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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE
(2020-21)**

(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations / Recommendations contained in the Fiftieth Report (16th Lok Sabha) on 'Provision of all weather road connectivity under Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and other agencies up to International borders as well as the strategic areas including approach roads- An appraisal']

TENTH REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

February, 2021/ Magha, 1942 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 12.02.2021

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 12.02.2021



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

February, 2021/ Magha, 1942 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE (2020-21)

SHRI JUAL ORAM – CHAIRPERSON

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Deepak (Dev) Adhikari
3. Kunwar Danish Ali
4. Shri Ajay Bhatt
5. Shri Devusinh Jesingbhai Chauhan
6. Shri Nitesh Ganga Deb
7. Shri Rahul Gandhi
8. Shri Annasaheb Shankar Jolle
9. Choudhary Mehboob Ali Kaiser
10. Prof. (Dr.) Ram Shankar Katheria
11. Smt. (Dr.) Rajashree Mallick
12. Dr. T.R. Paarivendhar
13. Shri Kapil Moreswar Patil
14. Shri Anumula Revanth Reddy
15. Shri Jugal Kishore Sharma
16. Dr. Shrikant Eknath Shinde
17. Shri Prathap Simha
18. Shri Brijendra Singh
19. Shri Mahabali Singh
20. Shri Kotagiri Sridhar
21. Shri Durga Das Uikey

Rajya Sabha

22. Dr. Ashok Bajpai
23. Shri Prem Chand Gupta
24. Shri Sharad Pawar
25. Shri V. Lakshmikantha Rao
26. Shri Sanjay Raut
27. Shri Rajeev Satav
28. Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi
29. Shri Kamakhya Prasad Tasa
30. Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi
31. Lt. Gen. Dr. D. P. Vats (Retd.)

SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Kalpana Sharma - Additional Secretary
2. Dr. Sanjeev Sharma - Director
3. Smt. Shilpa Kant - Executive Officer

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Defence (2020-21), having been authorized by the Committee, present this Tenth Report of the Committee on 'Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fiftieth Report on 'Provision of all weather road connectivity under Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and other agencies up to International borders as well as the strategic areas including approach roads- An appraisal'.

2. The Fiftieth Report (16th Lok Sabha) was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 12.02.2019. The Report contained 33 Observations/Recommendations. The Ministry of Defence furnished Action Taken Replies on all the Observations/Recommendations in July, 2019.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their Sitting held on 09.02.2021

4. For facility of reference and convenience, Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in the Report.

5. An analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fiftieth Report (16th Lok Sabha) of the Standing Committee on Defence is given in Appendix II.

New Delhi;
09 February, 2021
20 Magha, 1942 (Saka)

Jual Oram
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on Defence

REPORT

CHAPTER I

This report of the Standing Committee on Defence deals with Action Taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Fiftieth (50th) Report (16th Lok Sabha) on 'Provision of all weather road connectivity under Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and other agencies up to International borders as well as the strategic areas including approach roads-An appraisal' which was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 12.02.2019.

2. The Committee's Fiftieth Report contained 33 observations/recommendations on the following aspects:-

| Para No. | Subject |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Target and Achievement In Creating Physical Infrastructure Along the Border |
| 2 | BRO- Need to Concentrate in Strategic Areas |
| 3 | Construction of Indo China Border Roads (ICBRs) – Need to Expedite |
| 4 | Quality of ICBRs |
| 5 | Construction of Tunnels |
| 6 | Construction of Bridges |
| 7 | Key Projects – Provision of Connectivity Between Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh (Nemo-Padum-Darcha Road) |
| 8 | Provision Road Link to Last Indian Post of Lipulekh |
| 9 | Delays – Need for Involvement of Private Companies |
| 10 | Allocation and Utilization of Budgetary Resources |
| 11 | Delegation of Administrative and Financial Powers |
| 12 | Pace of Expenditure - Exemption from Ministry of Finance |
| 13 | Improper Utilization of Budgetary Allocations for ICBRs |
| 14 | Expenditure of Rohtang Tunnel Project |
| 15 | Expenditure on Procurement of Equipment, Plants and Vehicles |

| | |
|-------|---|
| 16 | Delay in Completing Infrastructure Projects Roads, Bridges, Permanent Works |
| 17-21 | Reasons for Delay in Construction of Roads - Land Acquisition Issues |
| 22 | Shortage of Construction Material |
| 23-24 | Delay in Wild Life Clearances |
| 25 | Delay in Obtaining Forest Clearances |
| 26 | Need for Sophisticated Equipment |
| 27 | Lack of Availability of Equipment |
| 28 | Human Resource Issues- Shortage of Manpower |
| 29 | Labour Shortage |
| 30 | Air Lift Facility |
| 31-33 | Constitution of Empowered Committees |

3. Action Taken Replies have been received from the Government in respect of the observations/recommendations contained in the Fiftieth Report. The replies have been examined and categorised as follows:-

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

Para Nos.1,4,8,10,11,12,14,16,24,25,26, 29,32,33.

(14 Recommendations)

(Please see Chapter II (A) of the Report)

(B) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government and commented upon:

Para Nos. 3,5 and 6

(3 Recommendations)

(Please see Chapter II (B) of the Report)

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

Para No. 23

(01 Recommendation)

(Please see Chapter III of the Report)

- (iii) **Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration and to be commented upon:**

Para Nos. 2,17,22,27,30,31.

(06 Recommendations)

(Please see Chapter IV of the Report)

- (iv) **Observations/Recommendations in respect of which Government have furnished interim replies:**

Para No. 7,9,13,15,18,19,20,21,28.

(09 Recommendations)

(Please see Chapter V of the Report)

4. The original Report on the subject was presented on 12th February, 2019. The Action Taken Replies/Notes are invariably sought from the Ministry within three months of the presentation of the Reports. However, after sifting of the reply of the Government, the Committee infer that 9 numbers of recommendations are interim in nature. At this stage, they can only recommend that replies to all such recommendations may kindly be furnished to the Secretariat at the earliest. In future also, all concerted efforts should be made to adhere to the timelines of the Committee in furnishing the Action Taken Replies. The Committee desire that the Ministry's response to their comments made in Chapter I of this Report and final replies in respect of Observations/ Recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report should be furnished to them at the earliest and in any case not later than six months of the presentation of this Report.

A. BRO NEED TO CONCENTRATE IN STRATEGIC AREAS

Observation/Recommendation No. 2

5. The Committee had recommended as under:

Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and Border Roads Development Board (BRDB) were set up, the Committee note, to ensure coordination and expeditious execution of road projects in the North and North Eastern States to enhance the defense preparedness and economic development

of the region. There is a need for BRO to concentrate on strategic works, along the border and hand over certain roads to other agencies. The Committee also note that with a large number of roads included in BRDB programme over the years, BRO spread its resources for the development of roads in the lower regions (other than higher/hilly regions) and as a result the development of road infrastructure in the forward areas suffered.

Based on the operational requirements of the Army and consequent upon the decision taken in the National Security Council meeting, it was decided that BRO may focus on core strategic functions on the borders and MoD along with MoRT&H will work out the modalities of separating BRO's strategic road building functions from infrastructure development in left Wing Extremism-affected areas and other internal roads. Accordingly, certain roads in the hinterland, which were earlier constructed by BRO and are now further required to be improved, are identified to be handed over to other agencies so that BRO is able to utilize its resources optimally for construction of roads, which are of strategic importance in the border areas and will meet the operational requirements of the Army. The Committee are in agreement with the decision especially in view of the fact that many border roads especially Indo-China Border Roads (ICBRs), which are important from the strategic perspective, are running much behind their completion schedules.

6. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated as under:

No further comments

7. **The Committee, while examining the subject, had noted that in the North and North-Eastern States, certain roads in the hinterland, which were earlier constructed by BRO, were handed over to other agencies so that BRO is able to utilize its resources optimally for construction of roads, which are of strategic importance. This is imperative in the case of India-China Border Roads, especially in view of the present security threat faced by our country when these roads have become crucial from the strategic perspective. As the Ministry have not given any comments, the Committee urge upon the Ministry to apprise the Committee of the latest developments regarding construction of border roads, especially Indo-China Border Roads (ICBRs) which were already running behind their completion schedule. The Committee would like to be kept abreast of the steps taken in early completion of the roads and would also like to be supplied with complete details, including the cost and time overruns during the last 17 months and also the new target dates fixed by the Organisation.**

B. CONSTRUCTIONS OF INDO CHINA BORDER ROADS (ICBRs) – NEED TO EXPEDITE

Observations/Recommendations (Para No.3)

8. The Committee had recommended as under:

The Committee note that Government has identified 73 roads of length 3812 Km, for development along the Indo-China Border. The initial target date for completion of these roads was 2012. Out of this, 61 roads of length 3417.50 km have been entrusted to BRO. Out of these, 28 roads of length of 981 km are completed and works on the balance roads are under progress and are in different stages of completion. Out of 35 General Staff roads, work has been completed in respect of 14 roads. Out of rest of 21 roads work has commenced but not yet completed. Out of 13 China Study Group roads, work relating to only 6 roads has been completed and rest of 7 roads are still under construction. The same is the case with Indo Tibet Border Police roads where out of 13 roads, only 8 has been completed and rest are still under construction. The Committee note that delay as mentioned by Border Road Organisation such as obtaining forest/wildlife clearances, difficult terrain conditions, hard rock stretches, limited working period, paucity of construction material, challenges posed by natural disasters such as flash flood of Leh in 2010, Earthquake in Sikkim in 2011, Uttarakhand Floods in 2013 and J&K Floods in 2014 etc is understandable. The revised completion schedule of 83 ICBR is 2022. The Committee also note that out of 11 ICBRs scheduled to be completed by the end of FY 2018-19 only three Nelong-Naga, Naga-Sonam and Sumna-Rimkhim have been completed. Work on only one road Tr Jn-Bheem Base-Dokala is near completion and has been completed 96 percent. Construction of all other roads i.e. Tata-Manigong-Tadagade, Joshimath-Malari, Musapani-Ghastoli, Nacho-TCC, LGG-Mukto-Teli, Leh-Upsi-Sarchu and Tawaghat-Ghatiabagarh has not been completed yet leaving 16 to 36 work to be finished in the current financial year which seems not possible considering the winter season and hard working conditions.

The Committee hope that with the delegation of administrative and financial powers effected in August 2017 empowering the field level officers to approve and sanction projects will hasten the completion of the projects in time. Apart from the above measures, outsourcing of certain activities, execution of works through Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode, might also shorten the project execution time. In view of the above, the Committee recommend BRO to explore the possibility of completing all ICBRs by 2020 instead of the present target of 2022.

9. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated as under:

Government has identified 73 roads for development along Indo-China border by 2012. Out of the 73 ICBRs, earlier, 61 ICBRs of length 3417.50 km was entrusted to BRO. As per the revised approval the earlier length of 61 ICBRs has reduced to 3323.57 km. Of these 61 ICBRs, 33 ICBRs of length 1120 km are completed and connectivity has been achieved in 3204.11 km of road length. Further, out of the 11 ICBR's mentioned above in the recommendation of the Committee, 6 ICBRs are completed and the progress of remaining is as under:-

| Srl no | Name of road | Length (km) | Remarks |
|--------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| i | Nelong - Naga | 8.10 | Completed |
| ii | Naga- Sonam | 11.20 | |

| | | | |
|------|---------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|
| iii | Tri Jn-Bheem Base -Dokala | 19.72 | |
| iv | Joshimath- Malari | 62.67 | |
| v | Musapani- Ghastoli | 7.40 | |
| vi | Nacho- TCC | 53.55 | |
| vii | Sumna- Rimkhim | 14.00 | Formation completed. |
| viii | Tato- Manigong -Tadagade | 85.98 | 93% completed and work in progress |
| ix | LGG- Mukto -Teli | 53.00 | 88% completed and work in progress |
| x | Leh- Upsi -Sarchu | 249.62 | 67% completed and work in progress |
| xi | Tawaghat- Ghatibagarh | 19.51 | 64% completed and work in progress |

The revised planning for completion of 28 remaining ICBRs based on the requirement of the Army is as under:-

- (i) FY 2019-20 - 11 roads
- (ii) FY 2020-21 - 9 roads
- (iii) FY 2021-22 - 6 roads
- (iv) FY 2022-23 - 2 roads

10. The Committee in their Report had recommended for expeditious completion of the projects of Indo-China Border Roads along with India-China Border. There were 73 roads of length 3812 kms identified out of which 61 ICBRs of length 3323.57 km was entrusted to BRO. The Committee find that of these 61 ICBRs, 33 ICBRs of length 1120 km have been completed and connectivity has been achieved in 3204.11 km of road length. Out of 11 ICBRs, which were scheduled to be completed by the end of FY 2018-19, the Ministry have informed that only 6 ICBRs have been completed and the rest are under progress. As the FY 2019-20 has come to an end and till now construction of only 6 out of 11 ICBRs have been completed, the Committee recommend that BRO should take the matter with utmost priority and seriousness, especially keeping in view the present tense scenario at India and China border and to overcome the hurdles in the direction of shortening the project completion time. The Committee would also like to be apprised of the latest position regarding completion of ongoing and targeted projects of ICBRs.

C. CONSTRUCTION OF TUNNELS

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 5)

11. The Committee had recommended as under:

The Committee note that BRO is constructing tunnels at Rohtang pass, Theng and Sela pass to ensure all weather accessibility to our strategic borders. The Committee are glad to note that tunnel on Gangtok-Chunghang at Teng was dedicated to the nation on 7th June, 2018. The Committee note that Rohtang tunnel is expected to be completed by August, 2019 and the Sela pass by 2021. The Committee hope that these much needed tunnels will not miss their completion deadlines especially in view of liberalized delegation of powers, outsourcing of works, execution of projects through EPC mode, etc.

12. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated as under:

No further comments.

13. In their earlier recommendation, the Committee had desired that the Ministry should provide the latest developments regarding the completion of Rohtang tunnel and the Sela Pass, which was scheduled to be completed by August 2019 and 2021 respectively should not miss their completion targets. As the Ministry has not commented upon it, the Committee, being dissatisfied, again exhort the Ministry to provide the current status of these two tunnels at least at the time of providing action taken statements to the Committee. In the normal course, the Ministry should have apprised of such details on its own. Yet the Committee would like to know the reasons of delay, if any, that took place, as also the current factual position in this regard.

D. CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGES

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 6)

14. The Committee had recommended as under:

The Committee note from the reply furnished by the Ministry that out of 20 bridges on ICBRs, only one out of two bridges on Balipara-Charduar-Tawang road, five bridges out of seven on Orang-Kalaktang-Shergaon-Rupa-Tenga road and one out of two bridges on Joshimath-Malari road have been completed leaving thirteen bridges in the non completed category. All the twenty bridges have Probable Date of Completion (PDC) between year 2010 to 2017. To the astonishment of the Committee, one of the bridges at Dhak on Joshimath-Malari road had PDC dated 31-03-2015, where, only 14.41 percent

work has been completed. With such pace of work, one can easily guess the actual date of completion of the bridge. Besides this, one bridge Tawangchu-II on BJJ-LGG road had PDC dated 31-03-2010 but only 19.75 percent of the work has been completed. The Committee find that besides the above all other bridges are still under construction, which would result in BRO missing PDC by a huge margin. The Committee, therefore, desire that as these bridges join the roads and are very crucial in movement of personnel, BRO should give preference for their early completion. Considering the fact that in Uttarakhand bridges were washed out every year due to natural calamities, the Committee desire that the Ministry should contemplate a plan of action to address such eventualities and designing of the bridges and site chosen for construction should be firm and not prone to vagaries of natural causes.

15. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated as under:

The design and execution of bridges involves complex processes and factors considered for design and execution of bridges during planning stage get enhanced many times by adversity of terrains and nature. Recurring floods, avalanches due to global warming greatly affect the progress of bridges. Besides these Local problems, land clearance, forest clearances etc during construction period affect the completion of bridges. However, efforts are made by BRO to complete the bridges in time by meticulously resolving the issues responsible for delay in completion of bridge.

Out of the 20 bridges, 07 bridges are completed and the present Status of these bridges is given below:-

| Name of road | Name of State | Nos of bridges | Nos of bridges completed | Nos of bridges under progress |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Balipara-Charduar-Tawang | Arunachal Pradesh | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Orang-Kalaktang-Shergaon-Rupa-Tenga | | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| BJG-LGG | | 2 | - | 2 |
| Joshimath-Malari | Uttarakhand | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| Darbuk Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie | Jammu and Kashmir | 4 | - | 4 |
| Total | | 20 | 7 | 13 |

16. Taking note of the fact that there are 20 bridges on ICBRs, out of which 13 bridges are still under construction. These bridges were to be completed between 2010 to 2017 but they have missed their Probable Date of Completion (PDC). Taking note of the above fact, the Committee had recommended to speed up the completion of construction of all the 20 bridges. However, the Committee have found that still the construction has not been completed and the work is still under progress. The Committee are of the opinion that instead of the sincere efforts of the Ministry, the desired results could not be accomplished. The Committee at this stage would like to know the reasons of delay in each and every bridge

totaling to 13 in number. They would also like to know what action has been taken by the Ministry in the field of designing of the bridges and on what basis the sites are chosen. The Committee, taking into account the pendency in the construction of bridges specifically in the strategically important border areas, reiterate their recommendation to leave no stone unturned in completion of these bridges. The Committee would like to know the latest developments in this matter.

E. REASONS FOR DELAY IN CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS – LAND ACQUISITION ISSUES

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 17)

17. The Committee had recommended as under:

The Committee note that there are many issues relating to acquisition of land which resulted in considerable delay in construction of roads, bridges and tunnels in the border areas. These issues include delay in joint survey for land acquisition, non disbursement of land acquisition payment, non transfer of land in the name of BRO for which land acquisition already paid, dual payment to forest department and civil administration for land acquisition, demand for additional compensation for which joint survey completed and land acquisition amount paid, non-demolition of structures for which price for land acquisition already paid etc. The Committee find that there is an abnormal delay of more than one and half years to carry out the joint survey for land acquisition by the civil administration. As a result, construction of roads from Daporijo-Taliha and Taliha-Nacho got delayed. In other case after making the payment for land acquisition in respect of Dirang Bye pass on road Balipara-Charduar-Tawang, the amount has not been disbursed to the land owners, due to which the people are not allowing BRO to construct the Bye pass. In yet another instance, there are 96 cases for which land acquisition amount has already been paid to the land owners by the civil administration but the transfer of land/mutation of the land is still pending with the civil administration.

In a case specific to Arunachal Pradesh due to the non-availability of land records, dual payment is required to be paid for land acquisition to both the forest department as well the revenue authorities for which a notification needs to be issued by the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh for Kimin-Potin, Daporijo-Taliha, Taliha-Nacho and Taliha-Tato roads making construction of these roads delayed.

The Committee also note that despite completion of joint survey of land for 6 cases in various States, recurring demand for fresh joint survey/demand for additional compensation is being received by BRO and more so over demolition of the structures within Right of Way (RoW) for which the compensation amount has already paid, is yet to be done.

18. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated as under:

The majority of the settlement of LA cases is based on court orders. In case of North Eastern states, a large number of LA cases are filed by the land owner's

on account of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 for enhanced compensation. Further, earlier a large number of roads in remote areas were constructed on community land, which was provided to BRO by the village heads and concerned locals by issuing NOC. Now a large number of LA cases pertaining to such roads are also arising due to subsequent generation not honoring /accepting the NOC.

19. The Committee find that there is a delay of more than one and a half years to carry out the joint survey for land acquisition by the Civil Administration. This delay has been attributed to the subsequent generation not honoring /accepting the NOC which were provided to BRO for construction on community lands by the village heads and concerned locals. As this is causing delay in construction of roads, the Committee desire to be apprised of the action taken by the Ministry to deal with this onerous issue. As the pending land acquisition cases are causing delays in construction of roads, the Committee again recommend the Ministry to take up this issue with utmost seriousness and resolve them at the earliest. The Committee would like to know about the latest status in this regard within three months of the presentation of this Report. It is needless to state that while furnishing the Action Taken Statements (ATNs), the impact of new Policy Decisions of the Government, if applicable in this scenario, should suitably be incorporated.

F. SHORTAGE OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 22)

20. The Committee had recommended as under:

The Committee further note that there is an acute shortage of quarry extracted construction materials in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Out of 71 quarries proposed by BRO, only 39 quarries have been notified by the State Government. Despite repeated request by BRO, rates for extracted quarry materials have not been fixed by the State Government since Sep 2015. The Committee find it surprising that despite having Empowered Committees and BRDB, the Ministry is not able to resolve such issues. It is obvious that if quarries are not available, the construction work cannot progress. The Committee therefore, desire that the Ministry should take the issue at the highest level so that these bottlenecks can be cleared in a shorter span of time and roads are built as per the schedule.

21. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated as under:

The present status of allotment of quarries to BRO in Arunachal Pradesh is as under:-

| S/No | Name of State | Proposed | Notified |
|------|-------------------|----------|----------|
| i | Arunachal Pradesh | 128 | 60 |

22. The Committee find that the reply of the Ministry is not complete and there is not much progress regarding number of quarries being notified. Therefore, the Committee desire that at the time of furnishing Action Taken Statements, they should be apprised of the steps taken by the Ministry to deal with this issue alongwith the latest developments that took place during this intervening period.

G. LACK OF AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 27)

23. The Committee had recommended as under:

The Committee note that the availability of construction equipment is far lesser than that of authorized numbers with respect to the work load of BRO in 2016-17. The availability vis-à-vis authorized numbers in respect of stone crushers of all types, a basic equipment in construction industry, is less than 40% in 2016-17, Similarly, in case of tippers the available percentage is less than 50%. In respect of others such as dozers, road rollers, Hot mix plants, wet mix plants, etc., the availability is less than the authorized. However, in 2017-18, the Committee find some improvement in terms of equipment availability, though there is shortages in terms of availability of snow clearance equipment, in which case the authorized vs. held is 154:41.

The Committee are of the view that BRO is deprived of certain basic construction equipment and snow clearance equipment in required numbers which may be affecting their efficiency adversely and also resulting in project delays. The Committee, however, appreciate that to address the shortages, a Long Term Equipments Plan (LTEP) 2014-15 to 2018-19 has been approved with an outlay of Rs 4116.70 crores and 1636 vehicles/equipments/plants were bought under plan. The Committee would like the BRO to inform them of whether the entire amount allocated under the plan has been spent.

24. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated as under:

Earlier, the approval for procurement of equipments was based on the approved five year Long Term equipment Plan which was not realistic with reference to the allocation of budget to BRO therefore, the entire plan could not materialise. Accordingly, Policy guidelines for preparation of Annual works plan (AWP) and Annual procurement plan (APP) with reference to fund allocation to

BRO has been issued vide this office letter dated 19th June 2017 so that the planning of works and the requirement of resources i.e. the size of APP is more realistic.

25. From the reply furnished by the Ministry, the Committee note that inadequate information regarding the utilization of funds by the Ministry under Long Term Equipments Plan (LTEP) 2014-15 to 2018-19 has been furnished to them. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should clearly state whether the entire amount allocated under the Long Term Equipment Plan has been utilized or status of amount allocated as more than a year has passed after its completion. The Committee also want to be apprised about the projects completed with its help. They would also like to be intimated as to what efforts were taken by the Ministry to address the issues of allocation of budget in order to safeguard the interests of not only BRO in particular but defence needs in general.

H. AIR LIFT FACILITY

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 30)

26. The Committee had recommended as under:

The Committee note that in order to induct the construction equipment and material to the air maintained detachments of BRO, each year the air effort is provided by Indian Air Force (IAF) by both Rotary Wing and Fixed Wing aircraft. During the year 2014-15, the demand by BRO was 1323 MT but it was allotted only 960 MT; In the year 2015-16, the demand was 2568 MT but allocation was 971 MT. The same deficiency existed in the year 2016-17 where against the demand of 1028 MT only 820 MT could be allocated. Although Indian Air Force has not denied any air efforts assistance to BRO and position was improved in later years, but demand has not been fully met particularly in case of Rotary Wing aircraft.

The Committee find that inadequate air logistic support is stated to be one of the reasons for time overruns and consequent cost escalation in completing the ICBR projects by BRO. Considering the above facts, the Committee desire if private operators, who have experience and specialization in airlifting the material required by BRO are not available, then IAF should be requested to provided dedicated service to BRO as IAF has the expertise in carrying out such operations.

27. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated as under:

Earlier, Request for Proposal (RFP) for hiring of Helicopter for transporting heavy construction equipments for construction of strategically important roads was uploaded on CPP Portal in Jan, 2018 by BRO, however, no response was received from any private firm.

Further, the air effort provided by IAF for these roads during FY 2018-19, is given below:-

| Sl. No | Sector | Status of Air Effort 2018-19 (as on 31 March 2019) | | | |
|--------|------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | | Rotary Wing (In MT) | | Fixed Wing (In MT) | |
| | | Allotment | % Materialization | Allotment | % Materialization |
| i | Western/Northern | 65 | 95 | 1150 | 90 |
| ii | Eastern | 370 | 99 | 10 | 0 |
| iii | Central | 225 | 90 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 660 | 96 | 1160 | 90 |

28. The Committee appreciate the efforts made by the Ministry regarding uploading the Request for Proposal. Taking into account the fact that no response had been received and since more than two years have been passed, the Committee desire that the Ministry may once again consider to advertise/upload its request and this time should consider advertising through print as well as electronic media too.

I. LACK OF AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 31)

29. The Committee had recommended as under:

The Committee note that a mechanism was put in place for coordinating between the Ministry/BRO and State Governments to resolve the issues such as land acquisition, forest/ wild life clearances, lack of quarries, law & order problems, etc., which are impacting adversely the construction schedules of BRO leading to delays in the completing border roads. Such mechanism includes constitution of Empowered Committees in various state Governments under the chairmanship of respective secretaries of the Departments concerned. So far five states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Sikkim and Tripura have constituted such committees.

The Committee note that of all the five states, Empowered Committee of Sikkim met five times since 2015 to discuss and resolve various issues affecting adversely the completion of border roads. The Empowered Committees of Arunachal Pradesh and J&K where number of land acquisition cases are pending i.e 117 & 308 respectively have not met since 15 June and 07 May 2015 respectively. In respect of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh where 32 and 4 respectively of land acquisition cases are pending, these Empowered Committees seems to have not met for a long time.

The Committee appreciate that empowered Committee of Sikkim met five times since 2015 to discuss various border roads related issues. However, in many states where large number of land acquisition case are pending (J&K

and Arunachal Pradesh) have met only once since 2015. The MoD has not furnished any information on the meetings of these Empowered Committees in Himachal Pradesh where 4 cases of land acquisition are pending. The Committee therefore are of the view that the Empowered Committee mechanism is not working effectively as it should be and accordingly recommend that specific steps should be taken to rejuvenate this body to enable to play more active role in resolving various issues concerning border roads.

30. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated as under:

The meetings held under the Chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Himachal Pradesh, are given below:-

- (i) 04 Sept 2018
- (ii) 05 Dec 2018
- (iii) 05 Jan 2019
- (iv) 27 Feb 2019

Out of the 36 cases pending in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, 7 cases have been settled. The details of pending cases are as under:-

| S/No | State | No of cases |
|-------|------------------|-------------|
| I | Himachal Pradesh | 02 |
| ii | Uttarakhand | 27 |
| Total | | 29 |

31. The Committee in their earlier recommendation had desired that as the Empowered Committees mechanism was not working effectively, specific steps should be taken to rejuvenate this body to enable to play more active role in resolving various issues concerning border roads. This recommendation was given in context of all the Empowered Committees constituted in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, HP, J&K, Sikkim and Tripura. The Committee are informed only about the details of the meetings conducted by the Empowered Committee of Himachal Pradesh. The Committee find the lack of information regarding other States and reiterate their earlier recommendation to rejuvenate all the Empowered Committees specially in Arunachal Pradesh and J&K where the number of unresolved cases are very high. They would specifically like to be apprised of the reasons of the high pendency of cases in Uttarakhand (case-wise) and those of Himachal Pradesh too.

CHAPTER-II

(A) OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation No. 1:

TARGET AND ACHIEVEMENT IN CREATING PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ALONG THE BORDER

The Committee note from the data supplied by MoD that since 2007-08, the targets set for formation, surfacing, permanent works and bridges could not be achieved. Despite the failure to achieve the set targets in respect of the aforementioned works in previous years, higher targets were set in the subsequent years again only to underperform. The failure to adhere to targets was attributed to various problems being faced by BRO such as difficult terrain, limited working period, lack of availability of construction raw material, lack of delegation of powers to the field level officers, etc. It may be worth noting that even in the year 2017-18, when the many administrative and financial powers have been delegated to the field level officers, the set targets could not be achieved in respect of these works. The Committee also note that based on the requirement of Army, five year Long Term Roll on Works Plan (LTRoWP) has been approved consisting of 530 roads of length 22,803 km for improvement/construction in the border areas. As per the year-wise completion plan of these 530 roads, BRO has to complete 55 roads of length 1729 km up to 2016, 72 roads of length 2081 km during 2017, 99 roads of length 3047 km during 2018, 78 roads of length 3786 km during 2019, 97 roads of length 4184 km during 2020 and 129 roads of length 7616 km beyond 2020. The Committee hope that the delegation of administrative and financial powers to the field level officers affected since August, 2017 will go a long way in enabling the BRO to quicken the completion of the projects on time and achieve the targets.

Reply of the Government

For BRO to be able to focus on the strategic roads and to ensure that BRO's resources are not spread over a large number of roads, the earlier, five year LTRoWP consisting of 530 roads of length 22,803 km has been reviewed and a revised LTRoWP for 272 roads of length 14545 km has been approved vide this office letter dt 9 August 2018, which has lesser number of roads and is more realistic vis –a vis budget allocation. Further, to bridge the gap between the strategic requirements of the Army and BRO's own capacity constraints of departmental execution, guidelines have been issued by the Ministry vide this office letter dated 29 August 2017 to adopt EPC mode of execution for all projects costing more than Rs 100 crore.

The delegation of administrative and financial power since August 2017 have enabled the CE(P) to speed up the works by enabling executives at various levels to sanction estimates, sanction of Revised estimates, acceptance of contracts and closure of jobs. The impact of these delegations of powers upto March 2019 is summarized below:-

| S/No | Item | Nos of cases | Cost (crore) |
|------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| (i) | Sanction of Estimate/DPR | 787 | 4760.25 |
| (ii) | Sanction of RAE/RDPR | 243 | 5009.43 |

| | | | |
|-------|------------------------|------|---------|
| (iii) | Acceptance of Contract | 300 | 3294.66 |
| (iv) | Closure of Jobs | 1216 | 2606.86 |

Further, the following ICBRs have been completed during FY 2018-19:-

- (i) Road Nacho-Tama-Chung-Chung of length 53.55 km
- (ii) Road Tr Jn-Bheem- Base –Dokala of length 19.72 km
- (iii) Road Naga-Sonam of length 11.20 km
- (iv) Road Musapani-Ghastoli of length 7.40 km
- (v) Road Joshimath –Malari of length 62.67 km

The achievement against the AWP 2018-19 is as under:-

| Items of Work | Unit | Target FY 2018-19 | Achievement FY 2018-19 |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Formation | Km | 937 | 990 |
| Surfacing | Km | 1930 | 1965 |
| Resurfacing | Km | 1797 | 1777 |
| Permanent Works including tunnel | Rs Cr | 1635 | 1854 |
| Major Bridges | Metre | 3039 | 2817 |

Recommendation (Para No. 4)

C&AG in their report (No. 5 of 2016) commented that numerous instances of defective construction of roads were noticed which resulted in delay in completion of strategic roads and also in fructuous expenditure of Rs.63.20 crore on account of corrective action/realignment of roads. This non completion/faulty specifications of works have a serious bearing on the operational capability of armed forces in strategically sensitive areas. Road works executed by the BRO did not adequately meet the users requirement. Even six roads which had been completed at a cost of Rs.164 crore, were not fit for running of specialized vehicles/equipment due to limitations in execution of works.

The Committee note from the reply submitted by the Ministry that due to extremely hostile and challenging terrains, where these ICBRs were being constructed, the first priority was to provide end to end connectivity and at times and at some locations the work was partially completed in order to achieve end to end connectivity. In the reply, the Ministry has not clarified as to whether the roads constructed by BRO are fit for running of specialized vehicles/equipment as pointed by C&AG. The Committee feels that border roads are essential for the movement of defence forces besides providing end to end connectivity and if they cannot withstand the movement of our fighting forces, in all weather conditions, it may not serve the purpose. The Committee, therefore desire that there should not be any compromise in the quality of the roads lest it may have adverse impact on the movement of troops.

Reply of the Government

To provide movement of defence forces and specialized vehicles/ equipments in all weather conditions inspections of works on roads are carried out regularly by executives at Project and Task Force level and the damaged roads are repaired regularly. In addition to the regular checks by the ground executives to ensure the quality of the roads is achieved, a Director level Officer at each Project headquarters has been appointed to check the quality of works.

Further, efforts are made through multilevel training courses for the supervisory staff to enhance their skills so that the quality is not compromised.

Recommendation (Para No.8)

The Committee note that road link to the last Indian post of Lipulekh pass which is located at an altitude of 17,000 feet in Chaudans valley or Darchula sub district in Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand on the Chinese border has not yet been constructed. The Ministry apprised the Committee that Ghatiabagarh-Lipulekh road of length of 75.54 Km is a strategic road under construction in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand. The road is to be developed to Class 9 specifications. Ghatiabagarh is connected by road from Dharchula of length 36 Km. Connectivity on Ghatiabagarh-Lipulekh road has been established upto 3.60 Km from Ghatiabagarh. Presently all effort are being made with five different attack points locations between Km 3.60 to Km 10.00 (3.70 Km connectivity yet to be achieved) and three attack points between Km 10.00 to Km 20.00 (9.50 Km connectivity yet to be achieved). The connectivity from Km 20.00 to Km 71.00 has been established and widening works are under progress through air maintained Dett Gunji.

The Committee also note that due to Annual Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, the same alignment from Km 0.00 to Km 20.00, the works got hampered nearly on daily basis from June to September every year. Yatries are being air lifted from Pithoragarh to Gunji in order to facilitate work on this alignment. State Government and District Administration have been approached by BRO for monitoring the movements of locals and traders in such a way that the working window is available with BRO for undertaking blasting and cutting operations daily at specified time intervals. Proposed date of completion of this road is 2022.

It is in view of the afore mentioned problems, the Committee, elsewhere in the report recommended that Empowered Committees be constituted which can discuss these kinds of problems and resolve them at the earliest ensuring completion of projects on time. The committee, therefore suggest, Uttarakhand Government may be requested to constitute empowered Committee without any delay.

Reply of the Government

In order to resolve the issue, a meeting was held with various stakeholders to provide airlift of Kailash Mansovar Yatris on 05 March 2018.

Further, the stretch Lakanpur-Najang of Ghatiabagarh-Lipulekh road has been connected due to which now the Kailash Mansarovar Yatris may go by road up to Najang. Beyond Najang up to Budhi (9 km), the road alignment is on the eastern side and the PWD mule track is on the western side as such there will be no hindrance to the Yatris moving on this mule track. Therefore, Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2019 is possible by road and mule track.

Recommendation (Para No. 10)

The Committee note from the data supplied by the Ministry that since 2011-12 BRO could not get the amount of funds requested for. However, it could not spent entire amount of resources allocated at RE stage for 5 years from 2011-12 to 2015-16. For

instance, against final allocation of Rs. 4472, 4319, 4178, 4039 and 4360 Crore for the years 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16 respectively, actual amount spent amounted to Rs. 4093, 4087, 4102, 4030, 4311 respectively. Hence, it may be seen against allocation of Rs. 21368 Crore for the last five years, actual expenditure amounted to Rs. 20,623 Crore leading to surrendering of funds to the tune of Rs. 745 Crore by BRO during the said period.

The Committee were informed that due to lesser delegation of powers at the field level resulted in all cases were coming to the Ministry for clearances. For instance, during the deliberations, the Committee was informed that earlier BRO had powers to approve procurement of equipment worth of Rs.7.5 crore for a particular case of indigenous equipment and for imported equipment, the powers were Rs.3.75 crore. Similarly, earlier the Chief Engineer at the field level had absolutely no powers for execution of contracts. The only powers he/she had was up to Rs. 10 crore, that too, only for Departmental execution. BRO in a way attributed the surrendering of the funds due to delay in obtaining approvals for procurement proposals. The Committee hope that the delegation of administrative and financial powers and outsourcing of certain works and execution of projects through EPC mode which are discussed in subsequent paras may obviate the need for such surrendering of the funds in future.

Reply of the Government

After the transfer of BRO from MoRT&H to MoD and with the delegation of financial and administrative powers to BRO executives, there has been no surrender of funds as given below:-

| S/No | Year | Allocation (Rs in Crs) | Expenditure incurred (Rs in Crs) |
|------|---------|---------------------------|--|
| i | 2016-17 | 3791 | 3881 |
| ii | 2017-18 | 4181 | 4240 |
| iii | 2018-19 | 4861 | 5361 |

Recommendation (Para No. 11)

During deliberation, the Committee was informed that earlier BRO was not in a position to perform in the field because there was lesser delegation of power and all cases were keep coming to the Ministry which led to delays. Earlier the Chief Engineer at the field level had absolutely no powers for execution of contracts. The only powers he had was up to Rs. 10 crore, that too, only for Departmental execution. Now there is enormous administrative and financial delegation of power. As per the new dispensation, Chief Engineer's powers have been enhanced from Rs. 10 crore to Rs. 50 crore for both Departmental as well as for EPC mode of execution. For two ADGs – one in the East and one in the North, have been increased from Rs. 50 crore to Rs 100 crore. Beyond Rs. 100 crore, the DG has been given powers. All acceptance of tenders takes place at Chief Engineer level itself. So not only from the Ministry to BRO, even within BRO, the powers have been delegated from DGBR up to ADGBR and Chief Engineer level and even up to task force Commander level so that lesser time is wasted in unnecessary communication. The Committee also note that in the short period, since the delegation of enhanced powers, 90 estimates amounting to Rs 258 crore have been sanctioned and 103 vintage vehicle/equipment/plants have been downgraded and 25 premature failure cases have been disposed off, which will facilitate BRO to induct new construction equipment. While appreciating the much needed move for putting in place the delegation

of financial powers, the Committee hope and trust that management of BRO uses the powers judiciously and ensure that projects do not suffer for want of approvals and sanctions of time. The Committee hopes that these powers may be utilized to complete the projects under Long Term Roll on Works Plan (LTRoWP). The Committee also want the MoD to furnish impact of such delegation of powers on the pace of execution of other projects.

Reply of the Government

The delegation of administrative and financial power since Aug 2017 have enabled the projects to speed up the works by enabling executives at various levels to sanction Estimates/DPR, sanction of RAE/RDPR, acceptance of contracts and closure of jobs. The impact of these delegations of powers upto 31 March 2019 is summarized below:-

| S/No | Item | Nos of cases | Cost (Crore) |
|-------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| (i) | Sanction of Estimate/DPR | 787 | 4760.25 |
| (ii) | Sanction of RAE/RDPR | 243 | 5009.43 |
| (iii) | Acceptance of Contract | 300 | 3294.66 |
| (iv) | Closure of Jobs | 1216 | 2606.86 |

The Ministry has accorded the Administrative Approval & expenditure Sanction for the following works:-

- (i) Design and construction/Improvement of Road Balipara-Charduar-Tawang (BCT) from Km 70.00 to Km 88.00 (New Location from Km 69.90 to Km 87.54) from existing CI-9 specifications to NH Double Lane Specifications through EPC mode under Project Vartak in Arunachal Pradesh amounting to Rs 220.30 Crore.
- (ii) Design and construction of two tunnels of length 0.475 km and 1.79 km at Sela pass along with approach road of length 9.775 km to NHDL specification on Balipara-Chardwar-Tawang (BCT) road under Project Vartak in Arunachal Pradesh through EPC mode amounting to Rs 687.11 Crore.

Further, award of contract approval accorded for the construction of Sela tunnel at an estimated cost of Rs 647 Crore. Work on the above two projects under EPC mode is in progress.

After the delegation of financial powers, there has been an increase in achievement of targets as mentioned below:-

| Items of Work | Unit | Achievement FY 2017-18 | Achievement FY 2018-19 |
|----------------------------------|----------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Formation | Km | 883 | 990 |
| Surfacing | Km | 1930 | 1965 |
| Resurfacing | Km | 1675 | 1777 |
| Permanent Works including tunnel | Rs Crore | 1486 | 1854 |
| Major Bridges | Metre | 2547 | 2817 |

Recommendation (Para No. 12)

The Committee note that Ministry of Finance (MoF) imposes ceiling on the allocation of budget at the stage of Revised Estimate (RE) and Budget Estimate (BE), based on the actual expenditure incurred during the last financial year and current financial year. The Ministry of Finance is stated to have been requested to exempt BRO from its guidelines mandating the pace of expenditure and not to curtail the allocation at RE stage based on the percentage of expenditure at half yearly stage as BRO is unable to adhere to the half yearly expenditure limits stipulated by MoF due to difficult working conditions. Due to the restricted allocation of budget to BRO, the Committee were informed that road laying works, resurfacing, maintenance, snow clearance of road got affected badly. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry of Defence should take up this matter at the highest level, especially in view of the limited working period due to adverse climatic conditions in which BRO does the work, with the Ministry of Finance. The Committee hope to hear positive response from the Ministry of Finance in this regard.

Reply of the Government

After the transfer of BRO from MoRT&H to MoD in January 2015 and due to various policy initiatives taken by the Ministry, there has been no reduction of funds by Ministry of Finance (MoF) to BRO. The details of funds allocated vs expenditure incurred are mentioned below:-

| (Rs. in Crore) | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Year | BE Allotment | Final Allotment | Expenditure |
| 2014-15 | 3223 | 2819 | 2897 |
| 2015-16 | 3481 | 3316 | 3277 |
| 2016-17 | 3526 | 3791 | 3881 |
| 2017-18 | 4168 | 4181 | 4240 |
| 2018-19 | 4426 | 4861 | 5361 |
| 2019-20 | 5234 | - | 697 (upto May 19) |

Recommendation (Para No. 14)

It could be seen that out of allocated amount of Rs. 374 Crore for Rohtang tunnel project, Rs 265 crore only was spent during the year 2017-18. Hence, Rs 109 Crore was surrendered. The Committee would like to be apprised of the reasons for such surrendering of the funds and also the impact, if any, on its completion schedules.

Reply of the Government

Earlier, the expenditure of Rs 265 crore for Rohtang tunnel was upto December 2017 however, the final expenditure of Rs 375.98 crore during for FY 2017-18 was incurred by BRO against the allocation of Rs 376 crore for Rohtang Tunnel.

Recommendation (Para No. 16)

It could be seen that in none of the years since 2012-13, the achievement of the targets vis-à-vis planning in respect of formation, surfacing, resurfacing of roads,

completion of permanent works and bridges is nowhere near the targets. In fact, in some cases the achievement is less than 40% of the targets. The Committee are aware of the problems specific to the border areas especially rugged mountains, adverse climatic conditions, transportation problems, etc. and the consequent difficulties in implementing infrastructure projects and accordingly feel that the low achievement of the targets vs planning is due to non consideration of the ground realities. The Committee, therefore, desire that the planning of the projects may be done in such a way taking into consideration the ground realities especially, the approvals required from statutory agencies.

Reply of the Government

Earlier, the approval for procurement of equipments was based on the approved five year Long Term equipment Plan which was not realistic with reference to the allocation of budget to BRO. Accordingly, Policy guidelines for preparation of Annual works plan (AWP) and Annual procurement plan (APP) with reference to fund allocation to BRO has been issued vide this office letter dated 19th June 2017 so that the planning of works and the requirement of resources i.e. the size of APP is more realistic.

Further, this would ensure the limited budgetary allocation to BRO to be utilised to the optimum as per the requirement of the Army.

Recommendation (Para No. 24)

The Committee note that the average time taken for obtaining wild life clearance from proposal stage to final clearance is 3-7 years. This is despite the fast track process for forest and wild life clearances put in place by Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEF&CC). The Committee are of the view that said that 3-7 years period is on the higher side especially in strategic areas and the possibility of reducing that time period may be explored with MoEF&CC and the Committee may be informed of the outcome in this regard at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

Consequent to the order dated 05th October 2015 by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, the time taken for disposal of wild life clearance cases has reduced, as the requirement of filing interlocutory application on case to case basis has been dispensed with and only permission from National Board of Wild Life (NBWL) is required to be obtained as per this order.

Recommendation (Para No. 25)

The Committee are glad to note that at present there are no pending cases of forest clearances in respect of ICBRs. However, the Committee note that at present out of 51 forest clearance cases of Non ICBRs, 13 forest clearance cases are not required at present, as lower priority has been accorded for construction by the Army. In 9 cases, Approval/Approval in Principle has been received and remaining 29 cases are pending with various State Governments. The Committee further note various measures such as Single Window System (SWS) at District, State & MoEF&CC levels to fast track processing of forest clearance cases since 2010, simplified and unified proforma adopted for processing both forest and wild life clearance simultaneously, regular review of meetings with all the concerned. The Committee are concerned to note that despite the afore mentioned measures for fast tracking the forest clearances, 29 cases for forest

approvals are still pending with various state Governments. They therefore, recommend that the respective Empowered Committees may be requested to expedite these cases at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

In order to facilitate obtaining various statutory clearances, BRO has appointed a Nodal Officer for each Project. Further, issues pertaining to forest clearances are reviewed by the empowered committee constituted by the State Government. As a result, at present critical road projects are not affected due to forest clearance.

Recommendation (Para No. 26)

The Committee note that BRO is using medium and indigenous equipment as they are generally working in the far flung/remote locations in the border areas where deployment of very sophisticated equipments, is not feasible as the repair support, supply point of spare parts etc are at a considerable distance. The Committee are of the view that the cost of sophisticated equipment and their spares, though may be costing high, the output of these machines and the efficiency at which these work may outweigh their cost. Hence, possibility of deploying sophisticated construction equipment may be explored especially to ensure quicker completion of the projects in rugged terrains.

Reply of the Government

Construction equipments of latest technology available in Indian market are procured by BRO through Open Tender Enquiry. The technical specifications are framed considering the latest development in the industry. During the FY 2018-19 state of the art equipments such as excavator, snow cutter/blower, and heavy duty drilling machine have been procured by BRO.

Recommendation (Para No. 29)

MoD has stated that extreme remoteness of the areas in which ICBRs are being laid is resulting in non-availability of skilled and experienced labour. MoD, however, stated that to attract and retain skilled and experienced labour an incentive mechanism was devised which includes (i) Preference in recruitment in Group 'C' & 'D' posts (ii) Shelter for accommodation (iii) Warming facilities for CPLs working above 8000 feet height (iv) Free conveyance from place of residence to work site (v) Creches for children of CPLs & (vi) Issue of ration on Government rates. In addition to the above, other benefits such as Ex-gratia benefits, compensation under Employees Compensation Act 1923, Financial Assistance from Border Roads Special Relief Fund and Non productivity Bonus are stated to have been offered. The Committee would like to be apprised of the impact of such measures on the addressing the shortages of skilled and experienced labour.

Reply of the Government

BRO has intimated that after providing the above incentives to CPLs, there has been improvement in availability of skilled labour.

Recommendation (Para No. 32)

MoD has furnished different replies in respect of constitution of empowered Committee in Himachal Pradesh. In their initial replies MoD stated that five states viz.

J&K, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Tripura. However, in a subsequent reply MoD stated that Empowered Committee is yet to be constituted in Himachal Pradesh. The committee therefore request MoD to furnish a clarification in this regard.

Reply of the Government

Government of Himachal Pradesh has not constituted the Empowered Committee as a mechanism under Single window for expeditious clearance of ICBRs and Single window at the level of DFO/DCF/Director (wild life/ national park) are already constituted which has facilitated in obtaining various statutory clearance for BRO.

Further, a mechanism/committee has been established under the Additional Chief Secretary Government of Himachal Pradesh for early resolution of all issues related to BRO works. Recently, the Government of Himachal Pradesh has accorded the permission for the following:-

- (i) Extraction of construction materials from the roadside.
- (ii) Installation of Hot Mix/Wet Mix Plants along the roadside.

Recommendation (Para No. 33)

Out of the 14 States which are required to constitute Empowered Committees as mentioned above 5 states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Tripura, where construction of ICBRs are in progress, were requested to constitute Empowered Committees. The Committee would like to be apprised of the reasons for not requesting other 09 states having strategic/border roads and where large number of land acquisition cases are pending.

Reply of the Government

Earlier, the Ministry had taken up a case with Chief Secretaries of 9 States Government, for constitution of Empowered Committees during 2013. Accordingly, 5 State Governments i.e. J&K, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Nagaland had constituted the Empowered Committee, whereas in Himachal Pradesh the Empowered Committee was not constituted as a mechanism under Single window for expeditious clearance of ICBRs and Single window at the level of DFO/DCF/Director (wild life/national park) is already constituted which is sufficient to take care of expeditious processing of forest land diversion proposals of BRO.

At present, since lot of roads are handed over to MoRT&H by BRO in the remaining 3 states i.e. Assam, Manipur, Uttarakhand, therefore, now there are less number of pending cases in these states.

**(B) OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY
THE GOVERNMENT AND COMMENTED UPON**

Recommendation (Para No. 3)

The Committee note that Government has identified 73 roads of length 3812 Km, for development along the Indo-China Border. The initial target date for completion of these roads was 2012. Out of this, 61 roads of length 3417.50 km have been entrusted to BRO. Out of these, 28 roads of length of 981 km are completed and works on the balance roads are under progress and are in different stages of completion. Out of 35 General Staff roads, work has been completed in respect of 14 roads. Out of rest of 21 roads work has commenced but not yet completed. Out of 13 China Study Group roads, work relating to only 6 roads has been completed and rest of 7 roads are still under construction. The same is the case with Indo Tibet Border Police roads where out of 13 roads, only 8 has been completed and rest are still under construction. The Committee note that delay as mentioned by Border Road Organisation such as obtaining forest/wildlife clearances, difficult terrain conditions, hard rock stretches, limited working period, paucity of construction material, challenges posed by natural disasters such as flash flood of Leh in 2010, Earthquake in Sikkim in 2011, Uttarakhand Floods in 2013 and J&K Floods in 2014 etc is understandable. The revised completion schedule of 83 ICBR is 2022. The Committee also note that out of 11 ICBRs scheduled to be completed by the end of FY 2018-19 only three Nelong-Naga, Naga-Sonam and Sumna-Rimkhim have been completed. Work on only one road Tr Jn-Bheem Base-Dokala is near completion and has been completed 96 percent. Construction of all other roads i.e. Tata-Manigong-Tadagade, Joshimath-Malari, Musapani-Ghastoli, Nacho-TCC, LGG-Mukto-Teli, Leh-Upsi-Sarchu and Tawaghat-Ghatiabagarh has not been completed yet leaving 16 to 36 work to be finished in the current financial year which seems not possible considering the winter season and hard working conditions.

The Committee hope that with the delegation of administrative and financial powers effected in August 2017 empowering the field level officers to approve and sanction projects will hasten the completion of the projects in time. Apart from the above measures, outsourcing of certain activities, execution of works through Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode, might also shorten the project execution time. In view of the above, the Committee recommend BRO to explore the possibility of completing all ICBRs by 2020 instead of the present target of 2022.

Reply of the Government

Government has identified 73 roads for development along Indo–China border by 2012. Out of the 73 ICBRs, earlier, 61 ICBRs of length 3417.50 km was entrusted to BRO. As per the revised approval the earlier length of 61 ICBRs has reduced to 3323.57 km. Of these 61 ICBRs, 33 ICBRs of length 1120 km are completed and connectivity has been achieved in 3204.11 km of road length. Further, out of the 11 ICBR's mentioned above in the recommendation of the Committee, 6 ICBRs are completed and the progress of remaining is as under:-

| Srl no | Name of road | Length (km) | Remarks |
|--------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| i | Nelong - Naga | 8.10 | Completed |
| ii | Naga- Sonam | 11.20 | |

| | | | |
|------|---------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|
| iii | Tri Jn-Bheem Base -Dokala | 19.72 | |
| iv | Joshimath- Malari | 62.67 | |
| v | Musapani- Ghastoli | 7.40 | |
| vi | Nacho- TCC | 53.55 | |
| vii | Sumna- Rimkhim | 14.00 | Formation completed. |
| viii | Tato- Manigong -Tadagade | 85.98 | 93% completed and work in progress |
| ix | LGG- Mukto -Teli | 53.00 | 88% completed and work in progress |
| x | Leh- Upsi -Sarchu | 249.62 | 67% completed and work in progress |
| xi | Tawaghat- Ghatibagarh | 19.51 | 64% completed and work in progress |

The revised planning for completion of 28 remaining ICBRs based on the requirement of the Army is as under:-

- (i) FY 2019-20 - 11 roads
- (ii) FY 2020-21 - 9 roads
- (iii) FY 2021-22 - 6 roads
- (iv) FY 2022-23 - 2 roads

(For comments of the Committee, please see Para No. 10 of Chapter I)

Recommendation (Para No. 5)

The Committee note that BRO is constructing tunnels at Rohtang pass, Theng and Sela pass to ensure all weather accessibility to our strategic borders. The committee are glad to note that tunnel on Gangtok-Chunghang at Teng was dedicated to the nation on 7th June, 2018. The Committee note that Rohtang tunnel is expected to be completed by August, 2019 and the Sela pass by 2021. The Committee hope that these much needed tunnels will not miss their completion deadlines especially in view of liberalized delegation of powers, outsourcing of works, execution of projects through EPC mode, etc.

Reply of the Government

No further comments.

(For comments of the Committee, please see Para No. 13 of Chapter I)

Recommendation (Para No. 6)

The Committee note from the reply furnished by the Ministry that out of 20 bridges on ICBRs, only one out of two bridges on Balipara-Charduar-Tawang road, five bridges out of seven on Orang-Kalaktang-Shergaon-Rupa-Tenga road and one out of two bridges on Joshimath-Malari road have been completed leaving thirteen bridges in the

non completed category. All the twenty bridges have Probable Date of Completion (PDC) between year 2010 to 2017. To the astonishment of the Committee, one of the bridges at Dhak on Joshimath-Malari road had PDC dated 31-03-2015, where, only 14.41 percent work has been completed. With such pace of work, one can easily guess the actual date of completion of the bridge. Besides this, one bridge Tawangchu-II on BJJ-LGG road had PDC dated 31-03-2010 but only 19.75 percent of the work has been completed. The Committee find that besides the above all other bridges are still under construction, which would result in BRO missing PDC by a huge margin. The Committee, therefore, desire that as these bridges join the roads and are very crucial in movement of personnel, BRO should give preference for their early completion. Considering the fact that in Uttarakhand bridges were washed out every year due to natural calamities, the Committee desire that the Ministry should contemplate a plan of action to address such eventualities and designing of the bridges and site chosen for construction should be firm and not prone to vagaries of natural causes.

Reply of the Government

The design and execution of bridges involves complex processes and factors considered for design and execution of bridges during planning stage get enhanced many times by adversity of terrains and nature. Recurring floods, avalanches due to global warming greatly affect the progress of bridges. Besides these Local problems, land clearance, forest clearances etc during construction period affect the completion of bridges. However, efforts are made by BRO to complete the bridges in time by meticulously resolving the issues responsible for delay in completion of bridge.

Out of the 20 bridges, 07 bridges are completed and the present Status of these bridges is given below:-

| Name of road | Name of State | Nos of bridges | Nos of bridges completed | Nos of bridges under progress |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Balipara-Charduar-Tawang | Arunachal Pradesh | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Orang-Kalaktang-Shergaon-Rupa-Tenga | | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| BJG-LGG | | 2 | - | 2 |
| Joshimath-Malari | Uttarakhand | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| Darbuk Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie | Jammu and Kashmir | 4 | - | 4 |
| Total | | 20 | 7 | 13 |

(For comments of the Committee, please see Para No. 16 of Chapter I)

CHAPTER-III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES RECEIVED FROM THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Para No. 23)

The Committee note that all formalities under the provisions of Wild Life Protection Act 1972 are required to be completed before taking up any construction activity within protected areas and reserve forest areas. The hurdles being faced in according wild life clearance are – delay in submission and processing of the case by the State Government, delay on the part of State Wild Life Board as well as National Board of Wild Life and filing of interlocutory application with Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and its disposal. MoD in its latest reply about the pendency of wild life clearances stated that the case for wild life clearance for road Khab-Nanagia-Chuppan was initiated in 2010 by BRO which is still pending with the State Government. The road has been completed and additional detail as required by the Government of Himachal Pradesh such as digital map etc has been submitted by BRO. MoD, however, in response to another latest query stated that as on date no wild life clearance is pending for road projects in north eastern region. Hence, it is not clear as to whether the Khab-Nanagia-Chuppan road in Himachal Pradesh was laid without obtaining statutory wild life clearances. The Committee would like to have a clarification in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The case for forest clearance in respect of road Khab-Namgia-Chuppan was initiated on 04 Feb, 2010. However, the work on this road commenced immediately by BRO without wild life clearance, as it was an Indo-China Border Road.

Himachal Pradesh State Forest Department has initiated a violation case and MoEF has sought directions from Hon'ble High Court of Shimla to deal with such cases. The Hon'ble High Court of Shimla has issued directions to constitute a committee comprising of members from Forest Dept, Revenue Dept and other stake holders on the matter. Details/documents required from BRO have already been provided to the State Government. There is no further, progress on the subject and case is still pending with State Government of Himachal Pradesh.

CHAPTER-IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION AND TO BE COMMENTED UPON

Recommendation (Para No. 2)

BRO and BRDB were set up, the Committee note, to ensure coordination and expeditious execution of road projects in the North and North Eastern States to enhance the defense preparedness and economic development of the region. There is a need for BRO to concentrate on strategic works, along the border and hand over certain roads to other agencies. The Committee also note that with a large number of roads included in BRDB programme over the years, BRO spread its resources for the development of roads in the lower regions (other than higher/hilly regions) and as a result the development of road infrastructure in the forward areas suffered.

Based on the operational requirements of the Army and consequent upon the decision taken in the National Security Council meeting, it was decided that BRO may focus on core strategic functions on the borders and MoD along with MoRT&H will work out the modalities of separating BRO's strategic road building functions from infrastructure development in left Wing Extremism-affected areas and other internal roads. Accordingly, certain roads in the hinterland, which were earlier constructed by BRO and are now further required to be improved, are identified to be handed over to other agencies so that BRO is able to utilize its resources optimally for construction of roads, which are of strategic importance in the border areas and will meet the operational requirements of the Army. The Committee are in agreement with the decision especially in view of the fact that many border roads especially Indo-China Border Roads (ICBRs), which are important from the strategic perspective, are running much behind their completion schedules.

Reply of the Government

No further comments

(For comments of the Committee, please see Para No. 7 of Chapter I)

Recommendation (Para No. 17)

The Committee note that there are many issues relating to acquisition of land which resulted in considerable delay in construction of roads, bridges and tunnels in the border areas. These issues include delay in joint survey for land acquisition, non disbursement of land acquisition payment, non transfer of land in the name of BRO for which land acquisition already paid, dual payment to forest department and civil administration for land acquisition, demand for additional compensation for which joint survey completed and land acquisition amount paid, non-demolition of structures for which price for land acquisition already paid etc. The Committee find that there is an abnormal delay of more than one and half years to carry out the joint survey for land acquisition by the civil administration. As a result, construction of roads from Daporijo-Taliha and Taliha-Nacho got delayed. In other case after making the payment for land acquisition in respect of Dirang Bye pass on road Balipara-Charduar-Tawang, the amount has not been disbursed to the land owners, due to which the people are not allowing BRO to construct the Bye pass. In yet another instance, there are 96 cases for which land acquisition amount has already been paid to the land owners by the civil

administration but the transfer of land/mutation of the land is still pending with the civil administration.

In a case specific to Arunachal Pradesh due to the non-availability of land records, dual payment is required to be paid for land acquisition to both the forest department as well the revenue authorities for which a notification needs to be issued by the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh for Kimin-Potin, Daporijo-Taliha, Taliha-Nacho and Taliha-Tato roads making construction of these roads delayed.

The Committee also note that despite completion of joint survey of land for 6 cases in various States, recurring demand for fresh joint survey/demand for additional compensation is being received by BRO and more so over demolition of the structures within Right of Way (RoW) for which the compensation amount has already paid, is yet to be done.

Reply of the Government

The majority of the settlement of LA cases is based on court orders. In case of North Eastern states, a large number of LA cases are filed by the land owner's on account of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 for enhanced compensation. Further, earlier a large number of roads in remote areas were constructed on community land, which was provided to BRO by the village heads and concerned locals by issuing NOC. Now a large number of LA cases pertaining to such roads are also arising due to subsequent generation not honoring /accepting the NOC.

(For comments of the Committee, please see Para No. 19 of Chapter I)

Recommendation (Para No. 22)

The Committee further note that there is an acute shortage of quarry extracted construction materials in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Out of 71 quarries proposed by BRO, only 39 quarries have been notified by the State Government. Despite repeated request by BRO, rates for extracted quarry materials have not been fixed by the State Government since Sep 2015. The Committee find it surprising that despite having Empowered Committees and BRDB, the Ministry is not able to resolve such issues. It is obvious that if quarries are not available, the construction work cannot progress. The Committee therefore, desire that the Ministry should take the issue at the highest level so that these bottlenecks can be cleared in a shorter span of time and roads are built as per the schedule.

Reply of the Government

The present status of allotment of quarries to BRO in Arunachal Pradesh is as under:-

| S/No | Name of State | Proposed | Notified |
|------|-------------------|----------|----------|
| i | Arunachal Pradesh | 128 | 60 |

(For comments of the Committee, please see Para No. 22 of Chapter I)

Recommendation (Para No. 27)

The Committee note that the availability of construction equipment is far lesser than that of authorized numbers with respect to the work load of BRO in 2016-17. The availability vis-à-vis authorized numbers in respect of stone crushers of all types, a basic equipment in construction industry, is less than 40% in 2016-17, Similarly, in case of tippers the available percentage is less than 50%. In respect of others such as dozers, road rollers, Hot mix plants, wet mix plants, etc., the availability is less than the authorized. However, in 2017-18, the Committee find some improvement in terms of equipment availability, though there is shortages in terms of availability of snow clearance equipment, in which case the authorized vs. held is 154:41.

The Committee are of the view that BRO is deprived of certain basic construction equipment and snow clearance equipment in required numbers which may be affecting their efficiency adversely and also resulting in project delays. The Committee, however, appreciate that to address the shortages, a Long Term Equipments Plan (LTEP) 2014-15 to 2018-19 has been approved with an outlay of Rs 4116.70 Crores and 1636 vehicles/equipments/plants were bought under plan. The Committee would like the BRO to inform them of whether the entire amount allocated under the plan has been spent.

Reply of the Government

Earlier, the approval for procurement of equipments was based on the approved five year Long Term equipment Plan which was not realistic with reference to the allocation of budget to BRO therefore, the entire plan could not materialise. Accordingly, Policy guidelines for preparation of Annual works plan (AWP) and Annual procurement plan (APP) with reference to fund allocation to BRO has been issued vide this office letter dated 19th June 2017 so that the planning of works and the requirement of resources i.e. the size of APP is more realistic.

(For comments of the Committee, please see Para No. 25 of Chapter I)

Recommendation (Para No. 30)

The Committee note that in order to induct the construction equipment and material to the air maintained detachments of BRO, each year the air effort is provided by Indian Air Force (IAF) by both Rotary Wing and Fixed Wing aircraft. During the year 2014-15, the demand by BRO was 1323 MT but it was allotted only 960 MT; In the year 2015-16, the demand was 2568 MT but allocation was 971 MT. The same deficiency existed in the year 2016-17 where against the demand of 1028 MT only 820 MT could be allocated. Although Indian Air Force has not denied any air efforts assistance to BRO and position was improved in later years, but demand has not been fully met particularly in case of Rotary Wing aircraft.

The Committee find that inadequate air logistic support is stated to be one of the reasons for time overruns and consequent cost escalation in completing the ICBR projects by BRO. Considering the above facts, the Committee desire if private operators, who have experience and specialization in airlifting the material required by BRO are not available, then IAF should be requested to provided dedicated service to BRO as IAF has the expertise in carrying out such operations.

Reply of the Government

Earlier, Request for Proposal (RFP) for hiring of Helicopter for transporting heavy construction equipments for construction of strategically important roads was uploaded on CPP Portal in Jan, 2018 by BRO, however, no response was received from any private firm.

Further, the air effort provided by IAF for these roads during FY 2018-19, is given below:-

| Srl. No | Sector | Status of Air Effort 2018-19 (as on 31 March 2019) | | | |
|---------|------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | | Rotary Wing (In MT) | | Fixed Wing (In MT) | |
| | | Allotment | % Materialization | Allotment | % Materialization |
| i | Western/Northern | 65 | 95 | 1150 | 90 |
| ii | Eastern | 370 | 99 | 10 | 0 |
| iii | Central | 225 | 90 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 660 | 96 | 1160 | 90 |

(For comments of the Committee, please see Para No. 28 of Chapter I)

Recommendation (Para No. 31)

The Committee note that a mechanism was put in place for coordinating between the Ministry/BRO and State Governments to resolve the issues such as land acquisition, forest/ wild life clearances, lack of quarries, law & order problems, etc., which are impacting adversely the construction schedules of BRO leading to delays in the completing border roads. Such mechanism includes constitution of Empowered Committees in various state Governments under the chairmanship of respective secretaries of the Departments concerned. So far five states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Sikkim and Tripura have constituted such committees.

The Committee note that of all the five states, Empowered Committee of Sikkim met five times since 2015 to discuss and resolve various issues affecting adversely the completion of border roads. The Empowered Committees of Arunachal Pradesh and J&K where number of land acquisition cases are pending i.e 117 & 308 respectively have not met since 15 June and 07 May 2015 respectively. In respect of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh where 32 and 4 respectively of land acquisition cases are pending, these Empowered Committees seems to have not met for a long time.

The Committee appreciate that empowered Committee of Sikkim met five times since 2015 to discuss various border roads related issues. However, in many states where large number of land acquisition case are pending (J&K and Arunachal Pradesh) have met only once since 2015. The MoD has not furnished any information on the meetings of these Empowered Committees in Himachal Pradesh where 4 cases of land acquisition are pending. The Committee therefore are of the view that the Empowered Committee mechanism is not working effectively as it should be and accordingly recommend that specific steps should be taken to rejuvenate this body to enable to play more active role in resolving various issues concerning border roads.

Reply of the Government

The meetings held under the Chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Himachal Pradesh, are given below:-

(i) 04 Sept 2018

(ii) 05 Dec 2018

(iii) 05 Jan 2019

(iv) 27 Feb 2019

Out of the 36 cases pending in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, 7 cases have been settled. The details of pending cases are as under:-

| S/No | State | No of cases |
|-------|------------------|-------------|
| i | Himachal Pradesh | 02 |
| ii | Uttarakhand | 27 |
| Total | | 29 |

(For comments of the Committee, please see Para No. 31 of Chapter I)

CHAPTER-V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH GOVERNMENT HAVE FURNISHED INTERIM REPLIES

Recommendation (Para No. 7)

The Standing Committee on Defence in their Report (Report No. 19 DFG of 2016-17) stated that connectivity between Himachal Pradesh and the Ladakh region is "very crucial" for the expeditious movement of troops and equipment, and recommended the construction of the Nyemo-Padum-Darcha Road to connect the two. The Committee are glad to note that progress has been noticed in the construction of the said road. The Ministry apprised the Committee that the road Nimmu-Padam-Darcha is 297 Km long road which takes off at Km 400 on Srinagar-Kargil-Leh road (34 Km short of Leh in J&K state) and terminates at Darcha (Km 145 on Manali-Leh road in H.P). The connectivity for 220.60 Km length has already been achieved. Out of 11 stretches of work, connectivity has been achieved in 6 stretches. The preparation of DPR for stretch of road between Km 45 to 124 and Km 176.70 to Km 259 measuring length 162 km is in progress. The Committee desire that the completion schedule of the project may be apprised on priority.

Reply of the Government

Out of 297 Kms, Connectivity has been achieved in a length of 257 Km in various portions. The present status of the road is given below:-

- (i) Connected Portions
 - (a) Km 0 to Km 47.00
 - (b) Km 77.50 to Km 79.50
 - (c) Km 89.00 to Km 297.00
- (ii) Unconnected Portions
 - (a) Km 47.00 to Km 77.50
 - (b) Km 79.50 to Km 89.00

The Completion schedule of the road is given below:-

| Total Scope of work (Crore) | Bal Scope of Work as on 01 Apr 2019 (Crore) | Year Wise planning for completion (Crs) | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | Total |
| 2276.13 | 1797.91 | 140 | 200 | 360 | 370 | 370 | 357.91 | 1797.91 |

Recommendation (Para No. 9)

The Committee note from the reply submitted by the Ministry that to bridge the gap between the strategic requirements of the Army and BRO's own capacity constraints of departmental execution, BRO has also started outsourcing of projects. Guidelines have been issued by the Ministry to adopt Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode of execution for all projects for which the value as per the DPR is above Rs 100 Crore so that these projects can further be offered for outsourcing to big construction companies' as viable projects through competitive bidding and improve the pace of execution of infrastructure projects in the border areas. Accordingly, at present BRO has identified 27 roads of length 2144.17 Km including one Sela Tunnel for construction through outsourcing. Request for proposal (RFP) has been uploaded for tendering of Detailed Project (DPR) preparation of 22 roads of length 1877.383 Km and for Sela Tunnel of length 2.265 Km. Bids had been received and were opened for 19 road projects & Sela Tunnel. Contract for DPR preparation has been awarded in 10 cases. DPR has been submitted for 1 road and Sela Tunnel which are under examination. The Committee welcomes the steps and hope that these steps will facilitate to minimize the gaps between targets and achievements with regard to construction of border roads and other infrastructure works in border areas.

Reply of the Government

No further comments

Recommendation (Para No. 13)

The Committee while going through the observation made by C&AG in its report (No. 5 of 2017 on Union Government Defence Performance Audit), on non-completion of Indo China Border Roads (ICBRs) who commented inter-alia that out of 61 Indo China Border Roads (ICBRs) planned to be completed by 2012, only 15 roads had been completed by 2012. Out of the balance 46 roads, only 07 roads were completed by March, 2016 extending the probable Date of Completion (PDC) of balance roads up to the year 2021. Thus 22 roads (36%) had only been completed up to March 2016, despite incurring an expenditure of Rs. 4536 Crore (98 percent) against the estimated cost of Rs. 4644 Crore for 61 ICBRs. Further out of 24 selected for audit, four roads were completed by March, 2012 and two were completed by March, 2016. Thus only 6 roads (25 per cent) costing Rs.164 crore were completed upto March, 2016 despite incurring an expenditure of Rs. 2,713.76 Crore for 24 selected ICBRs.

Further, C&AG has also pointed out certain serious malpractices for instance, an amount of Rs. 6.93 (Sl No. 6 above) crore was booked on four roads without any achievement in physical targets viz., formation, surfacing and permanent works. Similarly, an amount of Rs. 1.89 Crore (sl No. 8&9) was booked against BJJ-LGG road during the year 2012-13 and 2013-14 against execution of works worth Rs. 0.55 Crore. The C&AG has also pointed out that there are cases of booking expenditure without any execution of any work in some cases. The Committee hope that suitable steps will be taken to ensure non repetition of such acts of omission and commission.

Reply of the Government

The main reasons for cost and time overrun were delay in forest/Wild Life Clearance, restricted working season, inadequate air logistic support, terrain and technical constraints, limited attack points, extreme remoteness of the area resulting in

non-availability of skilled and experienced labour, inadequate availability of construction material. Further, due to physical inaccessibility of site, and available survey technology with department at the time of planning of these ICBRs (i.e. 1997-1999), the accuracy/efficiency of Recree Survey Trace Cut (RSTC) conducted and the estimates prepared were on approximation due to which revised estimates were required to be prepared based on modern day technique available for accurate estimation.

Further, the Ministry has taken the following measures to ensure that latest technology is utilized by BRO at the time of Detailed Project Report (DPR) preparation:-

- (i) Policy guidelines have been issued for preparation of DPR for all works costing more than Rs 10 crore.
- (ii) Further, Outsourcing for preparation of DPR has also been accorded.

Recommendation (Para No. 15)

The Committee observe that surrendering of the allocated funds by BRO for the purpose is a norm rather than an exception since 2009-10. Against allocation of Rs 4463.82 Crore from 2009-10 to 2016-17, utilization was only Rs 1534.29 Crore. Hence, an amount of Rs 2929.53 Crore was surrendered during the period, which is less than 50% of the allocation. Another feature of the expenditure pattern is despite surrendering of the funds since 2009-10, higher allocations were made in subsequent years only to be under spent. For instance out of Rs 250.76 Crore, Rs. 205.70 Crore was spent during 2009-10. However, in 2010-11 amount allocated was Rs 380.80 out of which Rs 186.66 Crore was surrendered. The scene is no way different in the rest of years since 2011-12. The Committee would like to be apprised of the specific reasons for surrendering considerable amounts allocated for the purpose. The Committee would also want the MoD to furnish the justification for such allocation of resources.

Reply of the Government

Earlier, the approval for procurement of equipments was based on the approved five year Long Term equipment Plan which was not realistic with reference to the allocation of budget to BRO. Accordingly, Policy guidelines for preparation of Annual works plan (AWP) and Annual procurement plan (APP) with reference to fund allocation to BRO has been issued vide this office letter dt 19 June 2017 so that the planning of works and the requirement of resources i.e. the size of APP is more realistic.

Further, this would ensure the limited budgetary allocation to BRO to be utilised to the optimum as per the requirement of the Army.

Recommendation (Para No. 18)

The Committee observed that there are 593 cases of land acquisition are pending in different courts, out of which 288 are pending at lower courts. The Committee also note from the information submitted by the Ministry that land acquisition cases have been expedited after constitution of Empowered Committees in Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Sikkim and Tripura which may be seen in the decline of pending land acquisition cases from 593 to 501. Though the Committee appreciate that the initiatives taken by the Empowered Committees resulting in decline of land acquisition cases to 501, they would like to be clarified as to whether the reduction in land cases is due to out of court settlement by the State Governments concerned or by

settlement of these cases by the Courts concerned. The Committee also desire that as many strategic roads in Arunachal Pradesh are stuck up for want of land clearances, special attention of the Empowered Committee of Arunachal Pradesh may be drawn to resolve the issue at earliest. They wish that after the meeting held under the Chairmanship of Raksha Rajya Mantri (RRM), wherein RRM directed the State Governments to expedite the cases and meeting with the representatives of State Government during Civil Military Liaison Conference (CMLC), pending cases would go down.

Reply of the Government

Out of the 501 cases pending for land acquisition, 170 cases are settled. The state wise pending cases are given below:-

| S/No | State | Nos of cases pending |
|-------|-------------------|----------------------|
| i | Jammu and Kashmir | 131 |
| ii | Himachal Pradesh | 2 |
| iii | Uttarakhand | 27 |
| iv | Arunachal Pradesh | 131 |
| v | Sikkim | 6 |
| vi | Nagaland/Manipur | 18 |
| vii | Mizoram | 16 |
| Total | | 331 |

Recommendation (Para No. 19)

The Committee observe that out of 501 nos of land acquisition cases pending in J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Nagaland Manipur and Mizoram, two states viz. J&K and Arunachal Pradesh only account for 425 cases. The Committee would like to be apprised of the specific reasons for large number of pending cases in J&K and Arunachal Pradesh vis-à-vis other states.

Reply of the Government

The majority of the settlement of LA cases is based on court orders. In case of North Eastern states, a large number of LA cases are filed by the land owner's on account of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 for enhanced compensation. Further, earlier a large number of roads in remote areas were constructed on community land, which was provided to BRO by the village heads and concerned locals by issuing NOC. Now a large number of LA cases pertaining to such roads are also arising due to subsequent generation not honoring / accepting the NOC.

Out of the pending 425 cases in the State of J&K and Arunachal Pradesh, 163 cases have been settled. The LA cases pending in J&K and Arunachal Pradesh are as under:-

| S/No | State | Nos of cases pending |
|------|-------------------|----------------------|
| i | Jammu and Kashmir | 131 |
| ii | Arunachal Pradesh | 131 |

| | |
|-------|-----|
| Total | 262 |
|-------|-----|

Recommendation (Para No. 20)

The Committee note that at present there are 593 land compensation cases pending at Supreme Court, various High Courts and District Courts, where the affected party has approached in the context of acquisition of land for BRO roads and providing rehabilitation thereof. The Committee also desire that the Ministry should look for out of court settlement of the cases for early resolution.

Reply of the Government

Various correspondences are made by BRO with the concerned officials of the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh. Further, the matter for settlement of pending LA cases was also discussed by DGBR with Hon'ble CM of Arunachal Pradesh on 21 Nov 2018.

As a result, LA cases have been reduced to 331 from 593. At present, there is no provision for out of court settlement of the cases. However, Policy guidelines for acquisition of private land through negotiation by Directorate General Defence Estate (DGDE) of Ministry of Defence are under consideration.

Recommendation (Para No. 21)

The Committee note that it has been suggested that in view of the in ordinate delays in land acquisition for border roads, it has been suggested to exclude 100 Kms along the northern borders and 50 Kms along the western borders from the extant land acquisition Act. MoD was requested to furnish its views on the issue. However, MoD merely stated that views of the relevant Ministry will have to be taken. The Committee desire that the views of the relevant ministries may be obtained and they be informed of the same.

Reply of the Government

Land acquisition is a state Government subject for which views from the various state Government authorities is being obtained so that concerned Ministry can be approached.

Recommendation (Para No. 28)

The Committee note that there is huge difference between authorized and held strength of Group A as well as Group B & C personnel. In respect of civil Engineers including Army and General Engineering Reserve Force (GREF), there are 155 vacancies, in mechanical engineering discipline 65, 63 vacancies in administrative cadre, 50 vacancies in medical cadre and 34 vacancies in miscellaneous category. In total there are 3381 vacancies in technical cadre and 1739 vacancies in non-technical cadre in group B & C.

The Committee have been apprised that demand for existing vacancies is being forwarded every year to Ministry for further processing the same to UPSC for recruitment in Group 'A' Officers cadre. However on the scrutiny of data furnished by the Ministry

since 2013 the Committee find that despite offer of appointment issued by Ministry of Defence for 30,60, 44 and 41 posts for AEE (Civil) in the years 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2017, only 17,19,18 & 23 respectively accepted the offers and joined. Hence, the percentage of acceptance is less than 50% and in some years it is less than 30%. Similarly, in respect of AEE (E&M), against offers of 7,8,16 & 7 in the years 2013, 2014, 2016 & 2017, only 2,4,6 & 2 candidates respectively only accepted the offers. Similarly, for medical officers (MOs) which recruitment was made in 2013 only one candidate against 8 offers made joined BRO. Similarly, in group 'B' and 'C' post also thousands of posts (in excess of six thousand posts) hundreds are lying vacant and are in the process of being filled up through the agencies concerned such as SSC/Departments concerned.

The Committee are of the view that due to inhospitable terrain, inclement weather, lack of proper facilities for the families of the employees such as schools, colleges, etc, many who were offered may be opting out. The Committee are of the view to attract and retain the best engineering talent, an incentive package specific to BRO postings in border areas may be devised. The possibility of relaxing some conditions may also be explored to recruit and retain the talent. Further, candidates from high altitude areas such as J&K and northeastern states may be encouraged to apply for the positions and if possible, preference in the recruitment for the candidates from these states may be explored. The Committee may be apprised of the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the committee has been noted for compliance.

New Delhi;

09 February, 2021
20 Magha, 1942 (Saka)

Jual Oram
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on Defence.

APPENDIX I
STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE (2020-21)
MINUTES OF THE THIRD SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
DEFENCE (2020-21)

The Committee sat on Tuesday, the 9th February, 2021 from 1530 hrs. to 1600 hrs. in Committee Room No. 2, Block A, Extension to Parliament House Annexe (EPHA), New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Jual Oram - **Chairperson**

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Kunwar Danish Ali
3. Shri Ajay Bhatt
4. Shri Nitesh Ganga Deb
5. Shri Annasaheb Shankar Jolle
6. Choudhary Mehboob Ali Kaiser
7. Smt. (Dr.) Rajashree Mallick
8. Dr. T.R. Paarivendhar
9. Shri Kapil Moreshwar Patil
10. Shri Jugal Kishore Sharma
11. Shri Prathap Simha
12. Shri Brijendra Singh
13. Shri Durga Das Uikey

Rajya Sabha

14. Dr. Ashok Bajpai
15. Shri V. Lakshmikantha Rao
16. Shri Sanjay Raut
17. Shri Kamakhya Prasad Tasa
18. Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi
19. Lt. Gen. Dr. D. P. Vats (Retd.)

SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Kalpana Sharma - Additional Secretary
2. Dr. Sanjeev Sharma - Director
3. Shri Rahul Singh - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and informed them about the agenda for the Sitting. The Committee then took up for consideration the following draft Action Taken Reports:-

- i. **Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Twenty-third Report (16th Lok Sabha) of the Standing Committee on Defence on the subject 'Proxy and Postal Voting by Defence Services Personnel in General Elections an Evaluation';**
- ii. **Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fiftieth Report (16th Lok Sabha) of the Standing Committee on Defence on the subject 'Provision of all weather road connectivity under Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and other agencies up to International Borders as well as the strategic areas including approach roads-an appraisal';**
- iii. **Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations contained in the First Report (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2019-20 on 'General Defence Budget, Border Roads Organisation, Indian Coast Guard, Military Engineer Services, Directorate General Defence Estates, Defence Public Sector Undertakings, Canteen Stores Department, Welfare of Ex-Servicemen, Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme, Defence Pensions, Sainik Schools (Demand Nos. 18 and 21)';**
- iv. **Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Second Report (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2019-20 on 'Army, Navy, Air Force and Joint Staff (Demand Nos. 19 and 20)';**
- v. **Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fourth Report (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2019-20 on 'Ordnance Factories, Defence Research and Development Organisation, Directorate General of Quality Assurance and National Cadet Corps (Demand No. 19 and 20)';**
- vi. **Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifth Report (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2020-21 on 'General Defence Budget, Border Roads Organisation, Indian Coast Guard, Military Engineer Services, Directorate General Defence Estates, Defence Public Sector Undertakings, Canteen Stores Department, Welfare of Ex-Servicemen, Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme, Defence Pensions, Sainik Schools (Demand Nos. 18, 19, 20 and 21)';**
- vii. **Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Sixth Report (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2020-21 on 'Army, Navy, Air Force and Joint Staff (Demand Nos. 19 and 20)'; and**
- viii. **Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Eighth Report (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2020-21 on 'Ordnance Factories,**

Defence Research and Development Organisation, Directorate General of Quality Assurance and National Cadet Corps (Demand Nos. 19 and 20)'.

3. After some deliberations, the Committee adopted the above reports without any modifications.
4. The Committee, then, authorized the Chairperson to finalise the above draft Reports and present the same to the House on a date convenient to him.
5. *****Does not pertain to the Reports*****

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX II

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OBSERVATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE FIFTIETH REPORT (SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA) ON 'PROVISION OF ALL WEATHER ROAD CONNECTIVITY UNDER BORDER ROADS ORGANISATION (BRO) AND OTHER AGENCIES UP TO INTERNATIONAL BORDERS AS WELL AS THE STRATEGIC AREAS INCLUDING APPROACH ROADS-AN APPRAISAL'

1. Total number of recommendations 33
- 2(A). Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government (please see Chapter II (A)):

Recommendation Nos. 1,4,8,10,11,12,14,16,24,25,26, 29,32 and 33

Total : 14
Percentage: 42.42%

- 2 (B). Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government (please see Chapter II (B)):

Recommendation Nos. 3,5 and 6.

Total : 03
Percentage: 09.09%

3. Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies received from the Government (please see Chapter III):

Recommendation No. 23

Total : 01
Percentage: 3.03%

4. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee, which require reiteration and commented upon. (please see Chapter IV):

Recommendation Nos. 2,17,22,27,30,31.

Total : 6
Percentage: 18.18 %

5. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which Government have furnished interim replies/replies awaited (please see Chapter V):

Para No. 7,9,13,15,18,19,20,21,28.

Total : 9
Percentage:27.27%