The Committee further urge the DoRD to keep up with their efforts and also ensure that other States/UTs also follow

suit with the same seriousness for ensuring a stricter adherence to the post construction maintenance of roads through the eMARG module.

VII. Post Construction Maintenance Fund

Recommendation (Serial No. 18)

1.24 In the context of Post Construction Maintenance Fund, the Committee had recommended as below:-

“The Committee note the replies submitted by the DoRD that the 15th Finance Commission had recommended for the provisioning of funds for maintenance of rural roads to the States for easing the burden on them. The Committee note that fund release for maintenance of roads post construction is a glaring issue compounded with the hesitancy of States in releasing the maintenance funds. However, the Committee find that the request of the Ministry of Rural Development to the Ministry of Finance remained unheeded as the Finance Ministry had stated that the Government will give due consideration to sectors identified by the Commission while formulating and implementing existing and new Centrally sponsored and Central Sector schemes. In the wake of the non-acceptance of the recommendation, the entire onus now lies on States to ensure that maintenance funds are released and spent timely so that the PMGSY roads post construction do not get deteriorated for want of maintenance due to dearth of adequate maintenance fund. Thus, the Committee urge upon the DoRD to continue their communication with the Ministry of Finance for the actualization of the recommendation of 15th Finance Commission on the one hand while keeping a proper oversight with the State governments for the release of adequate funds to ensure the maintenance of PMGSY roads.”

1.25 In their action taken reply to the above recommendation, DoRD have stated as follows:-

“Ministry has been regularly taking up the issue at appropriate forum with Ministry of Finance for providing maintenance funds for the roads constructed under the scheme. Various correspondence have been made at the level of Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Secretary, Rural Development. Besides, the states are also encouraged to pay proper attention towards these aspects. In order to ensure that states release timely required maintenance funds, a condition has been added in the programme guidelines that the second installment of programme fund will be released only when State has incurred requisite expenditure on maintenance work.

Further, as a measure of further enhancing the focus on maintenance of roads during the defect liability period (DLP) and also streamlining the delivery of routine maintenance of PMGSY roads, Electronic Maintenance of Rural Roads (eMARG) was launched as a simple yet an extremely effective solution to these problems. Conceptualized on Performance Based Maintenance Contracts (PBMC), eMARG sets up a blue-print on how maintenance of infrastructure can be solved across government departments with smart IT & Contract Management. PBMC is a type of contract in which payment to the contractor is made based on the minimum condition of road, its cross drainage works and traffic assets that have to be met by him/her. Payments are based on how well the contractor manages to comply with the performance standards or service levels defined in the contract, and not on piece work. E-Marg is being further strengthened to capture Post DLP maintenance expenditure also.”

Further Observations/Comments of the Committee

1.26 Taking cognizance of the fact that fund release for maintenance of roads post construction is a huge issue on part of the States and that the 15th Finance Commission had recommended for the provisioning of funds for maintenance of rural roads to the States, the Committee had recommended the DoRD to keep up with their communication with the Ministry of Finance for the actualisation of the recommendation of the 15th Finance Commission. The DoRD, in their reply have submitted that the issue is regularly being taken up at appropriate forums with the Ministry of Finance and various correspondences have been made at the level of Hon’ble Minister and Secretary, Rural Development. Other actions being taken for ensuring post construction maintenance by the States have also been elaborated upon such as non-release of second instalment on account of non-incurrence of requisite expenditure of maintenance and provision of eMARG etc. The Committee after going through the reply thoroughly find the efforts of the DoRD positive and

encouraging in nature. Post construction maintenance is indeed a burning issue which needs a logical redressal. So, the Committee are of firm opinion that the recommendation of 15th Finance Commission regarding provisioning of funds for maintenance of rural roads to the States assume paramount importance and thus, further stress upon the DoRD to sustain their good efforts in this direction while also increase their dialogues at the highest level to impress upon the Ministry of Finance for expediting the provisioning of post construction maintenance fund. The Committee also urge upon the Ministry of Finance to take a positive decision in the matter. DoRD may send a copy of this recommendation to that Ministry for their action taken reply.

VIII. Prompt Redressal of Grievances raised by the Members

Recommendation (Serial No. 25)

1.27 With regard to Prompt Redressal of Grievances raised by the Members, the Committee had recommended as under:-

“The Committee note the critical complaint raised time and again by the Members of Parliament about the casual approach elicited by the Department of Rural Development in promptly taking up and redressing the grievances regarding the inaction/irregularities in the works of PMGSY highlighted by them. The Committee feel that this approach of DoRD needs to be rectified immediately. Members of Parliament are constitutional figures and represent the voices/concerns of major chunk of population. Through them, the issues of common man are heard by the authorities at top echelons. Hence, it is imperative that the genuine concern/plight of the scheme at ground level highlighted by a Member of Parliament needs to be taken up on ‘war footing’ and redressal of such complaints needs to be done on priority basis with due information to the concerned Members. Hence, the Committee urge the Department of Rural Development to sort out the areas of grievance raised by Members and ensure their prompt disposal.”

1.28 The DoRD in their action taken reply have stated as below:-

“The Ministry follows the guidelines laid down for handling of all references received from public representatives and strictly adheres to the prescribed timelines. Utmost priority is given to settle the references/grievances received from Member of Parliament. However, in some cases delay occurs due to non receipt of inputs from concerned State Government. In some cases team of National Quality Monitors (NQMs) need to be deputed to carry out the inspection of roads work against which complaint has been made. All these processes take some time and hence delay may occur. However, the Ministry makes all efforts to minimize the delay.”

Further Observations/Comments of the Committee

1.29 The issue of non-serious take up of the grievances raised by the Members of Parliament (MPs) regarding the inaction/irregularities in the works of PMGSY by the DoRD is an area of deep concern to the Committee. Highlighting this casual approach of the Department towards the genuine concerns raised by the MPs, the Committee urged the DoRD to sort out the areas of grievances raised by the Members and ensure their prompt disposal. The Action Taken Reply furnished by the DoRD in this regard more or less vindicate the issue raised by the Committee. While on one hand it states that the Ministry follows the guidelines laid down for handling of all references received from public representatives and strictly adheres to the prescribed timelines, on the other hand, the same reply shifts the onus of delay on the State Governments citing the non-receipt of inputs from concerned State Government. Procedural delay aspect in the inspection of NQMs have been also talked about. The Committee is clueless from the reply as to strict adherence to which ‘timeline’ is being referred to. If there are inordinate delays in handling of the complaints of the MPs, the plight of common man’s complaints leaves nothing to the imagination. Therefore, the Ministry should bring transparency in this aspect and is expected to bring to fore their

prescribed timelines for sorting the grievances raised. All the above foregoings necessitate that the DoRD strengthen further their efforts and spruce up their grievance redressal mechanism for getting the desired results. Therefore, the Committee while reiterating the earlier recommendation further impresses upon the DoRD to issue stricter guidelines to all the agencies involved for the prompt redressal of grievances/complaints raised by the MPs within a definite timeline.

IX. Increased usage of Green Technology

Recommendation (Serial No. 27)

1.30 With regard to Increased usage of Green Technology, the Committee had recommended as under:-

“The Committee pleasantly find the gradual increase in the usage of green technology for the construction of roads under PMGSY and acknowledge the positive efforts being undertaken by the Department of Rural Development in this regard. In this era of modernization, it is in the best interest of the environment that by ushering in green technologies, a sustainable platform is being provided to the infrastructure projects by shifting from the conventional methods. Notable among other techniques is the usage of plastic in the road construction activities. The Committee are a bit concerned over the usage of plastic in terms of its biodegradability and the hazard it poses to the environment in general. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department of Rural Development should conduct a study on the possible environmental hazards of the usage of plastic for road construction and take appropriate steps thereon on the basis of outcome of that study.”

1.31 The DoRD in their action taken reply have stated as below:-

“Waste Plastic itself is a huge problem for environment as they are non degradable, keeping in view that aspect in mind it was decided to use waste plastic in Rural roads. These waste plastic are shredded and made as a powdery substance and mixed in the hot bitumen. The study on use of waste plastic in construction of rural road has been carried out by IIT Chennai and it was found that plastic paved roads have higher resistance to deformation and water induced damaged. As regards concern about the toxicity and environmental suitability of

adding plastic, separate studies have not been carried out. The recommendation of the committee has been noted for compliance.”

Further Observations/Comments of the Committee

1.32 Green Technology is the need of hour is almost every sphere of life. So, the gradual increase in the usage of green technology for the construction of roads under PMGSY has been pleasantly acknowledged by the Committee. However, the Committee are concerned over the usage of plastic in the road construction activities. Therefore, the Committee had recommended the DoRD to conduct a study on the possible environmental hazards of the usage of plastic for road construction and take appropriate steps thereon on the basis of the outcome of the study. In their Action Taken Reply, the DoRD have stated about the rationale for using waste plastic in rural roads construction based on the study carried out by IIT Chennai. However, it has also been submitted that no separate studies have been carried out so far to ascertain the toxicity and environmental suitability of adding plastic in the construction of roads. This precise aspect was highlighted through the recommendation of the Committee as the Committee are of the view that usage of plastic need to be continued after taking into account all facets involved around it and as such the Committee reiterate their recommendation for conducting study on the possible environmental hazards of the usage of plastic for road construction under PMGSY. The study be conducted at the earliest under due intimation to the Committee.

X. Convergence with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Recommendation (Serial No. 30)

1.33 With regard to Convergence with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Committee had recommended as under:-

“The possibility of dovetailing of different schemes of the Government for a systematic approach towards development through prudent economic utilization has always drawn the attention of the Committee. In this backdrop, the Committee find that one such scheme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) can be effectively merged with PMGSY for better utilization of Government’s fund. The unskilled labour component of MGNREGA can be used for the earthen works required in the construction of roads under PMGSY. On the one hand, the unskilled labourers of MGNREGA would get their workdays while the PMGSY construction work would be collaterally taken up, thus saving its fund. Such or similar exercises may be taken up through review of administrative modules and in consultation with the Departments or State bodies involved. Therefore, the Committee recommend the Department of Rural Development to explore the proposal of convergence of MGNREGA with PMGSY earnestly in order to have a rationalized Government fund utilisation.”

1.34 The DoRD in their action taken reply have stated as below:-

“The PMGSY roads are inter-habitation/inter-village roads while under MGNREGA connectivity within a village is supported. Further, there would be challenges in terms of availability of labour during the construction season, tendering process of material component, etc. which makes the convergence in construction of rural roads further difficult.

However, convergence of MGNREGA funds with PMGSY for raising of plantation alongside PMGSY roads has been started.”

Further Observations/Comments of the Committee

1.35 Through dovetailing of different schemes of the Government, prudent economic utilisation of Government funds can be brought about. Keeping this logic under consideration, the Committee had recommended the DoRD to explore the proposal of convergence of MGNREGA with PMGSY. In this context, the Action Taken Reply of the DoRD has elicited the challenges in terms of availability of labour during the construction season, tendering of material component etc. as the reasons for making the convergence of MGNREGA with PMGSY difficult. The Committee note the reply and take into

account the challenges enumerated by the DoRD in this regard. However, the Committee feel that the reply primarily shrugs aside the intent of the recommendation behind the convergence proposal by citing the bottlenecks. The Committee appreciate the fact that atleast bottlenecks have been identified in carrying out convergence of MGNREGA with PMGSY. This in itself is the first step towards ultimate concretisation of any futuristic strategy if there is adequate wherewithal to do so on the part of DoRD. Therefore, the Committee reiterate the earlier recommendation and urge upon the DoRD to relook into the proposal of convergence of MGNREGA with PMGSY with a fresher perspective and explore feasibilities of possible fructification of the convergence aspect.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Serial No. 1)

2.1 The Committee note that one of the most important aspect associated with the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) is the Centre-State coordination, which act as the fulcrum, for the performance of this scheme. The scheme was started in the year 2000 as a 100% centrally sponsored scheme with a onetime intervention of the Centre in realizing the objective of providing all weather durable rural road connectivity to the habitations (500 plus population in plain and 250 plus in Himalayan and North Eastern States). However, the funding pattern was revised to 60:40 ratio between Centre and State from the financial year 2015-16, in all the States barring eight North Eastern States and two Himalayan States (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) and UT of J&K where it is 90:10 ratio. It is 100% Central share for other Union Territories (UTs). Thus, the seamless flow of funds for the timely completion of projects under PMGSY assumes utmost paramountcy. Although the issue of fund release is primary, rural roads being a State subject, the onus of effective implementation also depends upon various other factors which require the pro-activeness of the State machinery. In this context, the Committee find that various projects in many States get delayed or stalled due to logistics issue or non-timely fund release being the main culprit among others, which can be sorted out at the State Government level.

It is pretty much clear that for the effective implementation of the scheme, both Centre and State nodal agencies need to come up with a joint and harmonious approach without shying away from fulfilling their own responsibilities. Hence, the Committee recommend the Department of Rural Development to ensure that the projects under PMGSY do not get hampered due to lack of coordination between Centre and State rather a better cohesive mode of coordination may be devised for providing a positive impetus to the scheme.

Reply of the Government

2.2 Various Institutional mechanisms are already in place for effective coordination between the States/UTs for implementation of the schemes. The progress of the scheme is regularly reviewed by the Ministry by way of Regional

Review Meetings (RRMs), Performance Review Committee (PRC) Meetings, Pre-Empowered/ Empowered Committee Meetings with the States. At District level, the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) headed by Hon'ble Member of Parliament (LS) monitors the implementation of various schemes of Government of India including PMGSY. Besides above, special review meetings/monthly review meetings are also held by Secretary/Additional Secretary/Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development with Chief Secretaries/Principal Secretaries of the States to take stock of the progress of the scheme and remove the bottlenecks, if any. Whenever States point out any difficulty in implementation of the scheme, the same is taken care of and issues are flagged at appropriate level to the concerned agencies for positive outcome.

PMGSY has an unbroken chain of fund release and no work has been hampered on account of non-availability of funds. Sometimes fund released from Central Government does get stuck up for a longer period than the permissible time limit in the State treasury, however, of late, this problem has also been addressed due to constant interaction with the concerned State Governments.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 2)

2.3 The Committee firmly believe that the vital parameter which portrays the performance of any scheme is the amount of fund lying as unspent balance. Even though the Committee notice the fact that the volume of unspent balance accrued over the years has gone down and acknowledge the positive efforts of the Ministry in this regard, an unspent balance of Rs. 2269.631 Crore as on 20.01.2023 is a matter of concern. Two verticals of PMGSY (I & II) are almost on the verge of completion (as per the sunset date outlined by the Ministry) and the remaining components of the scheme are also not much far away from their target date of completion, the accumulation of such large quantum of unspent balance is not acceptable to the Committee. The 'need of the hour' is expeditious utilisation of available finances for the faster completion of the projects, particularly in those States which are lagging behind in implementation of the Scheme. Therefore, the Committee recommend that the DoRD should increase the tempo of their ongoing efforts so as to ensure that the amounts under the head 'unspent balances' get wiped out on a faster rate and the projects under PMGSY are executed in a time bound manner.

Reply of the Government

2.4 In PMGSY funds are transferred to States as an advance against the value of projects sanctioned to the states. As such, some amount of funds will always be available with the State so as to maintain the unbroken chain of fund release. Ministry ensures that the States/UTs are released further funds only upon utilization of 75% of the available funds in the Single Nodal Account (SNA) of the scheme in the state. This limit of 75% has been brought as per the instruction of Ministry of Finance. The process is underway to ensure just in time release to States/UTs. Various recent instructions issued by Ministry of Finance do take care of the fact that unnecessary floats are not available with the States, for that purpose various instruments under Public Finance Management Systems (PFMS) are already in operation.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 3)

2.5 The Committee with utmost concern note the inordinate delay in the completion of targets envisaged under PMGSY-I & II. While PMGSY-I was initiated way back in the year 2000 with the target of connecting 1,78,184 eligible habitations with the construction of 6,45,590 km of sanctioned roads and PMGSY-II was launched in 2013 with a target of upgradation of 50000 Km. After obtaining the final extension, both the verticals were supposed to be finally completed by September, 2022. However, 96.24% under PMGSY-I and 97.01% under PMGSY-II of the targets fixed have been achieved as on 31st January, 2023. Much time has elapsed than could have been ever thought about at the start of each vertical and the phases, specifically PMGSY-I has witnessed inordinate delay in completion of entire sanctioned length of road. Needless to say that the sufferers of such delay are the rural populace of the country who wait with bated breath for the construction of roads so that they can also expect a rise in economic/developmental activities around their habitation for finding a better avenue of livelihood generation. Rural roads are akin to the arteries of the body which connect the hinterland of the vast stretch of the country with the cycle of ongoing development in every sphere of the society. The Committee firmly believe that 'no stone should be left unturned' in the efforts of the DoRD to ensure that the remaining pendency in the PMGSY-I & II are completed on 'war footing' and the progress in this regard should be intimated to the Committee. DoRD could further utilise their administrative skills in the timely completion of

RCPLWEA and PMGSY-III as well. The Committee recommend that concrete measures should be initiated for the timely completion of RCPLWEA and PMGSY-III projects on the basis of experience gained in implementation of PMGSY-I & II so that the necessity of resorting to time extensions does not arise for the completion of projects under RCPLWEA and PMGSY- III.

Reply of the Government

2.6 Under PMGSY-I , II & RCPLWEA 7227 Km, 689 Km & 3852 Km respectively, of road work is balance for completion as on 25th September, 2023. The Ministry has been reviewing the progress of these works on monthly basis. As per the Action plan given by the concerned state government, Ministry is hopeful that all these balance works would get completed before the end of timeline i.e. March, 2024 as the pace of work is likely to pick up after the end of the monsoon season.

Under PMGSY III out of 1,25,000 Km of targeted length, 1,06,911 road length has been sanctioned and 64,874 Km road length completed as on 25th September, 2023. The balance target length is proposed to be sanctioned by the end of the current financial year. Seeing the pace of construction PMGSY-III, Ministry is hopeful that all the sanctioned work would get completed end of timeline i.e. March, 2025. Further, Since PMGSY –III is the up-gradation of existing road network hence the issue regarding the land acquisition, forest clearance and other related issues are not likely to hamper the progress.

For RCPLWEA, Ministry is in constant touch with the implementing States, and all, except Chhattisgarh, have given their action plan for completion of balance works by March, 2024. Ministry has flagged the issue of unsatisfactory progress of balance work of RCPLWEA in Chhattisgarh with Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). MHA is actively reviewing RCPLWEA works of Chhattisgarh and necessary handholding is being done to ensure that bottle necks, if any which are coming in the way of progress are removed.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 4)

2.7 The Committee are not oblivious to an inherent quagmire, associated with the infrastructure projects which overshoot their deadline and result in cost overrun, especially the escalation of cost of raw material and labour component. In this scenario, the Committee fail to comprehend the measures adopted by the DoRD to prevent such collateral damage arising out of the delay/stalling of projects under

PMGSY. It is necessary to quantify the exact detrimental effect of the escalation in cost factor on innumerable projects which have lingered over for years. The Committee found during deliberations with the representatives of the Department and through the on ground reality witnessed during the study visits, the presence of umpteen cases wherein the contractor left the project mid-way or just after start, due to the rising cost of construction owing to delay in projects on account of various logistical issues ranging from non-availability of land clearance to non-release of funds. It is quite perplexing to understand as to how the cost escalation that might have cropped up due to the delay in the completion of projects could be offset against the original quotations at the time of bidding of tender. Although “much water has flown under the bridge” by now, such occurrences need to be examined carefully for ensuring that the future/ongoing endeavours of the DoRD under PMGSY do not suffer the same fate. Thus, in the fitness of things, the Committee recommend that DoRD should make tangible efforts to envisage any kind of delays that may crop up during the execution of projects and to guarantee a mechanism of inflation proof costing system under PMGSY constructions even over a longer period of time so as to ensure that the PMGSY projects are completed as per scheduled time period without any cost escalation.

Reply of the Government

2.8 As per the PMGSY guidelines, no extra funds are provided by the Central Government on account of time and cost overrun as well as tender premium. States prepare Detailed project Reports (DPRs) based on the prevailing schedule of rates (SoR). Accordingly Ministry sanctions the proposals based on the cost estimate arrived at by the States based on the SoR. These SoRs are revised from time to time keeping in view the existing market trends. Once project is sanctioned, there is no provision for payment of cost escalation on account of time overrun under the scheme. Timeline has been clearly laid down for completion of roads/ bridges in the guidelines and the same has to be adhered to by the States as there is fixed timeline for completion of projects sanctioned under PMGSY. If cost increases on account of time overrun, States have the responsibility to bear the extra cost which acts as a disincentive against time and cost overruns.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 5)

2.9 The Committee note that RCPLWEA, a very important vertical under PMGSY, was launched in 2016 with the primary goal of ensuring socio-economic development of the areas affected by left wing extremism in such States of the country. The deadline for the completion of this component under PMGSY is March, 2023. In this regard, the Committee are concerned to note that only about 55.61 percent of the work has been completed as on 31.01.2023 and as such the vertical is poised to miss its deadline. While trying to grasp the peculiarity of such delay, the Committee have taken into account the unique nature of challenge that LWE areas throw in terms of insurgency, difficult terrain etc. Still, the Committee feel that such bottlenecks in themselves are all the more potent reasons as to why road connectivity to the mainland from such areas are of utmost importance. The more delay caused in bringing the affected population to mainstream via the connectivity, the situation would take even longer to be controlled and developed for good. Special efforts and perhaps area specific professionals who are skilled to work in combat and insurgent zones such as Border Roads Organization (BROs) might serve as a boost to the lagging projects under RCPLWEA. Therefore, the Committee recommend that DoRD should envisage a few 'out of box' solutions and guide the concerned States accordingly so as to ensure that the projects under RCPLWEA do not suffer delay and are completed on a faster basis for the time-bound realization of the objectives of this vertical.

Reply of the Government

2.10 Works sanctioned under RCPLWEA are regularly reviewed both by Ministry as well as MHA. Ministry is in constant touch with the implementation states, and all except Chhattisgarh have given their action plan for completion of balance work by March, 2024. Ministry has flagged the issue of unsatisfactory progress of balance work of RCPLWEA in Chhattisgarh with Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). MHA is actively reviewing RCPLWEA works of Chhattisgarh and necessary handholding is being done to ensure that bottle neck, if any which are coming in the way of progress is removed. Efforts are being made to ensure that all the sanctioned works are completed by the extended timeline which is March, 2024.

As on 25.09.2023, 630 roads of 3,853 km and 391 bridges remain balance for completion under RCPLWEA. Hence, the States/UTs are well placed to complete the works under RCPLWEA within the stipulated timeline.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 6)

2.11 The Committee note that the latest component of PMGSY is its third phase i.e. PMGSY-III which was launched in 2019 with the objective of consolidation of the existing through routes and major rural links so that rural habitations are connected to gramian agricultural markets, higher secondary schools and hospitals. With the timeline for completion being March, 2025, 96,950 km of road length have been sanctioned till 31.01.2023 out of the total target of 1,25,000 km road proposed to be laid under this phase. Despite the passage of a substantive period of time since its launch, even the sanctioning of the entire targeted length of road to the States has not been completed so far. This does not augur well for the future of the vertical as the deadline for completion is not very far. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that DoRD should enrich themselves from the past experiences and take immediate appropriate steps with the participation of all the stakeholders involved to expedite the groundwork for start of work on the remaining targeted length of PMGSY-III and also for the timely completion of road length already taken up for execution so as to achieve the target of existing 1,25,000 km of road by March, 2025 without any time and cost overrun.

Reply of the Government

2.12 PMGSY-III works have been sanctioned to only those states which have either fully completed PMGSY-I & II works or are on the verge of completion. This has been done to ensure that their execution capacity is not overstretched otherwise their would be further delay in the completion of balance PMGSY-I & II works.

Under PMGSY III out of 1,25,000 Km of targeted length, 1,06,911 road length has been sanctioned and 64,874 Km road length completed as on 25th September, 2023. The balance target length is proposed to be sanctioned by the end of the current financial year. Seeing the pace of construction PMGSY-III, Ministry is hopeful that all the sanctioned work would get completed end of timeline i.e. March, 2025.

Further, Since PMGSY–III is regarding up-gradation of existing road network, hence the issue regarding the land acquisition, forest clearance and other related issues do not hamper the progress.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 8)

2.13 The Committee note that there exists the mandatory provision of laboratories at the ground level which serve as the first tier of the quality control of the programme implementation unit. These on-site labs are meant for the assessment of the quality of roads, the stones that have been used, etc. The Committee take into account such valuable component of quality check at the fundamental stage of road construction. However, the Committee are surprised on being informed about the alleged non-existence or non-functioning of these labs at many locations through the first hand ground experience of the Members. Since this important provision for quality monitoring of the construction needs to be scrupulously implemented as violation of this provision can derail the entire project of the specific site, the Committee recommend DoRD should take this matter seriously and carry out thorough evaluation of the sites for ensuring stricter compliance with the presence of labs at the construction sites for maintaining the quality of raw materials and roads. The action initiated in this regard should be intimated to the Committee.

Reply of the Government

2.14 As per the Programme Guidelines, a site quality control laboratory has to be set up by the contractor for each package. Payments are made to the contractors only after quality control laboratory has been set up. Project Implementation Units (PIUs) has been instructed to verify the field lab and upload geo tagged photograph on OMMAS, containing photograph of lab with head of PIU. State Quality Controller (SQC) has been mandated to upload a pdf copy of Quality Control (QC) registers part-I in online management monitoring and accounting system (OMMAS) through his login for all the projects after getting it evaluated and rated by the concerned Superintending Engineer (SE) of the circle. NRIDA has mandated the requirement of maintaining Quality Control Registers (QCR) for each work. Moreover, National Quality Monitors (NQMs) and State Quality Monitors (SQMs) while visiting the site do cross check the establishment of field lab and record their observations on OMMAS.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 10)

2.15 The Committee note the provision under PMGSY, as informed by the DoRD during evidence, about the sub-letting of works to petty contractors by the main contractor. Acknowledging the intent of creating a wider resource pool for future through this percolation of works to other personnel who gain valuable experience,

the Committee through their experience and the information shared with them have acquiesced themselves to the flip side of this practice also. The petty contractors who come into the picture by way of multiple sub-lettings are sometimes not able to maintain the quality of construction and the goals of the scheme. Such practices results in poorly constructed roads, devoid of standard protocols and have adverse effect on the project. Quality check on the working of such petty contractors is the 'need of the hour' and proper drafting of norms along-with their implementation for ensuring that the petty contractors work properly is required. Hence, the Committee recommend DoRD to review the provision of sub-letting and take corrective measures as per manual in this regard.

Reply of the Government

2.16 As per Standard Bidding Document, for PMGSY works, the Contractor may subcontract part of the construction work with the approval of the Employer in writing, up to 25 percent of the contract price. However, the ultimate liability for delivery of good quality roads lies with the main contractor. The main contractor shall, at all times, be responsible and liable for all his obligations under the Agreement notwithstanding anything contained in the agreements with his Sub-contractors or any other agreement that may be entered into by the Contractor and no default under any such agreement shall exempt the Contractor from his obligations or liability towards the contract. The overall responsibility of maintaining the quality lies with the main contractor and all works are executed following similar quality standards following a three tier quality monitoring system. Based on the periodic monitoring of quality of roads under the 3-tier mechanism, corrective measures, wherever necessary, are taken by the State Governments.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.14 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 11)

2.17 The Committee opine that PMGSY roads are built under such guidelines which do not take into account plying of heavy tonnage vehicles which nowadays cause immense damage to the rural connectivity roads. In this era of modernization when industrial setups at far flung locales and the construction works of highways often necessitate movement of heavy load bearing vehicles, particularly those of NHAI to also utilise the roads built under PMGSY. Such heavy vehicles cause

irreversible damages to the rural roads under PMGSY which are of the mandated thickness of 20 mm. It, thus, becomes imperative to protect and get repaired the existing roads under PMGSY from the damaging NHAI vehicles and increasing the thickness of roads under PMGSY to 30 mm for bearing the load of heavy vehicles that would keep on plying on them in future. In view of the above, the Committee urge DoRD to have urgent meaningful dialogue with the NHAI to ensure that the PMGSY road damage by NHAI vehicles get mitigated and the damages are repaired by NHAI in accordance with the provisions of PMGSY. Moreover, the need of increasing the thickness of the PMGSY road from the existing 20 mm to 30 mm should also be looked into pragmatically by the DoRD.

Reply of the Government

2.18 Rural roads are designed for 10 years of design life and future traffic annual growth rate is also taken into consideration while designing the pavement crust. Roads built under PMGSY follows the specifications of IRC especially IRC SP 72:2015 to design the rural roads, IRC SP 72:2015 limits the design traffic to 2 MSA. Load carried by standard axle (single axle, dual wheel) is 8.16 tonnes and tandem axle is 14.9 tonnes. Fully loaded Heavy Commercial Vehicle (HCV) have a rear axle load of 10.2 tonnes and a front axle load half the rear axle load i.e. 5 tonnes and 20 % overloading is considered if overload vehicles are present. Heavier loads than this is not considered in design.

As per IRC SP 72:2015 the surface course recommended is 20 mm OGPC only for higher traffic, The surfacing course (layer) is the upper layer of the flexible pavement and provides the smooth, durable, abrasion-resistant characteristics of a good roadway, retaining adequate friction for road safety. It is normally made from bitumen bound aggregate – asphalt concrete. It will be waterproof and prevent ingress of water into the lower pavement layers, which would adversely affect their strength. These layers must be strong enough not to rut under the action of traffic.

Since the main load bearing layers are the Binder course, Base course and Sub base course, thickness of these layers are more determining factors for the distresses caused in the pavement when heavy vehicles ply over it.

The issue regarding damage of PMGSY roads by heavy vehicles coming from NHAI roads has been taken up with Ministry of Road Transport and Highways firstly by Secretary vide DO letter dated 08.08.2023 and further by Minister (Rural Development) vide DO letter 27.09.2023. Copies of DO letters are attached.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.17 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 12)

2.19 The Committee note with concern the non-presence of earthen/soil flanks on either side of the PMGSY roads at many locations which cause major inconvenience to on-footers and bicycle riders/two wheeler riders in such areas. Existence of earthen flanks adjacent to roads are integral for the rural areas and a practical aspect which ought to be taken into consideration seriously. The on-footers and bicycle riders are always accident-prone while commuting on cemented roads due to speeding vehicles. Stricter compliance with such provision at the time of construction of PMGSY roads should be ensured and stressed upon. Hence, the Committee recommend the DoRD to relook into the matter by taking into account the plight of the daily commuters and issue guidelines for mandatory earmarking of the earthen flank areas adjacent to either side of PMGSY roads.

Reply of the Government

2.20 Flanks/ shoulders are provided while constructing PMGSY roads. Requirement of shoulders is a mandatory clause of IRC:SP:72-2015. Generally, earthen/hard shoulder requirement is fulfilled for construction of PMGSY road (clause 9.2 of IRC:SP:72-2015). However, since appropriate land is not available alongside the roads and also Central Government does not pay for land acquisition, in some cases earthen flanks may not be available appropriately. However recommendation of the committee has been noted and will be shared with the States for mandatory compliance.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 14)

2.21 Another important area of concern that was brought to the notice of the Committee during their deliberations was the uneven sloping and substantial height difference between the roads constructed under PMGSY and the arterial sub-road or path leading to the villages. The Committee note that vehicles joining the road or leaving the road of PMGSY had to manoeuvre a substantial gradient which had emerged due to non-formation of a decent slope at the time of construction or due to the slope being washed away owing to its non-concretized nature. During darkness or even in daylight there have been cases of vehicles overturning causing harm to the riders who have to negotiate such difficulty on daily basis. Construction of a permanent gentle slope at the meeting places of PMGSY roads with main roads is necessary for the accident free passage of PMGSY road users. Therefore, the Committee recommend that DoRD should ensure identification of such locations and course-correction steps are taken for the existing meeting places where such slopes are missing while this concern is kept in design and complied with in all future construction of rural roads under PMGSY to ward off accidents.

Reply of the Government

2.22 Programme guidelines of PMGSY provide that while preparing the DPR, PIU will ensure that the Rural Roads constructed under PMGSY-III must meet the technical specifications and geometric design standards given in the MoRD's Specifications for Rural Roads, Rural Roads Manual of the IRC (IRC: SP:20) and also, where required, the Hill Road Manual (IRC: SP:48) and other IRC Codes, Manuals relating to Road Signs, Pavement Markings, Crash Barriers, Safety in construction zones etc.

DPRs of the roads sanctioned under PMGSY are prepared by concerned Programme Implementation Units (PIU) and they are expected to take into account these type of special needs. The DPRs are also vetted by State Technical Agencies (STAs) and Principal Technical Agencies (PTAs). They are the institutions of repute and are expected to look into such aspect. However, the recommendations of the committee have been noted and it will be shared with all the concerned agencies to take into account while preparing DPRs.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 15)

2.23 The Committee are of the view that construction of rural roads is an ongoing process and there is always scope for improvement and inclusion of better ideas for bolstering the rural connectivity much more holistically. One such suggestion which drew the Committees' attention during their deliberation over the subject was that of choosing Gram Panchayats as reference point/unit for providing connectivity rather than utilizing the population criteria of a habitation. The provision may be conceptualized in terms of connecting all the villages under a specific Gram Panchayat and so on. This would ensure that all GPs are covered step by step which inter-alia would cover all the habitations/villages automatically. The Committee feel that any change in approach, if it serves the rural populace in a better way, should be welcomed and merit a thorough analysis for present modification as well as future endeavours. Therefore, the Committee recommend the DoRD to be amenable to changes in a positive way and explore the feasibility of picking up Gram Panchayats as reference points/units for providing rural connectivity so as to incorporate the concept at certain stage of rural connectivity mission in the country.

Reply of the Government

2.24 The mandate of PMGSY-I was to provide connectivity to habitations and its completion time is March, 2024 as such no such proposal can be considered at this stage when all the work of this vertical has already been sanctioned. However the recommendation of the committee has been noted and due consideration is given as and when any new vertical to provide new connectivity under PMGSY is launched.

While PMGSY-I mandate is on connectivity of habitations, there exist provisions in PMGSY-I guidelines which involve gram panchayat level functionaries for smooth functioning of the scheme. For instance, at the stage of preparing DPRs, the DPIU conducts a transect walk along the road alignment, involving the local panchayat. State Governments are required to arrange joint inspection of ongoing as well as completed works under PMGSY by Hon'ble MPs, Hon'ble MLAs and representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

For maintenance management of rural roads, State Governments are stipulated to take steps to build up capacity in the District Panchayats and endeavour to devolve funds and functionaries onto these Panchayats in order to enable them to manage maintenance contracts for rural roads. However, till such time as District Panchayats take over maintenance functions, the PIUs will continue to be responsible for

administration of post-construction and zonal maintenance contracts of PMGSY roads.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 16)

2.25 The Committee note that one of the perennial challenges associated with the construction of unified stretch of roads under PMGSY crops up due to the falling of bridges in the mid-way of roads at various locations. The Committee have been apprised that normally when a bridge comes in between two segments of roads, the agency carrying on the PMGSY works do not undertake bridge work citing it as the work of other specific division. As a result, the construction of roads on either side of the bridge site is rendered unusable due to non-construction of bridge work. The entire stretch suffers and the public money gets wasted as an outcome. The Committee feel that a synergy and coordinated action by the different agencies could pave the way for simultaneous construction of roads and bridges at many such locations, thus bringing a much needed relief to the nearby rural habitations. Perhaps, a bit of policy revision and constructive interaction between the stakeholders could bring about a practical change in approach, good enough for the remedial measures required for pushing such projects to completion in a holistic manner. Thus, the Committee recommend to DoRD to look into such issues in a pragmatic way and come out with a suitable mechanism for symbiotic association of different nodal infrastructure agencies.

Reply of the Government

2.26 The primary objective of the 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 in rural areas. Roads constructed under PMGSY thus have all the required culverts and cross drainage works including bridges at appropriate places as per the site requirement. As per the scheme guidelines, if the length of the bridges is more than 15m, separate DPR is prepared. The scheme guidelines provide sanctioning of required bridges. The only condition is that these bridges should fall on the same alignment of the road being constructed. Thus, PMGSY has sanctioned many bridges to different states as per the site requirement. Since, DPR is prepared by the State government, they have to make provisions for cross drainage of bridges depending upon the requirement. The scheme doesn't provide sanctioning of Stand alone bridges.

Moreover, the suggestion given has been noted and will be shared with all the State Governments to take into account while preparing DPRs in future cases.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 17)

2.27 The examination of the subject brought to fore a pertinent issue associated with the PMGSY roads being the post-construction maintenance. The Committee find that the usual design life of roads constructed under PMGSY is 10 years and as per the programme guidelines, onus of the maintenance of roads within Defect Liability Period (DLP) (initial 5 years) falls on the Contractor, while post DLP (next 5 years) is the responsibility of the concerned State Government and the funds for the same need to be provided by the concerned State Governments. Here comes the real issue associated with the maintenance and upkeep of PMGSY roads across the nation. The contractors, despite the maintenance provision elucidated in detail in Clause 43 of standard Bidding Document (SBD), more often than not do not pay heed to the enabling provisions and there are abundant instances, wherein non-adherence to the maintenance provision have resulted in the shabby and damaged condition of the PMGSY roads. Having gone through the clauses and other provisions of the scheme, the Committee are of the firm view that mere theoretical presence of such articulated provisions does not seem to deter the erring contractors. The situation demands an iron-fisted approach for stricter implementation of such provisions of PMGSY concerning the post constructed maintenance of PMGSY roads. Therefore, the Committee strongly recommend to DoRD to ensure that the provisions of SBD governing post construction maintenance of roads of PMGSY are complied with in 'letter and spirit' so that the roads do not get deteriorated at an early stage, rather serve the purpose of connectivity for a longer period of time. Ering contractors should be short-listed and strict action should be taken to declare them black-listed.

Reply of the Government

2.28 eMARG is implemented for five years after construction for online monitoring of maintenance of PMGSY roads. Rigorous monitoring of eMARG implementation during review meetings, pre-EC, EC meetings with States is being done & extension

of 5 Year Defect Liability Period (DLP) in case of poor maintenance of roads has been made mandatory.

For the Post 5 year period i.e. another 5 years after DLP i.e. for a total period of 10 years, eMARG module has been developed, which all States have to follow. The State of Madhya Pradesh has already spent Rs. 644.23 Cr on Post 5 Year Renewal & Maintenance through the module. This will ensure stricter compliance of post construction maintenance.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.23 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 18)

2.29 The Committee note the replies submitted by the DoRD that the 15th Finance Commission had recommended for the provisioning of funds for maintenance of rural roads to the States for easing the burden on them. The Committee note that fund release for maintenance of roads post construction is a glaring issue compounded with the hesitancy of States in releasing the maintenance funds. However, the Committee find that the request of the Ministry of Rural Development to the Ministry of Finance remained unheeded as the Finance Ministry had stated that the Government will give due consideration to sectors identified by the Commission while formulating and implementing existing and new Centrally sponsored and Central Sector schemes. In the wake of the non-acceptance of the recommendation, the entire onus now lies on States to ensure that maintenance funds are released and spent timely so that the PMGSY roads post construction do not get deteriorated for want of maintenance due to dearth of adequate maintenance fund. Thus, the Committee urge upon the DoRD to continue their communication with the Ministry of Finance for the actualization of the recommendation of 15th Finance Commission on the one hand while keeping a proper oversight with the State governments for the release of adequate funds to ensure the maintenance of PMGSY roads.

Reply of the Government

2.30 Ministry has been regularly taking up the issue at appropriate forum with Ministry of Finance for providing maintenance funds for the roads constructed under the scheme. Various correspondence have been made at the level of Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Secretary, Rural Development. Besides, the states are also encouraged to pay proper attention towards these aspects. In order to ensure that states release timely required maintenance funds, a condition has

been added in the programme guidelines that the second installment of programme fund will be released only when State has incurred requisite expenditure on maintenance work.

Further, as a measure of further enhancing the focus on maintenance of roads during the defect liability period (DLP) and also streamlining the delivery of routine maintenance of PMGSY roads, Electronic Maintenance of Rural Roads (eMARG) was launched as a simple yet an extremely effective solution to these problems. Conceptualized on Performance Based Maintenance Contracts (PBMC), eMARG sets up a blue-print on how maintenance of infrastructure can be solved across government departments with smart IT & Contract Management. PBMC is a type of contract in which payment to the contractor is made based on the minimum condition of road, its cross drainage works and traffic assets that have to be met by him/her. Payments are based on how well the contractor manages to comply with the performance standards or service levels defined in the contract, and not on piece work. E-Marg is being further strengthened to capture Post DLP maintenance expenditure also.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.26 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 19)

2.31 The Committee learn from the Standard Bidding Document (SBD) Clause 43.4 that ample provisions are in place for holding the accountability of such contractors who do not comply with the routine maintenance as per the contract in force and that such contractors can be penalized with an additional 20 per cent amount as penalty while they can also be blacklisted. Taking into cognizance the existence of such provisions, the Committee are of the view that the contractors and supervisory engineers are together involved in cases of poor quality of construction and non-maintenance of roads constructed under PMGSY. It is essentially required to overcome the situation by taking suitable corrective actions in this regard. Therefore, the Committee recommend that DoRD should ensure the stricter compliance of the enabling provisions in Clause 43 of SBD.

Reply of the Government

2.32 Maintenance of rural roads is the responsibility of the concerned state government. However, Ministry is seized with the issue relating to complaints of poor maintenance of roads under Defect Liability Period (DLP). NRIDA deploys teams of NQMs to carry out inspection of such roads when specific complaints are received

from Hon'ble MPs and also from other agencies. Based on the inquiry report, States are asked to take necessary action against concerned contractor. Also, after implementation of eMarg, which is primarily performance based maintenance contract, it has become possible for NRIDA to monitor all such roads visually. If any roads fails to get desired grading, maintenance payments are not released. Further, DLP period of such roads also stand extended for the period for which the road has failed to get desired grading. Hence, Ministry has always been trying to find out ways and means to strengthen the oversight mechanism for ensuring better roads maintenance.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 20)

2.33 The Committee note that there is a well structured monitoring mechanism under PMGSY. The paraphernalia include Online Management Monitoring and Accounting System (OMMAS), Project Management Information System (PMIS), Citizen Information Board, Common Review Mission (CRM), National Level Monitors (NLM), Regional Review Meetings (RRM) among others. Meri Sadak App has also been launched through which any person can register the complaint relating to slow pace of work, abandoned work, poor quality, ensuring on-ground monitoring of road construction on a real time basis. The Committee take due note of all the existing systems of monitoring of PMGSY projects but are still not satisfied with the effectiveness of such monitoring mechanisms. The tools are always present, how efficiently these can give results depends on the actual wherewithal and acumen of the user i.e. the nodal agency, DoRD. Through the on-ground experiences of the Members and the insight gained by the Committee during their study visits, startling revelations of by-passing the monitoring mechanism by the erring stakeholders involved in PMGSY projects can be found out. Poor condition of PMGSY roads both in terms of construction quality and maintenance aspect can be noticed even after all such monitoring mechanisms in place. It is evident that monitoring needs to be tighter. Therefore, the Committee recommend that DoRD should entail newer and innovative measures like uploading of real time videos of roads at the duration of every six months, increase in surprise inspections during the Defect Liability Period specifically along with concerned Members of Parliament among others need to be explored on priority basis.

Reply of the Government

2.34 In order to effectively monitor the entire Programme and bring about greater efficiency, accountability and transparency in implementation, a modern web based On-line Management, Monitoring and Accounting System (OMMAS) has been set up for PMGSY. Implementation of all sanctioned works is being monitored through OMMAS on real time basis to ensure that the physical and financial progress is in sync with the overall targets given to states. Progress of all roads uploaded on OMMAS is monitored on real time basis with the provision of Geotech Photographs. Further Project Management Information System (PMIS) has been developed for better management of construction activities of each road sanctioned under PMGSY-III. To enhance transparency during road construction it has been made mandatory to install Global Positioning System (GPS) enabled Vehicle Tracking System (VTS) on all vehicles/ machinery/ equipment deployed by the contractor/ PIUs for execution of PMGSY works. This helps in assessing the proper operation of these machinery/ equipment for a specified period which is very essential for achieving the specified quality of the roads being constructed. Further, as a measure of further enhancing the focus on maintenance of roads during the defect liability period and also streamlining the delivery of routine maintenance of PMGSY roads, Electric Maintenance of Rural Roads (eMARG) has been introduced, which is conceptualized on Performance Based Maintenance Contracts (PBMC). Payment to the contractor is now made through eMARG which is based on the minimum condition of road, its cross drainage works and traffic assets. Payments are based on how well the contractor manages to comply with the performance standards or service levels defined in the contract, and not on piece work.

PMGSY roads are constructed by the State Governments with a design life of at least 10 years. As per PMGSY guidelines, maintenance of roads constructed under the programme is the responsibility of the State Governments. All PMGSY road works are covered by initial five 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 are required to be budgeted by the State Governments and placed at the disposal of the State Rural Roads Development Agencies (SRRDAs) in a separate maintenance account. On expiry of this 5 year post construction maintenance, PMGSY roads are required to be placed under Zonal maintenance contracts consisting of 5 year maintenance including renewal as per cycle, from time to time.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 21)

2.35 The Committee believe that monitoring mechanism, howsoever robust, is bound to fail if it is not followed in 'letter and spirit' while ensuring that the monitoring is of continuous nature. Keeping tab on the functioning of all monitoring mechanism through regular follow-up with the State Government's nodal agencies is perhaps the key to an effective monitoring. The DoRD should entail all possible measures to maintain a sustained mode of the monitoring of the progress of the scheme without

any retarding factor. Along with the above, it is also of paramount importance that there is seamless flow of funds from the Centre to the State so that the projects do not get delayed on account of non-timely release of funds by the Centre to the States. Therefore, the Committee recommend that the DoRD should consistently and continually monitor the progress of the scheme through regular follow-up with the State Governments and also ensure that the Central share of funds are timely released to the State Governments.

Reply of the Government

2.36 To make the programme transparent and also to ensure ease of access for monitoring the programme in terms of planning/implementation, a web based programme Monitoring Information System named Online Monitoring, Management and Accounting System (OMMAS) has been developed. The implementation of all sanctioned works is monitored through OMMAS on real time basis. Data on OMMAS is also available in public domain.

Ministry has been monitoring this issue at various level including at Minister and Chief Secretary level besides regular interaction with other officials. Due to all such efforts there is mark improvement in the timely release of state share. Delay in release mainly occurs due to non- fulfilment of certain pre-conditions either imposed by Ministry of Finance or as mentioned in the programme guidelines. However, if such eventualities arise, matter is escalated to higher levels and resolved.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 22)

2.37 The Committee are of the firm view that for a flagship scheme such as PMGSY having a pan-India coverage, adequate manpower is a must for the smoother implementation and redressal of grievances. In this context, the Committee have been briefed about the shortage of the requisite number of engineers in each district. This shortage is having a telling effect on the supervision of ongoing works of PMGSY as limited number of staff cannot cater to the workload of examining sites at far flung locales simultaneously. Moreover, the rising trend of appointing Civil Engineers on contract basis is also not serving any good as the contractual employee is only for a short period of time and cannot be held accountable at later stages. Also, there is always a lack of authority that can be exercised by a contractual employee in comparison to the regular/permanent post holder. The Committee acknowledge that the appointment of engineers lies in the domain of States, but having said that, it is also a fact that their non-presence is having a

detrimental effect on the Centre's scheme. Thus, the Committee recommend to DoRD to ensure that the matter of shortage of staff is duly taken up with the concerned State Governments and they are brought on-board in understanding the gravity of the situation arising due to non-availability of adequate manpower so that the projects of PMGSY get ample technical supervision.

Reply of the Government

2.38 The issue of shortage of manpower is regularly reviewed at various levels including the monthly review meeting with the states. States are sensitized about the need to provide adequate manpower for better supervision as well as implementation of the schemes. States have been taking action in this regard. As per the data collected by the Ministry, only few States have reported shortage of staff and Hon'ble Minister during his interactions with his counterparts in the State Governments has raised the issues and asked them to provide adequate manpower.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 23)

2.39 The Committee note that the inspection of construction of roads under PMGSY is the most vital component of monitoring under the scheme. Infrastructure projects such as these, upon which rests the rural development of the country, require utmost attention to oversee the meeting of requisite engineering requirements. In this context, the Committee have been regularly informed of the existing in-built provisions within the scheme regarding the mandatory involvement of area specific concerned Members of Parliament during the routine inspection twice a year along with redressal of grievances/matters raised by the Members during DISHA Committee meetings. Despite the presence of clear cut theoretical provisions in the scheme, the Committee are concerned to note the non-compliance of these provisions in 'letter and spirit'. More often than not, the prior information to the Members regarding inspection of sites which are carried out by the State Government officials and the National Quality Monitors are not received by the concerned Members and the information about inspection team's departure or their non-arrival reaches the Members. It has been time and again repeated by the Committee that the privileges of the Members of Parliament should not at all be taken casually. It is imperative for the nodal agency of the scheme, Department of Rural Development, to ensure that the mandatory provision mentioned under the

scheme regarding the involvement of Members of Parliament in carrying out inspection of construction sites are complied without any laxity. Moreover, the information to the concerned Members of Parliament about the arrival of inspection teams from Centre or State should be disseminated to them through all possible modes of communication at least one week in advance so that they can make themselves available for the inspection of construction sites. Therefore, the Committee recommend the Department of Rural Development should look into this important issue with utmost earnest and ensure the strictest compliance of the provisions of PMGSY for the active involvement of Members of Parliament during the inspection of PMGSY sites.

Reply of the Government

2.40 PMGSY programme guidelines provides for joint inspection of projects with public representatives. In addition to the joints inspections by assistant engineer and executive engineer with Sarpanch and MLA/ Chairperson of the Intermediate Panchayat respectively, the Superintending Engineer concerned of the zone/region has to request the MP and Zilla Pramukh representing that zone/region once in six months to select any PMGSY project(s) for joint inspection.

In this regard, a circular has been issued by Ministry vide which it has been intimated to all states that deputation of NQMs would be communicated to the Hon'ble MPs by the SQCs well before their visits.

Further, the Ministry has also circulated an advisory regarding joint inspection of PMGSY works by elected representative and officials of SRRDA/PIUs. Regarding the complaints received from the Hon'ble Member of Parliament, another advisory has been issued by the Ministry which stipulates that the concerned National Quality Monitor (NQM) will intimate the visit details to the Hon'ble Members of Parliament with a request for either joining the inspection or sending his/her representative. This provision is being scrupulously followed by all NQMs.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 24)

2.41 The Committee are concerned to note that adequate attention is not given to the provision under the scheme that the suggestions given by the Members of Parliament are to be given due consideration while sanctioning roads for construction under the scheme. In this regard, Members of Parliament have expressed their concern that even though there is explicit role assigned to them

under the scheme relating to the finalization of road projects, this rule is not given due sanctity by the implementing agencies. The Committee duly understand the nitty-gritties involved at the ground level before any specific road is sanctioned by the involved agencies. However, the Committee would like to revisit the rationale behind the implementation of a Welfare Scheme like PMGSY which is primarily aimed at meeting the local population needs. Members of Parliament are one point source for highlighting and airing of the local demands of any constituency. Thus, if they, on merit, gauging the requirement felt by the locals, place their suggestions for inclusion of such roads/sites under PMGSY, then the Department of Rural Development must look into the request with alacrity and should explore the feasibility of inclusion of such suggestions which could assuage the concerns of local rural populace, even at a later stage. Therefore, the Committee recommend that Department of Rural Development should take into account the preference of roads suggested by the Members and utilize their manoeuvring skills under the scheme for effective inclusion of such suggestions on priority basis.

Reply of the Government

2.42 Priority is given to the recommendations made by Hon'ble MPs subject to condition that, they should meet the guidelines and objectives of PMGSY-III. In this respect an advisory has been issued by the Ministry vide letter dated 2nd June, 2020 where detailed role of Hon'ble MPs and other elected members in planning and implementation of road work under PMGSY has been laid out.

The same has been reiterated again vide Ministry's letter dated 23rd June, 2023, to all the States on Role of Hon'ble MPs in Planning and selection of road works under PMGSY-III. The Ministry has been making all efforts to accommodate the views of the Member of Parliament in planning and selection of roads to be taken up under the scheme.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 26)

2.43 The Committee have been frequently informed about the violation of norms of PMGSY pertaining to the protocol to be adhered to in cases of stone laying of any project under PMGSY and later at the time of inauguration of the constructed roads vis-à-vis involvement of the Member of Parliament of the concerned District. This is yet another area of concern wherein the reality of the role that should have been played religiously by the MPs and the facts on ground are completely different on

numerously reported occasions. Even though this was highlighted by the Committee through the previous recommendations, continuous prevalence of non-adherence to these norms are matter of concern to the Committee. Thus, the Committee recommend to Department of Rural Development to revisit norms/provisions in this regard to ensure that the Members of Parliament are not neglected at the time of stone laying ceremonies and inauguration function of the PMGSY projects. Authorities at State level should also be impressed upon to scrupulously adhere to these norms/provisions.

Reply of the Government

2.44 Regular advisories are issued/re-iterated to state to ensure that the guidelines laid down for foundation as well as inauguration of roads by Member of Parliament are strictly complied with. The same is reiterated in the various review meetings held with States from time to time. In case any specific complaint is received the same is taken up with the concerned State government for compliance.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 28)

2.45 The Committee note that Full Depth Reclamation (FDR) technique is another notable novel approach being adopted by the Department of Rural Development in the construction of PMGSY roads. However, the Committee came across during the deliberations about the flip side of its usage at the ground level wherein non-availability of FDR machines in requisite numbers are stalling/delaying the projects. Reportedly, substantial lengths of roads have been sanctioned in Uttar Pradesh State alone for road construction using this technology. However, it is informed that the delays occur primarily due to non-availability of functional machines at all the sites, monopolization of agencies providing the machines and the time consuming process of soil study required for this technology. These areas of concern are defeating the purpose for which the technology was ushered in and need to be seriously taken up for redressal by the Department of Rural Development. The claim at the sites that the soil samples have been sent for analysis for a long period of time (at few places, for more than six months in a stretch) certainly warrant a serious push. In view of the intent and usefulness of the FDR technology, the Committee recommend that the Department of Rural Development should take up the issue of availability of sufficient number of FDR machines and the speedier completion of

formalities like soil testing so that the roads may be constructed using this technique at faster pace in reality.

Reply of the Government

2.46 The pavement problems may lie within the surface layer, but more often can be found in the layers beneath the surface. Base, Sub-base and subgrade layers can be held accountable for a majority of the problems we see in pavements. Full-depth reclamation of asphalt pavement is a rehabilitation method that involves recycling of the existing distressed bituminous layers of an existing asphalt pavement along with a predetermined thickness of the underlying granular (Water Bound Macadam or WBM, Wet Mix Macadam or WMM and Granular Sub Base or GSB) layer(s) into a new base layer. Hence FDR Technology can be better utilized to reclaim the existing distressed pavement layers into new pavement which will result in saving of natural resources and will give durable pavement at the same time.

The recommendation of the committee has been noted and the States will be advised by the Ministry to maintain availability of sufficient number of FDR machines and the speedier completion of formalities like soil testing and job mix formulation. **The Ministry has been hand-holding the States for technical know-how of the FDR process by conducting workshops and organizing exposure visits to the States conducting FDR.**

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Recommendation (Serial No. 29)

2.47 The Committee find that the habitations taken up for PMGSY projects are based on the population figures of Census 2001. Much time has elapsed since the Census 2001 and as such newer and eligible areas of habitations with growing population are left out of the ambit of PMGSY. As a result, the habitations which could have also benefitted as per 2011 Census figures are bereft of the benefit of this welfare scheme. This certainly seems to be a grey area and merits a pragmatic and practical solution. The Committee firmly believe that the objective of the scheme will remain unfulfilled if habitations remained left behind after the culmination of this scheme. Hence, it becomes necessary that the Department of Rural Development ponders over this issue and review their policy while approaching the Ministry of Finance to introduce a suitable new vertical in their domain for the inclusion of habitations as per 2011 Census. Thus, the Committee urge the Department of Rural Development to seriously consider the requirement of inclusion of habitations according to 2011 Census and involve all the stakeholders for chalking out a robust strategy in this regard.

Reply of the Government

2.48 In order to provide connectivity to the eligible habitations as per 2011 census, an EFC note was circulated by the Ministry in the year 2020 amongst various stake holders including Ministry of Finance. The proposal was however not agreed to by the Ministry of Finance due to the prevailing economic conditions owing to COVID-19 pandemic. The Department has been seized with this issue. As and when any decision is taken to launch any further vertical under PMGSY, the issue will be given due consideration.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

NIL

(DoRD O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation (Serial No. 7)

4.1 The Committee are constrained to note that the quality of road construction under PMGSY is an important issue affecting the entire country. This glaring issue, which casts aspersions on the marquee scheme of the Central Government, has wider ramifications on the hopes of rural populace of the country. Building roads build nations as quality roads serve in manifold ways for the prosperity of a country in terms of economic strengthening via boost in domestic trade and commerce, providing employment opportunities and ultimately achieving the goals of development associated with better livelihoods of people. The scheme was launched by the Government with various welfare oriented goals in foresight and has been one of the flagship rural development schemes over the years. On this note, the Committee find the compromise in the quality of construction of roads completely unacceptable and consider this as a punitive act. Instances are galore wherein the attention of the Committee have been drawn towards the poor road materials used in the construction of roads at many places which are not able to sustain the rigours of weather and traffic volume even for one season and are washed away with the onset of monsoon. The Members of the Committee having ground reality experience of their constituencies have time and again raised the nagging issue of poor quality of roads at many locations. Therefore, the Committee beseech upon DoRD to entail stronger measures to ensure that the quality of roads constructed under PMGSY do not get compromised on account of utilization of poor raw materials or other associated reasons so that the noble objective of the scheme to provide all weather road to rural habitation is achieved without any compromise.

Reply of the Government

4.2 Ensuring the quality of PMGSY works is the responsibility of the State Governments, who are implementing the programme. A three-tiered Quality Control mechanism is in place under PMGSY for ensuring construction of quality road works and durability of road assets under PMGSY including the works undertaken by sub-contractors.

Guidelines to regulate the quality control process have been issued to States from time to time. In order to ensure that people engaged in quality check are adequately proficient and well trained, NRIDA has been conducting proficiency tests of NQMs, SQMs, PIU etc. It has been made mandatory for all personnel engaged as NQM/SQM to pass the proficiency test. Further, their skills are also developed through webinars, seminars or by sending them to various training institutions etc. To strengthen the quality check mechanism, establishment of field Lab has been made compulsory. These labs are also to be geo-tagged. Unless these are ensured, no payment is allowed to be made against such roads. Also, new version of Quality Monitoring System App has been developed to include e-forms and other initiatives which has strengthened quality monitoring systems. Consequent upon introduction of e-Marg, payment on account of maintenance to the contractor, during the defect liability period, is made commensurate with the quality of roads maintained by him/her through a performance based contract management system.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.8 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 9)

4.3 The Committee note that bidding through tenders for obtaining projects for construction of roads under PMGSY is an integral part of the scheme as learnt by the Committee while scrutinizing the modalities of the scheme. The contractors who are awarded construction contracts through tenders are, perhaps, the central figures who through their activities more often than not determine the quality of roads constructed under PMGSY. In this context, various reliable sources and the Members of the Committee have brought to fore the practice of low- tendering, in order to win the bid for acquiring the rights for the construction of projects, under PMGSY. Contractors are expected to render yeoman service to the nation for the welfare of people. Bad quality of works under PMGSY is set in motion from here onwards and the contractor compromise with the quality of work after getting contracts at low quotations. The roads so constructed suffer from early 'wear and tear' and becomes rough for use of the people. Therefore, the Committee recommend DoRD to devise even stronger mechanisms/provisions in the bidding processes, besides the extant ones, to further negate the effect of low bidding, so that quality of road construction does not get compromised in the hands of contractors. Moreover, rigorous monitoring mechanism should be put in place to

ensure the quality of road construction as per the specifications mentioned in the contracts.

Reply of the Government

4.4 In the interest of the quality of roads being built under PMGSY and for protection against Abnormally Low Bids (ALBs), provisions of taking the additional performance security from the contractor have been made in the Standard Bidding Documents (SBD). All States have been advised to deal with cases of ALBs as per SBD provisions which are enumerated as under.

A. Qualification of the Bidder:

To make sure that contractors who are bidding for the works have sufficient backgrounds in execution of good quality works, the following Qualification criteria are laid down in clause 4 of the SBD :-

- (a) Contractor to provide the aggregate monetary value of civil construction projects executed in each of the preceding five years.
- (b) Furnish a record of past involvement in projects similar in nature and scale for each of the past five years. Additionally, include particulars of ongoing or contracted projects, along with endorsements from a relevant authority not lower than the rank of an Executive Engineer or its equivalent.
- (c) Present comprehensive information regarding the technical personnel slated for engagement in the project.
- (d) Confirm that the contract aligns with the qualifications specified in Clause 4.4 B(b) (ii) of ITB for the construction.
- (e) Submit a proposed schedule for construction activities and a Quality Management Plan outlining the anticipated timeline for project completion in adherence to technical specifications and the stipulated completion period.

B. Additional Bank Guarantee

As per the clause 46, sub clause 46.1 and 46.2 of the SBD, the Performance Security equal to 5% (five percent) of the Contract Price and additional Security for unbalanced bids shall be provided to the Employer.

C. Blacklist/Termination of Contract

As per the clause 52, sub clause 52.1 and 52.2 the Employer can terminate the Contract if the Contractor commits a major breach of contract in terms of quality and other contractual commitments i.e. Failure to correct a specified Defect promptly, Non-maintenance of required Security, Delaying project completion

beyond allowable liquidated damages period and Not completing a specified portion of work on time.

It may be noted that SBD already has strict provisions to ensure that good quality contractors are engaged for execution of PMGSY works; however the States/UTs have been further advised to ensure strict technical evaluation during the technical scrutiny of bids.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.11 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 13)

4.5 The Committee note that presently road lengths of minimum 3 km are taken up as eligible roads under PMGSY-III. The attention of the Committee was drawn towards demand from various quarters regarding the inclusion of roads of even 2 km as eligible roads under PMGSY-III. The requirement has been felt on account of relevant thorough fare locations getting missed due to the strengthening of minimum 3 km roads uptake for making the main candidate road as minimum 5 km. At this juncture when PMGSY-III has been started, suitable review can be undertaken to meet a populist public demand through minor tweaking of provisions by the DoRD. Therefore, the Committee recommend DoRD to relook into the matter of selection of appropriate road length by reducing the minimum to 2 km and bring about review in their guidelines accordingly so as to provide last mile connectivity to rural habitations.

Reply of the Government

4.6 PMGSY-III envisages consolidation of the existing Rural Road Network by upgradation of existing Through Routes and Major Rural Links that connect habitations to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools, Hospitals.

Links can be made up of two or more roads of variable lengths which can be merged into single candidate road if it makes TR/MRL and gives access to most of the facilities to the majority of the benefitted population. PMGSY-III guidelines specifically state that candidate roads shall preferably be of length not less than 5 kms. Proposing a single road of length 2 km and below is avoided as it mostly benefits only a single habitation thus forming a dead end.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.20 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 25)

4.7 The Committee note the critical complaint raised time and again by the Members of Parliament about the casual approach elicited by the Department of Rural Development in promptly taking up and redressing the grievances regarding the inaction/irregularities in the works of PMGSY highlighted by them. The Committee feel that this approach of DoRD needs to be rectified immediately. Members of Parliament are constitutional figures and represent the voices/concerns of major chunk of population. Through them, the issues of common man are heard by the authorities at top echelons. Hence, it is imperative that the genuine concern/plight of the scheme at ground level highlighted by a Member of Parliament needs to be taken up on 'war footing' and redressal of such complaints needs to be done on priority basis with due information to the concerned Members. Hence, the Committee urge the Department of Rural Development to sort out the areas of grievance raised by Members and ensure their prompt disposal.

Reply of the Government

4.8 The Ministry follows the guidelines laid down for handling of all references received from public representatives and strictly adheres to the prescribed timelines. Utmost priority is given to settle the references/grievances received from Member of Parliament. However, in some cases delay occurs due to non receipt of inputs from concerned State Government. In some cases team of National Quality Monitors (NQMs) need to be deputed to carry out the inspection of roads work against which complaint has been made. All these processes take some time and hence delay may occur. However, the Ministry makes all efforts to minimize the delay.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.29 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 27)

4.9 The Committee pleasantly find the gradual increase in the usage of green technology for the construction of roads under PMGSY and acknowledge the

positive efforts being undertaken by the Department of Rural Development in this regard. In this era of modernization, it is in the best interest of the environment that by ushering in green technologies, a sustainable platform is being provided to the infrastructure projects by shifting from the conventional methods. Notable among other techniques is the usage of plastic in the road construction activities. The Committee are a bit concerned over the usage of plastic in terms of its biodegradability and the hazard it poses to the environment in general. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department of Rural Development should conduct a study on the possible environmental hazards of the usage of plastic for road construction and take appropriate steps thereon on the basis of outcome of that study.

Reply of the Government

4.10 Waste Plastic itself is a huge problem for environment as they are non degradable, keeping in view that aspect in mind it was decided to use waste plastic in Rural roads. These waste plastic are shredded and made as a powdery substance and mixed in the hot bitumen. The study on use of waste plastic in construction of rural road has been carried out by IIT Chennai and it was found that plastic paved roads have higher resistance to deformation and water induced damaged. As regards concern about the toxicity and environmental suitability of adding plastic, separate studies have not been carried out. The recommendation of the committee has been noted for compliance.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.32 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 30)

4.11 The possibility of dovetailing of different schemes of the Government for a systematic approach towards development through prudent economic utilization has always drawn the attention of the Committee. In this backdrop, the Committee find that one such scheme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) can be effectively merged with PMGSY for better utilization of Government's fund. The unskilled labour component of MGNREGA can be used for the earthen works required in the construction of roads under PMGSY. On the one hand, the unskilled labourers of MGNREGA would get their workdays while the PMGSY construction work would be collaterally taken up, thus saving its fund. Such

or similar exercises may be taken up through review of administrative modules and in consultation with the Departments or State bodies involved. Therefore, the Committee recommend the Department of Rural Development to explore the proposal of convergence of MGNREGA with PMGSY earnestly in order to have a rationalized Government fund utilisation.

Reply of the Government

4.12 The PMGSY roads are inter-habitation/inter-village roads while under MGNREGA connectivity within a village is supported. Further, there would be challenges in terms of availability of labour during the construction season, tendering process of material component, etc. which makes the convergence in construction of rural roads further difficult.

However, convergence of MGNREGA funds with PMGSY for raising of plantation alongside PMGSY roads has been started.

(O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.35 of Chapter I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

**RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF
THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED**

NIL

(DoRD O.M. No. P-17017/6/2019-RC dated 27.10.2023)

NEW DELHI
12 December, 2023
21 Agrahayana, 1945 (Saka)

Kanimozhi Karunanidhi
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Rural
Development & Panchayati Raj

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ
(2023-2024)

**EXTRACT OF THE MINUTES OF THE FOURTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2023**

The Committee sat from 1530 hrs to 1550 hrs in Committee Room C, Parliament House Annexe (PHA), New Delhi.

PRESENT

Smt. Kanimozhi Karunanidhi - ***Chairperson***

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri AKP Chinraj
3. Shri Rajveer Diler
4. Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuria
5. Dr. Mohammad Jawed
6. Shri Narendra Kumar
7. Ms S. Jothi Mani
8. Shri Janardan Mishra
9. Shri B.Y. Raghavendra
10. Dr Talari Rangaiah
11. Smt Gitaben Vajesingbhai Rathva
12. Smt Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah
13. Shri Vivek Narayan Shejwalkar

Rajya Sabha

14. Shri Iranna Kadadi
15. Shri Naranbhai J. Rathwa
16. Shri Desai Babubhai Jesangbhai
17. Shri Samirul Islam

Secretariat

1. Shri D. R. Shekhar - Joint Secretary
2. Shri C. Kalyanasundaram - Director
3. Shri Vinay P. Barwa - Deputy Secretary

At the outset, the Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened to consider and adopt draft action taken report on the recommendations contained in the 32nd Report on Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) pertaining to the Department of Rural Development (Ministry of Rural Development).

2. The Committee considered and adopted the draft action taken report without any amendment and authorized the Chairperson to present the report to the House.

3. XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX.

The Committee then adjourned.

XXX Not related to the Draft Report

[Vide para 4 of Introduction of Report]

**ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE THIRTY-SECOND REPORT (17TH LOK
SABHA) OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND
PANCHAYATI RAJ**

- | | | |
|------|---|-------------------|
| I. | Total number of recommendations: | 30 |
| II. | Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: | |
| | Serial Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28, 29 | |
| | | Total:24 |
| | | Percentage: - 80% |
| III. | Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of replies of the Government: | |
| | Serial No. NIL | |
| | | Total: NIL |
| | | Percentage:- 0% |
| IV. | Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee: | |
| | Serial No. 7, 9, 13, 25, 27, 30 | |
| | | Total: 06 |
| | | Percentage: - 20% |
| V. | Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited: | |
| | Serial No. NIL | |
| | | Total: NIL |
| | | Percentage:- 0% |