

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

(2020-2021)

17

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT)**

[Action taken on the recommendations contained in the Thirteenth Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2021-22) of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development)'.]

SEVENTEENTH REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

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[Action taken on the recommendations contained in the Thirteenth Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2021-22) of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development)'.]

Presented to Lok Sabha on 05.08.2021

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 05.08.2021



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(2020-2021)**

Shri Prataprao Jadhav -- Chairperson

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INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2020-2021) having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present the 17th Report on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirteenth Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (17th Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2021-22) of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development).

2. The Thirteenth Report was presented to the Lok Sabha on 09.03.2021 and was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on the same date. Replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received on 14.06.2021.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 03.08.2021.

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

NEW DELHI;
03 August, 2021
12 Sravana, 1943 (Saka)

PRATAPRAO JADHAV
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on Rural Development

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2020-21) deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in their Thirteenth Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) for the year 2021-2022.

2. The Thirteenth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 09.03.2021 and was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on the same date. The Report contained 27 Observations/Recommendations.

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

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

Serial Nos. 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

Total: 22
Chapter-II

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

Serial No. NIL

Total: NIL
Chapter-III

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

Serial No. 2, 4, 5, 17, 19

Total: 05
Chapter-IV

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

Serial No. NIL

Total: NIL
Chapter-V

4. The Committee desire that Action Taken Notes on the Observations/ recommendations contained in Chapter I of this Report may be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.

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

I. **Shortage of Technical Manpower at Panchayat Level**

Recommendation (Serial No. 2)

6. With regard to the shortage of Technical Manpower at Panchayat Level, the Committee had recommended as under:-

"During the course of examination, the Committee observed that there is huge shortage of technical manpower at the level of Panchayats for implementing prominent schemes like MGNREGA, PMGSY etc. therefore, adversely impacting the progress of these schemes including causing delay in day-to-day formalities required at various stages of policy implementation. Thus, sensing the need of hour for the proper maintenance of strength at grass root level, especially Gram Panchayat, the Committee urge the DoRD to look into the matter with utmost seriousness and make all out efforts to coordinate with the nodal bodies for appointment of requisite officials' strength so that delay in the implementation of policies can be avoided."

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

"MGNREGA:- As per Section 18 of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, Act, the State Government shall make available to the District Programme Coordinator and the Programme Officers necessary staff and technical support as may be necessary for the effective implementation of the Scheme.

Central Government has directed the states to have "Junior Technical Assistant" (also known as Panchayat Technical Assistant/ technical Assistant) for every panchayat. Further Central government have trained "Bare foot Technician" (BFT) as per the demand of the states. Such BFT are trained for the civil work related technical matters and are extending support to Junior Engineers / JTAs in discharging their technical works. BFTs are available for Panchayats.

The cost of payment to the technical personnel including TAs and BFTs is part of the material component of the funds released to

states. Further every state Government has been directed to have at the State level a chief engineer headed cell in case of those States whose annual expenditure under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS is more than Rs.1000 crore. In those cases where expenditure is less than Rs.1000 crore, the Cell shall be headed by a superintendent engineer rank official. Such positions shall be full time and filled on deputation from other technical departments of the State Government.

Central Government has directed that at the sub-state/division level, district level and block level, the State government should ensure that a regular executive engineer, assistant engineer, junior engineer respectively, have been assigned the fulltime responsibility to oversee all the engineering activities pertaining to execution of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS works.

Currently, as reported by states/UTs, a total 19,103 numbers of Junior Engineers/Assistant Engineers at block level and 45,010 Technical Assistants/GP Technical Assistant (Total- 64,113) at Gram panchayat are working in all States/UTs.

PMAY-G:- As per the Framework for Implementation (FFI) of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G), Although the construction of the house is to be undertaken by the beneficiary, State to ensure that the beneficiary is provided with the requisite guidance in the process and also closely monitored to ensure that construction of the house is completed. The States/ UTs shall set up a dedicated Programme Management Unit (PMU) at State, District, and Block level to take up the task of the implementation, monitoring, and supervision of the quality of construction.

Further as per FFI, every house sanctioned under PMAY-G to be tagged to a village-level functionary (Gram Rozgar Sahayak, Bharat Nirman Volunteers, SHGs, representatives of Civil Society Organizations, or any other village level worker), whose task is to follow up with the beneficiary and facilitate construction.

The expenditure towards hiring of these personnel are met from the Administrative expenses of the scheme. The administrative fund of the scheme was 4% at the time of inception of the scheme in the year 2016 which was later reduced to 2%. This has made it difficult to place the full complement of manpower at relevant levels.

The proposal for increasing the administration cost from 2% to 4% is under consideration by the MoRD. Once, the same is approved, would facilitate recruitment of adequate staff for the program implementation at various levels including at the field level.

PMGSY:- State Governments and UTs Administration are implementing the PMGSY programme. The PMGSY roads are executed by Block level/ Subdivision level officers and supervised by

the district level/ circle level officers of the implementing department of the State governments. This official machinery is responsible for the implementation of PMGSY projects.

To help the State governments in the preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), MoRD has permitted the State Governments to prepare the DPRs through outsourcing by engaging qualified consultants for the preparation of DPRs of bridge and road works under PMGSY duly following the Quality Cum Cost Based Selection System (QCBS). Also, the State Governments were permitted to engage Project Implementation Consultants (PICs) to improve the quality of roads and speed of construction activities.

The position of staff available at PIU level and State level for implementing PMGSY is being reviewed during the Pre EC and EC meetings and also during monthly review meetings. State Governments are requested to fill all the vacancies at block level/ district level either through transfer among their departmental officials or on deputation drawing officials from other engineering organizations of the State Governments for the effective implementation of the scheme. Also, the States are permitted to outsource the qualified personals for analyzing the inspection reports submitted by the State Quality Monitors (SQMs) and National Quality Monitors (NQMs) at the State level. The pace of execution of works is monitored through various regional review meetings and the quality of works is also monitored through SQMs and NQMs.

Under PMGSY efforts have been made to provide training to various officers related to DPRs preparation, works management, contract management, quality management, construction of bridges and Road safety, etc., through reputed institutions like CRRI, IAHE, AITD, IITs, NITs, and various reputed engineering institutions. The need-based training programs are organized through experienced faculty at the district level, at the regional levels, and also at the State and Central level for officers of all categories ranging from Chief Engineers up to Junior Engineers.

MoRD is making consistent efforts through the State Governments to fill the vacancies at various levels and also for capacity building of staff involved in the PMGSY programme to implement/ execute the road & bridge works efficiently and qualitatively.

DAY-NRLM:- Till March 2021, DAY-NRLM is being implemented in 6517 blocks of all States and UTs and is working with 7.52 crore rural households by promoting 69.08 lakh Self Help Groups towards strengthening the livelihoods of the poor. DAY-NRLM has adopted the policy to deploy the community resource persons (CRPs), a experienced community practitioner to support the programme

implantation at the village level. A total of 3.30 lakh CRPs has been deployed, mostly by SHG Federation.

DDU-GKY SKILLS:- Projects under DDU-GKY scheme are being implemented by the Project Implementing Agencies (PIA) on their engagement by State Nodal Agencies. The nodal agency implementing DDU-GKY in States are State Rural Livelihood Mission(SRLM)/ State Skill Development Mission(SSDM). There is no requirement or provision of manpower at Panchayat level under DDU-GKY.

NSAP:- Under the NSAP Schemes, technical support is required for identification / verification / selection / registration of new beneficiaries and digitisation of data of beneficiaries, DBT payment of pensions and other financial benefits etc. Besides, trained manpower is also required for social audit and IEC activities under the scheme. All these activities are completed by State Governments through Block / Gram Panchayat level functionaries. The State /UT Governments are permitted to utilize the 3% of the NSAP funds, released during the year towards administrative expenses to streamline implementation of schemes under NSAP. The administrative funds may be utilized for training of Nodal Officers, officials of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) and Urban Local Bodies. States have already been informed in this regard.

SPMRM:- Under SPMRM, as per the Mission's Framework of Implementation, two professionals are to be engaged at the Cluster level and three at the district level - who shall provide the required technical support to the panchayats in the cluster. Presently, 302 out of 1328 such required professionals have been recruited after regular follow-ups by the Ministry. Even after regular reminders, 13 States/UTs have not onboarded any professional at the District or Cluster.

2. Provisioning of technical support at the panchayat level therefore, continues to be a challenge under the Mission. States/UTs have raised concerns with respect to non availability of adequate administrative funds for such recruitment.

3. The Ministry has a three pronged agenda to fulfill these technical support vacancies as per detail below, which has been taken up with the concerned authorities.

- i. Provisioning of Rs. 60 lakh / cluster as additional administrative budget for the coming 2 financial years (proposed in the EFC Memorandum without any increase in the overall budget outlay). This will ensure that the States/UTs complete the remaining requirements at the District and Cluster level.
- ii. NITI Aayog has recommended that a Rurban Fellow be posted at the Cluster level to provide hand-holding, training and

intensive technical support to the Panchayats in the cluster. This is proposed to be undertaken through the Mission's Innovation Fund.

- iii. Mentor Institutions (India's leading institutions specializing in regional planning and economic development) are being onboarded (28 Institute of repute till date) through nomination by the States. These institutions will also provide technical support to the panchayats and the clusters for spatial planning and other mission related activities."

8. Taking cognizance of the shortage of adequate officials' strength at the level of Gram Panchayats which is having a retarding effect on the implementation of various Rural Development Schemes at the ground level, the Committee had urged the Department of Rural Development to ensure, in coordination with the nodal bodies, the speedier appointment of requisite staff strength to ward off delay factor in the implementation of schemes. In their reply, the Department of Rural Development have given in detail the procedure and provisions associated with the appointment of officials in each of the Rural Development Schemes separately. While the primary thrust evinced by the reply highlights the role of State Governments in the appointment of requisite manpower/officials for aiding and assisting the actual implementation of Schemes on the ground, it also gives detail of a plethora of reason ranging from shortage of administrative cost in PMAY-G (due to reduction from 4% to 2%) to non-adherence/slow approach of the States towards the filling up of vacancies in other Schemes like SPMRM & PMGSY specifically. In large, the onus is shifted on the State Governments.

The Committee after going through the reply thoroughly, feel that the response of the Department of Rural Development cannot be merely limited to simply carving out provisions for each centrally sponsored scheme and off loading itself with actual enforcement of the semantics of the Schemes on

ground level by 'passing the buck' towards State Governments only. These are Centrally Sponsored Schemes and all out efforts from every party involved is a must for the success of such schemes meant for the welfare of Rural Populace. Thus, it becomes imperative that the Department of Rural Development come out with stronger measures whereby the State Governments are taken on board and the vacancies are filled expeditiously for the smooth running of the Schemes. Therefore, the Committee reiterate its recommendation regarding the appointment of requisite officials at Gram Panchayat levels and urge Department of Rural Development to leave 'no stone unturned' in their efforts by resolving this issue on priority basis.

II. Timely release of 40% of Skilled/Material fund shares under MGNREGA

Recommendation (Serial No. 4)

9. With regard to the Skilled/Material fund shares under MGNREGA, the Committee had recommended as under:-

"While evaluating the performance of MGNREGA during the last financial year, the Committee note the delay in the release of 40% component of fund meant for the wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers and materials. MGNREGA is a flagship welfare oriented programme of the Government through which willing job-less rural population get a chance to improve their life through the earnings under this programme. At the time of economic distress caused due to COVID-19 pandemic in particular, there was an increase in the demand of work under MGNREGA. However, inordinate delay in the release of funds for skilled/semi-skilled workers under MGNREGA is a huge discouraging aspect and does not go in consonance with the underlying spirit of the scheme. It has been noticed that due to such contingency, skilled/semi-skilled workers get discouraged to take up the works under MGNREGA for which not only the works suffer but also the idea behind providing works to the rural population get defeated. Therefore, the Committee are of the view that the Department should appropriately modify it's approach and ensure that the 40% part of the fund also reaches on time so that the wages are paid on time and the works get completed too. Hence, the Committee strongly urge the Department to view this lacuna seriously and entail all measures for the timely release of funds."

10. The DoRD in thier action taken reply have stated as under:-

"The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS) is a demand driven wage employment programme. Fund release to the States/UTs is a continuous process and Central Government is committed to making funds available keeping in view the demand for work. The Ministry releases funds periodically in two tranches with each tranche consisting of one or more installments based on " agreed to Labour Budget ", opening balance, pace of utilization of funds, pending liabilities of the previous year, if any, timely submission of relevant documents by the States and overall performance."

11. While going through the deliberations during the examination of Demands For Grants, the Committee had taken into account one of the major grievance associated with the smooth implementation of MGNREGA being that of the non-timely release of 40% of skilled/material fund shares under the Scheme. Viewing this seriously, the Committee had recommended Department of Rural Development to look into the matter earnestly and ensure timely release of funds. However, Department of Rural Development, in their reply have merely elicited the 'theoretical' practice in vogue and have remained completely silent on the issue raised by the Committee specifically. The Committee find the reply bereft of any substance and had expected a much more 'to the point' response instead. Needless to repeat that the non-timely release of the 40% of skilled/material share definitely has a retarding effect on the completion of MGNREGA works and is also discouraging for the workers. Thus, the Committee once again presses upon Department of Rural Development to examine the matter of non-timely release of funds under contention and come out with some strong remedial measures to ensure timely release of 40% of skilled/material fund share by also taking on board the State/Nodal machinery involved, under due intimation to the Committee.

III. Disparity in Wages

Recommendation (Serial No. 5)

12. With regard to the disparity in wages, the Committee had recommended as under:-

"One of the often repeated and pertinent issue that has always attracted the attention of the Committee is that of the existing disparity between the wage rate assured under MGNREGA in different States/UTs. It is still beyond comprehension as to how is it possible that a single scheme having the provision of hundred days of guaranteed work to willing person from the rural settings can have different yard-stick when it comes to the payment modalities across the length and breadth of the country. The Committee further observe that as per clause (d) of Article 39 of the Constitution directing certain principles of Policy to be followed by the State provides that there is equal pay for equal work for both man and woman. Hence under the directive there cannot be different wages for different States under the MGNREGA. In view of Article 39 of the Constitution and to have parity in wages, the Committee strongly recommend that MGNREGA beneficiaries must be paid wages without any disparity in order to bring equality in wages under MGNREGA across all States/UTs urgently. "

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

"Mahatma Gandhi NREGS is a demand driven wage employment Scheme which provides livelihood security, i.e. fall back option for livelihoods for the rural households, in the situation when regular employment is absent.

The wage rate for the scheme Mahatma Gandhi NREG Act 2005 is mandated in sec.6 of the Act.

Sec 6 of the Act is reproduced as below:

6. Wage rate -(1) *Notwithstanding anything contained in the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (11 of 1948), the Central Government may, by notification, specify the wage rate for the purposes of this Act:*

Provided that different rates of wages may be specified for different areas:

Provided further that the wage rate specified from time to time under any such notification shall not be at a rate less than sixty rupees per day.

(2) Until such time as a wage rate is fixed by the Central Government in respect of any area in a State, the minimum wage fixed by the State Government under section 3 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (11 of 1948) for agricultural labourers, shall be considered as the wage rate applicable to that area.

As per section 6(1) of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (Mahatma Gandhi NREGA), the Ministry of Rural Development notifies Mahatma Gandhi NREGA wage rate every year for States/UTs. To compensate the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers against inflation, the Ministry of Rural Development revises the wage rate every year based on change in Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labour (CPI-AL). As the CPI (AL) varies across the states/UTs, so wage rate is different across the States/UTs.

The wage rate is made applicable from 1st April of each Financial Year.

Further as schedule -I of the Act – following are the provisions to ensure equal wage payment to men and women –

Para 17: The state Government shall link the wages, without any gender bias, with the quantity of work done and it shall be paid according to the rural schedule of rates fixed after time and motion studies for different types of work and different seasons and revised periodically.

Para18. A separate schedule of rate shall be finalized for women, the elderly people with disabilities and people with debilitating ailments so to improve their participation through productive work.

Para 19(a) The scheduled of rates of wages for various unskilled labourers shall be fixed up so that an adult person worked for eight hours which include an hour of rest will earn a wage which is equal to the stipulated wage rate."

14. The Committee are disappointed to note that a pertinent issue afflicting MGNREGA since its inception has been that of disparity in wages in different States/UTs. Time and again, the Committee have brought this peculiarity to the fore and have vehemently urged Department of Rural Development to resolve this anomaly sooner rather than later. In the present instance too, the Committee strongly recommended Department of Rural Development to overcome this disparity in wages and ensure that MGNREGA beneficiaries are paid equal wages across the States/UTs. To the utter dismay of the Committee, the reply of the Department of Rural Development once again belittles the concern raised by the Committee and is as usual a routine and

stereotypical response. The reply quotes section 6(1) of MGNREGA, 2005, wherein it clearly states that "the Central Government may, by notification, specify the wage rate for the purposes of this Act". Further, the reply states that the "Ministry of Rural Development revises the wage rate every year based on change in Consumer Price Index for Agricultural labour (CPI-AL). As the CPI(AL) varies across the States/UTs., so wage rate is different across the States/UTs.". The Committee also take note of the nuances of the Act and find that the Section 6(1) in itself gives the Department of Rural Development complete control over the ratification/revision of the wages under MGNREGA. The Act does not compel the Department of Rural Development to justify the disparity solely on the basis of different CPI-AL in different States/UTs. The yardsticks for revision of wages can be changed suitably to take into account inflation across the States/UTs uniformly. Thus, the Committee, while strongly reiterating its recommendation for bridging the disparity in wages implore Department of Rural Development to evolve a uniform mechanism through which the revision of wages of a Centrally Sponsored Scheme like MGNREGA does not depend upon the factors in States/UTs but are calculated and revised by the Department of Rural Development for the entire nation uniformly.

IV. Accidental Compensation to Workers under MGNREGA

Recommendation (Serial No. 8)

15. With regard to the accidental compensation to workers under MGNREGA, the Committee had recommended as under:-

"During the examination deliberations, the Committee were apprised about the occurrences of deaths of MGNREGA workers during on-site work due to various accidental reasons, one of them being that of snake bites. Such untimely demise of MGNREGA beneficiaries who sometimes are not even able to get primary medical help on time

needs to be looked into with compassion. The Committee feel that MGNREGA workers despite having provisions of insurance and other claim facilities still have to run helter skelter in getting due approvals and completion of formalities. For a person belonging to marginalized section of the society, a prompt and urgent redressal to accidental claims is perhaps the least that can be paid by the Government within 15 days of such accidents' occurrence. Hence, the Committee recommend DoRD to create easy mechanisms of ex-gratia payment of a fixed compensation amount for the MGNREGA workers so as to have some solace in the need of hour."

16. The DoRD in thier action taken reply have stated as under:-

"The recommendation of the committee noted for further deliberation with States and to create simplified mechanisms of ex-gratia payment of a fixed compensation amount for the MGNREGA workers."

17. On the issue of accidental compensation to workers under MGNREGA, the Committee, while bringing to fore the plight of MGNREGA workers meeting accidents on site, had recommended Department of Rural Development to create easy mechanism of ex-gratia payment of a fixed amount of compensation to such beneficiaries. The Department of Rural Development in their response have submitted that the recommendations of the Committee will be further deliberated upon with the States to create simplified mechanism of ex-gratia payment of a fixed compensation amount for the MGNREGA workers. The Committee find the approach of the Department of Rural Development positive and in a right direction. However, the Committee are still of the view that the modalities may be chalked out in an expeditious way so that the issue do not keep on lingering for long in the pretext of consultations and other formalities. Thus, the Committee expect Department of Rural Development to come up with a final solution in a time-bound manner while also updating the Committee in this regard.

V. Bringing Parity between PMAY-U and PMAY-G

Recommendation (Serial No. 15)

18. With regard to the bringing parity between PMAY-U and PMAY-G, the Committee had recommended as under:-

"On several occasions, the Committee have been enlightened with the fact of glaring disparity between the assistance component under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Urban) and Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Gramin). The Committee in this vital aspect note the nature and quantum of assistance under both the Schemes and also take due cognizance of the submissions made in this regard by the DoRD. Taking an all-encompassing view with regard to the financial provisions cited under both the Housing Schemes, the Committee, are still not able to comprehend the simple prima-facie fact that building a house in a rural set-up with multi-faceted logistics and infrastructure constraints cannot be ignored. Even if one compares the purchasing power parity of the rural and urban beneficiary, it is obvious that which sector of population requires more assistance. Thus, without delving into greater details, the Committee are of strong belief that a semblance of parity be brought about between both the Housing Schemes at rural and urban levels and hence urge DoRD to take all possible means to ensure the increase in unit assistance component under PMAY (G) also at the earliest."

19. The DoRD in thier action taken reply have stated as under:-

"Under PMAY-G, beneficiaries are provided an enhanced unit assistance of Rs. 1.20 lakh in plains (which was Rs. 70,000 under the erstwhile Indira Awaas Yojana) and Rs. 1.30 lakh in hilly states, difficult areas and Integrated Action Plan (IAP) districts (which was Rs. 75,000 under the erstwhile Indira Awaas Yojana) for construction of pucca house (keeping in view of the availability of transportation materials). In addition, there is provision of 90/95 persondays of unskilled labour wages through convergence with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and Rs.12,000 for construction of toilets through convergence with Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin (SBM-G), MGNREGS or any other dedicated source of funding. At present, there is no proposal considered by the Ministry for enhancing the unit assistance under PMAY-G. However, vide this Division's OM dated 22.7.2020, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has been requested to consider the increase of assistance from Rs. 12,000/- to Rs. 20,000/- for construction of toilet/ IHHL as per suggestion of the Standing Committee on Rural Development. Under PMAY-G the area of construction of house is mandated to be 25 sq m.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has been implementing Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U) since 25.06.2015 for providing assistance to States/ Union Territories (UTs) for addressing the

housing requirement of the people belonging to Economically Weaker Section (EWS), Low Income Group (LIG) and Middle Income Group (MIG) categories in urban areas through following four verticals:

SI No	Vertical	Area of the House	Unit Assistance
1	Insitu Slum Redevelopment	30 sq m	1 lakh
2	Affordable Housing in Partnership	30 sq m	1.50 lakh
3	Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme	Ranging from 30sq m to 200 sq m depending upon Annual Income	Subsidy Ranging from 3-6.5% on loan amounts
4	Beneficiary led individual House Construction	30 sq m	1.50 lakh

The Ministry is considering revision of Rural Housing Interest Subvention Scheme (RHISS) to bring the benefits at par with that of its urban counterpart.

20. Taking serious note of the existing per unit assistance under PMAY-G and the difference in amount of financial aid being provided under PMAY-U and PMAY-G, the Committee recommended Department of Rural Development to bring a semblance of parity between the housing schemes of urban and rural levels and also increase the unit assistance under PMAY-G. Department of Rural Development in their reply have categorically stated that at present no proposal is being considered by the Ministry for increasing the unit assistance under PMAY-G. However, the Ministry is considering revision of Rural Housing Interest Subvention Scheme (RHISS) to bring the benefits at par with that of its urban counterpart. The Committee after going through the reply of Department of Rural Development, are not satisfied with the approach of the Ministry regarding the hike in per unit assistance as sought by the Committee under PMAY-G. The Committee still believe that the existing rates of per unit assistance under PMAY-G in plains/hills of Rs.1.20 lakh/Rs.1.30 lakh require upward revision commensurate with the rising cost and infrastructure issues.

Further, the Committee are pleased to note the efforts being undertaken by the Ministry in pursuing with the Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation to increase the assistance from Rs.12,000/- to Rs.20,000/- for construction of toilets/IHHL in the houses built under PMAY-G. The Committee also appreciate the revision of Rural Housing Interest Subvention Scheme (RHISS) being considered by the Ministry to bring the benefits at par with that of its urban counterpart. Taking into account, the entire scenario, the Committee still expect the Department of Rural Development to review per unit assistance component under PMAY-G for its upward revision and expedite its collaboration with Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation for actual implementation of revised assistance for toilets from Rs.12000/- to Rs.20,000/- while also completing its formalities on a speedier basis for the revisions of RHISS. The Committee may be apprised of the development in this regard.

Recommendation (Serial No. 17)

VI. Issue of Down-Tendering in PMGSY

21. With regard to the Issue of Down-Tendering in PMGSY the Committee had recommended as under:-

With grave concern, the Committee note the widespread prevalence of manipulative behaviour of the contractors at the bidding stage to acquire the tender of projects under PMGSY by quoting 25-30% lower amount than the minimum bidding amount. This obnoxious approach by the seemingly unscrupulous contractors in nexus with the erring officials has a cascading detrimental effect over the quality of construction of roads under PMGSY. Such contractors who initially acquire bid at lower rates, in the garb of profiteering further decrease the quality of roads to increase their margin of profits. This is a rampant criminal strategy which does not augur well for the effectiveness of the scheme. The Committee are of the view that the DoRD should bring out a mechanism at least by which a certain

quantum of amount component equivalent to the difference between bidding and actual quoting is kept aside as security and may be released only after ensuring that the constructed road satisfy the quality norms. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend the DoRD to entail all measures for curbing the down-tendering in PMGSY and review its provision to incorporate the security component for quality assurance of roads.

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

Works are awarded in accordance with the provisions as contained in Standard Bidding Document, Programme Guidelines, General Financial Rules and CVC guidelines which allows the works to be allotted to the bidder whose bid value has been found to be the lowest.

Relevant provisions of SBD and Programme Guidelines are given below:

PMGSY Guidelines:

Para 11.1

After the project proposals have been cleared and Technical Sanction has been accorded, the Executing Agency would invite tenders. The well-established procedure for tendering, through competitive bidding, would be followed for all projects. All the projects scrutinized by the STA and cleared by the Ministry, will be tendered as such, and no changes shall be made in the work without the prior approval of the NRIDA. The States will follow the Standard Bidding Document (SBD), prescribed by the NRIDA, for all the tenders.

Para11.2

Since PMGSY places high emphasis on time and quality, States shall take steps to increase competition and to realistically assess Bid capacity. To this end States shall ensure that all Tender notices are put out on the Internet under the OMMAS. Centralised evaluation of Bid capacity will be done to give effect to the provision of the SBD. States may empower the SRRDA to call and decide tenders in the interest of speeding up the process. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

Para 11.3

The tendering and contracting process and time periods will be as per the SBD (please refer to Para 13.1 also). The State shall at all times update the OMMAS tendering module to enable downloading of tender documents. Details of contracts entered into shall also be immediately entered into database.

Provisions Of SBD:

Para 25: Examination of Bids and Determination of Responsiveness

25.1: During the detailed evaluation of “Part-I of Bids”, the Employer will determine whether each Bid (a) meets the eligibility criteria defined in Clauses 3 and 4; (b) has been properly signed; (c) is accompanied by the required securities; and (d) is substantially responsive to the requirements of the bidding documents. During the detailed evaluation of the “Part-II of Bids”, the responsiveness of the bids will be further determined with respect to the remaining bid conditions, i.e., priced bill of quantities, technical specifications and drawings.

25.2: A substantially responsive “Financial Bid” is one which conforms to all the terms, conditions, and specifications of the bidding documents, without material deviation or reservation. A material deviation or reservation is one (a) which affects in any substantial way the scope, quality, or performance of the Works; (b) which limits in any substantial way, inconsistent with the bidding documents, the Employer’s rights or the Bidder’s obligations under the Contract; or (c) whose rectification would affect unfairly the competitive position of other bidders presenting substantially responsive bids.

25.3: If a Bid is not substantially responsive, it will be rejected by the Employer, and may not subsequently be made responsive by correction or withdrawal of the nonconforming deviation or reservation.

Evaluation and Comparison of Bids

Para 26.1: The Employer will evaluate and compare only the bids determined to be substantially responsive in accordance with Clause 25 of ITB.

Para 26.2: In evaluating the bids, the Employer will determine for each Bid, the evaluated Bid price by adjusting the bid price through making an appropriate adjustment for any other acceptable variation, deviations or price modifications offered in accordance with sub-clause 21 of ITB.

Para 26.3 : *If the Bid of the successful Bidder is seriously unbalanced in relation to the Engineer’s estimate of the cost of work to be performed under the contract, the Employer may require the Bidder to produce detailed price analysis for any or all items of the Bill of Quantities, to demonstrate the internal consistency of those prices. After evaluation of the price analysis, the Employer may require that the amount of the Performance Security set forth in Clause 30 of ITB be increased at the expense of the successful Bidder to a level sufficient to protect the Employer against financial loss in the event of default of the successful Bidder under the Contract. The amount of the increased Performance Security shall be decided at the sole discretion of the Employer, which shall be final, binding and conclusive on the bidder.*

Award Criteria :

Para 27.1: Subject to Clause 30 of ITB, the Employer will award the Contract to the Bidder whose Bid has been determined: (i) to be substantially responsive to the bidding documents and who has offered the lowest evaluated Bid price, provided that such Bidder has been determined to be (a) eligible in accordance with the provisions of Clause 3 of ITB, and (b) qualified in accordance with the provisions of Clause 4 of ITB; and (ii) to be within the available bid capacity adjusted to account for his bid price which is evaluated the lowest in any of the packages opened earlier than the one under consideration.

It could thus be seen that the SBD and Programme Guidelines does not debar quoting the amount below the estimated value. However in order to ensure that Government interest is protected it has been laid down in the SBD that *If the Bid of the successful Bidder is seriously unbalanced in relation to the Engineer's estimate of the cost of work to be performed under the contract, the Employer may require the Bidder to produce detailed price analysis for any or all items of the Bill of Quantities, to demonstrate the internal consistency of those prices. After evaluation of the price analysis, the Employer may require that the amount of the Performance Security set forth in Clause 30 of ITB be increased at the expense of the successful Bidder to a level sufficient to protect the Employer against financial loss in the event of default of the successful Bidder under the Contract. The amount of the increased Performance Security shall be decided at the sole discretion of the Employer, which shall be final, binding and conclusive on the bidder.*

The tendering/ procurement process is done by the states. States have to make provision of asking for increased performance guarantee if the bids received are below a certain threshold. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the contractor to maintain road for a period of 5 years. The Ministry is implementing an online system (e-Marg) for monitoring of maintenance works, wherein all the payments have to be done through this system. This will further improve the maintenance work during the defect liability period.

There is a three tier quality control and quality assurance mechanism already in place to deal with the issue of construction of poor quality of road by the contractor at PIU level, State level and National level. Further there are provisions in the Standard Bidding Document of NRIDA to Black list such contractors who do not complete works as per specifications laid down in the bid document.

23. PMGSY is a centrally sponsored scheme with the DoRD as its nodal Department at the helm of affairs. Keeping this in view, the Committee poignantly intended to bring forward the rampant prevalence of malpractices being carried out by the unscrupulous contractors in bidding for projects

under PMGSY and had recommended DoRD to rein in this malaise afflicting the schemes' performance on the ground level by reviewing and incorporating security component. However, the Committee are taken aback by the response of the DoRD. In an elaborate reply, the Department have merely outlined the guidelines/provisions of PMGSY and Standard Bidding Document on the one hand and have put all the onus on the State Government for the compliance with the procedures on the other hand. The 'theoretical' provision and guidelines were never in question and the aim of the Committee was never to pick any shortcoming of the already well documented mechanism in place. The Committee had taken cognizance of the ground reality and the practical aspect of the implementation of provision of PMGSY/SBD in 'Letter and Spirit'. Also, the 'need of the hour' is to pin-point the shortcomings regarding the tendering process which can always be done in unison with the State Governments. In this regard, the Committee observe that abdicating or confining one's role to only policy formulation will perhaps not yield desired result. Therefore, the Committee vehemently reiterate its recommendation of curbing the malpractices in tendering processes of PMGSY and urge DoRD to bring all Stakeholders on-board in order to have a proper resolution on ground level.

Recommendation (Serial No. 19)

VII. Quality of Construction of Roads and Maintenance of Roads Post Construction under PMGSY

24. With regard to the Issue of Quality of Construction of Roads and Maintenance of Roads Post Construction under PMGSY as under:-

The success of any welfare oriented Scheme rests firmly on the result of its implementation at grass root level and not merely through the myopic vision of data

analysis. The Committee are of firm resonance with this sentiment but are disappointed on observing the performance of the projects taken up under PMGSY. The roads constructed under this Yojana at numerous sites are not at all upto the prescribed norms and standards and glaring loopholes in the construction and quality of materials are apparently visible. Not only this, the PMGSY roads are witnessing visible deterioration, even if they survive five years of the warranty period. The Committee note that the two separate issues starting initially with the quality of construction and later the maintenance aspect, both require equally strict regulation. In view of this scenario, the Committee strongly recommend DoRD to ensure that the quality norms as prescribed under the provisions of PMGSY are not at all compromised and the roads built have strong durability. Moreover, DoRD is also expected to ensure due coordination with the Nodal agencies and requisite surveillance for proper maintenance of the post constructed PMGSY roads.

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

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

As a measure of enhancing the focus on maintenance of roads during the defect liability period (five years from the date of completion of road) and also streamlining the delivery of routine maintenance of PMGSY roads, eMARG has been implemented in all the states. eMARG is an online platform, used by all the states, that ensures maintenance of PMGSY works for five years since the date of completion and upkeep of roads in good condition. eMARG has been implemented in all the states, ensuring a universal system for maintaining quality of completed

works. System and procedures of quality monitoring is consistently refined to increase the accountability of the PIU in ensuring the quality of works.

To take care of the maintenance of rural roads, PMGSY III guidelines stipulates that States shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India before launching of PMGSY III in the concerned State for providing adequate funds for maintenance of roads constructed/ upgraded under PMGSY for initial five years routine maintenance, and for further five year routine maintenance including periodic renewal as per requirement.

Special emphasis is being given to quality and maintenance of DLP and post DLP roads under PMGSY. During the PRC meeting, EC and Pre EC meetings, monthly review and other meetings, it has become focal point of review with states in terms of routine maintenance, length renewal and expenditure incurred.

NRIDA in collaboration with ILO has prepared a Policy Framework for the development of rural roads maintenance policy. The Policy Framework along with a Guidance Note for the States has been shared with the States since Rural Roads Maintenance Policy needs to get adopted and notified at state level. The policy and guidance note would be helpful for the road agencies of the States to have a clear understanding about expectations for rural road maintenance and intentions of States to sustain the created network of rural roads. All the States/UTs except UT of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have notified Rural Road Maintenance Policy. It has, however, been observed that the State Governments are not making adequate provisions in their budget for maintenance of the rural roads constructed under PMGSY and, as a result, the roads constructed with huge investment of public money deteriorate in the absence of the proper maintenance and require replacement/relaying with huge cost.

With the advent of fund sharing mechanism 60:40 and 90:10 from April 2015, the burden on States has increased. In addition, the States are also bearing the entire cost of maintenance, the costs of utility shifting and forest clearance. The cost overrun, if any, other than expenditure mentioned in the proposal is also borne by the concerned State Government from their own budgetary resources. Further, the

maintenance liability on the States is increasing with the construction of more roads under PMGSY and completion of DLP of the roads already constructed.

Due to increasing construction and maintenance liability on the States, the State Governments are not able to make adequate provisions in their budget for maintenance of the rural roads constructed under PMGSY.

As on date, Rs. 4,123.13 crore (since 2016-17 to 2020-21) has been released as Financial Incentive to the States/UTs (best performing States/UTs that achieve the targets allocated to them, within the prescribed timeframe). These funds are exclusively meant for periodic maintenance of roads already constructed under PMGSY.

In order to ensure to improve quality the following further steps have been taken:

- For the financial year 2021-22, target has been set to conduct 15,000 NQM inspections and 85,000 SQM inspections, subject to COVID situation in the field.
- SQM inspections are being conducted on each 5 km section length, as compared to the whole road length earlier.
- 49 New NQMs have been empanelled and efforts are being made to increase the number of NQMs even further.
- Specialized NQMs and SQMs are deputed for inspection of bridges.
- Uploading of Geo-tagged photographs has been made mandatory for field laboratory, before any payment.
- Payment of cement concrete roads are made only after verification of core test results.
- Comprehensive guidelines have been issued for empanelment and performance evaluation of SQMs.

26. Proper maintenance of roads constructed under PMGSY has been an important area of concern ever since the scheme of rural connectivity through PMGSY was envisaged. However, for various reasons, till date, the issue

remains unresolved. Keeping this in mind, the Committee had recommended DoRD for due coordination with the nodal agencies and requisite surveillance for the maintenance of roads built under PMGSY. The Committee have, now, gone through the reply of the DoRD in this context and have found few notable issues raised therein, primary being non-adequate budget provisioning by the State Governments for maintenance of the rural roads constructed under PMGSY and the increased burden on the States post change of fund sharing mechanism from 90:10 to 60:40 since April, 2015. The Committee find such arguments taking the entire issue towards a deadlock whereby one has to stop pondering over the path forward as the malaise has taken the status of being incurable. The bottlenecks are indeed there but the scheme can't be allowed to languish in wake of such hindrances. Some way out need to be created among this quagmire of administrative and financial web. DoRD is not expected to cite reasons and sit over such issues but to come up with solid redressal of these pertinent problems. Be it constant deliberations with the State Governments, seeking higher fund allocations from the Ministry of Finance or revisiting their norms/guidelines, the need of the hour is to move constantly towards solving this enigma. In view of the precarious situation, the Committee, thus, with utmost concern while reiterating its recommendation coerces DoRD to tackle the issue of maintenance of roads under PMGSY with utmost alacrity and ingenuity so that the entire vision of robust rural connectivity through PMGSY may not fizzle away.

VIII. National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

Recommendation (Serial No. 21)

27. With regard to the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), the Committee had recommended as under:-

"The relevance of a marquee Scheme like National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) in reaching out to the poor and downtrodden section of the society does not go amiss in the eyes of the Committee. The Committee note the extremely important objective of the Programme and the target group of its beneficiaries like old aged persons, widows and disables and are of the firm view that Social Programmes of such stature are a blessing for such sections of the society. However, the Committee are baffled to observe the meager amount of assistance ranging from Rs. 200/- to Rs. 500/- per month under the different components of this Scheme. The Committee had earlier too made recommendations to this effect through Recommendation Numbers 16 and 19 in their First and Fourth Reports (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands For Grants (2019-20 & 2020-21) respectively. However, to the utter dismay of the Committee, nothing much has been forthcoming so far. The Committee do not endorse the nonserious approach of DoRD on this issue. In view of this laxity, the Committee again vehemently recommend the DoRD to look into this issue with utmost sincerity and hasten their processes for bringing an increase in the assistance amount under NSAP."

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

"The Department is working actively on early completion of the 3rd party Evaluation Study of NSAP. The Agency conducting the evaluation study has submitted its report. After examination of the report, the Department may initiate further action with regard to increase in the amount of pension / assistance in consultation with States/UTs and other stakeholders to take final decision on the outcome of the Study."

29. With profound concern, the Committee had recommended DoRD to increase the assistance amount of pension under NSAP for the welfare of the beneficiaries of this programme. The Committee have been pursuing this issue over a long period of time and have been keeping an eye on its progress. In the present instance, the reply of the DoRD elicits about the submission of the Report of 3rd Party evaluation of NSAP and that the further action with regard

to increase in the amount of pension/assistance will be taken in consultation with the States/UTs and other stakeholders. The Committee acknowledge the efforts of the DoRD and appreciate the positive movement in this regard. However, it has been the experience that such consultations keep on lingering and go on endlessly for longer periods, sometimes, making the wait for fruition of the desired objective unbearable for the beneficiaries. Thus, the Committee strongly reiterate that DoRD should accelerate its momentum for early completion of all formalities and arrive to a logical conclusion *vis-a-vis* the increase of pension/assistance component under NSAP so that the beneficiaries start reaping the reward. The Committee may be apprised of the development.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Serial No. 1)

The Committee are dismayed to note that huge unspent balance of as large as Rs. 40,293.94 crore accrued over all the schemes / programmes of the DoRD that does not augur well with overall allocation vis-a-vis utilization of DoRD funds. In the light of difficult COVID pandemic scenario prevailing in the country, the Committee find that it is essential on the part of DoRD to tighten its mechanism for early liquidation of these unspent balances that will make its own balance sheet clean and bring its financial health in order. Therefore, the Committee strongly recommend that it must gear up its mechanism for efficacious implementation of the scheme envisaged by the Government in the area of Rural Development.

Reply of the Government

All out efforts are being made by the Department to bring the unspent balances to a bare minimum. In this regard, rigorous examination of fund availability with the States as well as expenditure incurred by the States against the balance funds is done in order to ensure that further funds are released to only those States where the State have expenditure plan in place. While sanctioning the funds, the unspent balances of the previous releases are taken into account. For this purpose, the Programme Divisions of the Department also take the help of Public Financial Management System (PFMS) Portal to know the bank balance of the recipients before making each release. The instructions of the Department of Expenditure regarding the use of PFMS Portal for the use of Central Sector Scheme from time to time are strictly followed by the Department. The principles of 'just in time', is being strictly followed for releases in respect of all payments to the extent possible. The broad principles, like, cash balance at a time should preferably not be more than 3 months of requirements and funds released as per actual requirements, are adhered to. Recent guidelines issued by Department of Expenditure in the Month of March 2021, further emphasise the requirement of reduction of float available with

States/UTs by following 'just in time release' principle, releases in four installments during a year and efficient and proper use of PFMS Portal by all the stakeholders.

Further, Finance Review Meetings are held with States/UTs to review the progress of expenditure and resolve any impediments in smooth flow of funds and pace of expenditure. Performance review meetings with the States are also held regularly under the Chairmanship of Secretary (RD) which are being attended by the Additional Chief Secretaries / Principal Secretaries of all States/UTs. Video conferences, review meetings, regular follow-up, etc. are being conducted at various levels on regular basis to monitor the performance, progress of the schemes and liquidation of unspent balances in the States/UTs.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 3)

The Committee note that the existing practice of the provision of funds allocation to the Gram Panchayat at the Sarpanch level has resulted in unilateral parking of government funds in the hands of few, who are in a position to manipulate and manoeuvre the utilization of government funds in a whimsical manner suiting their personal discretion. This is an ever-growing malaise which has defeated the entire intent behind the rationale of providing the key to expenditure of funds with the elected representatives instead of government officials like Taluka Development Officer, Block Development Officer, DRD Director or Officials in similar capacity. Finding this practice as one of the root causes for the nexus between the unscrupulous elements at ground level, the Committee strongly recommend the Department of Rural Development to find a solution or undertake a major review mechanism of the existing fund percolation so that the funds may not be misused.

Reply of the Government

MGNREGA:- Fund release to the States/UTs is a continuous process and Central Government is committed to making funds available to States/UTs for the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS. The Ministry release funds periodically in two tranches with each tranche consisting of one or more installments, keeping in view the "agreed to" Labour Budget, demand for works, opening balance, pace of utilization of funds, pending liabilities and overall performance.

For the scheme, Funds is being released towards wage payment, Material payment and Admin. contingency as per the funding patterns mandated sec. 22 of Mahatma Gandhi NREG Act 2005. Wage payment is being released directly to the bank/post office account of the beneficiaries for all states which are under National Electronic Funds Management Systems (Ne-FMS) under the scheme. Material and Admin. funds is being released to state treasury, which in turn release it to concerned State Nodal Account. The fund transfer orders are made therefrom in favour of vendors or service providers or staff. As such, under the scheme, no fund is released to or parked at Gram Panchayat level.

PMAY-G:- Under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin Scheme only single account is maintained which is called State Nodal Account. All the program and admin funds (both Central and State share) are kept in the State Nodal Account (SNA) and releases are made to the beneficiaries account directly from SNA through DBT. All funds from SNA are transferred electronically, except a few exceptions in north eastern States, and no other mode of withdrawal from it is permissible.

PMGSY:- There is no provision of fund allocation to the Gram Panchayat at the Sarpanch level under PMGSY. Hence, the above para is not applicable for PMGSY.

DAY-NRLM:- There is no provision of fund allocation to the Gram Panchayat at the Sarpanch level under NRLM. Funds are directly transferred using PFMS to the Block Mission Management units (BMMUs) by the District Mission Management units (DMMUs) to meet the programme expenditure approved in their Annual Plan.

DDU-GKY SKILLS:- Under DDU-GKY funds are released to the SRLM/SSM via the State Treasury. No funds are provided at GP level.

NSAP:- Funds under NSAP schemes are released to States/UTs and further release of funds is managed/monitored by States/UTs.

SPMRM:- Under SPMRM's implementation, the Critical Gap Funds (CGF) is allocated to respective project's implementation agency. Out of the 72590 projects entered on RurbanSoft MIS as part of the Cluster's DPRs, Gram Panchayat is an implementation agency in 15941 projects. Line departments, Community Based Organizations, Block / District Panchayats and other agencies are the implementation agencies for the rest of the projects. Therefore, the implementation responsibility (and funds for respective projects) are spread across various bodies and not concentrated at the Gram Panchayat / Sarpanch level.

2. The selection of projects to be undertaken in the Cluster are approved in the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) approved by the District Level Committee (chaired by the District Collector) and the State Level empowered Committee

(chaired by the Secretary, Rural Development of the State / Chief Secretary of the State). This ensures a double vetting of the projects so proposed by the Cluster and it's panchayats.

3. Further, post settling down of the pandemic situation in the Country, an intensive social audit exercise is being planned to be undertaken for the Rurban Clusters to ensure community participatory review of local level misuse of funds, if any.

4. Also, as per the SOP for Fund Release followed under SPMRM, all the transactions are digitally recorded on real time basis through the RurbanSoft - PFMS integration. This helps in ensuring certain level of transparency

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 6)

The Committee are dismayed to note that large number of fake job cards under MGNREGA have been still prevailing in various Gram Panchayat with active connivance of officials hobnobbing the rank and file thereby depriving the legitimate poor from imperative eligible employment under MGNREGA. The Committee are of the firm view that, the precious resources of central budget are being devoted under MGNREGA, but pouring in of fake job is gradually defeating the very purpose of the scheme meant for rural unemployed persons. The Committee, therefore, recommend that all out efforts be made to nip the malaise from root for all intent and purposes to achieve the desired results of the useful scheme.

Reply of the Government

The States hold time bound campaigns to verify/ update JCs. The District Programme Coordinator/ Collector and the State Government ensure that these verification campaigns are conducted in a time bound manner. For verification/ updation of a Job Card, the following is verified:

- i. SECC TIN number, if any, bank account/ Post Office account number must be verified and entered into the Job Card.
- ii. Either family photo or photos of workers or individual photos (preferably) of that family, duly attested by the competent authority is mandatory.

- iii. Demand, allocation, work done and payment details must be updated in the Job Card.

States have already been directed to keep the verification and updation drive of issued job cards on and so far about 3.7 crore job cards (including job card of ghost workers) have been tagged as to be deleted. This is based on the report provided by states in NREGASoft.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 7)

The Committee once again note the callous approach of the State Governments in the proper implementation of the provision of unemployment allowance as mentioned in Section 7 (1) of MGNREGA. It may be recalled here that the Committee had recommended on this aspect in its Report No. 1 and Report No. 4 of Seventeenth Lok Sabha while examining the Demands for Grants (2019-20) & (2020-21). However, the Committee still find non-adherence to this provision in letter and spirit at the grass-root level. Although, the Committee are well aware that the actual implementation of this provision rests in the hand of State Governments, however, they are still of the opinion that until and unless all concerns of the scheme are properly and meticulously addressed irrespective of the domain of the Centre or the State, purpose of the scheme would not yield desired results. Therefore, the Committee urge upon DoRD to ensure the strict compliance with this provision by the States/UTs.

Reply of the Government

The payment of unemployment allowance is the responsibility of the concerned State/ UT. Currently, 99.86 % of the household demanding employment are being offered employment within 15 days as mandatory by the Act. States have been advised to approve the unemployment allowance as per their unemployment allowances rule and provisions of the Act.

Government of India is monitoring the progress on regularly through different forums.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 8)

During the examination deliberations, the Committee were apprised about the occurrences of deaths of MGNREGA workers during on-site work due to various accidental reasons, one of them being that of snake bites. Such untimely demise of MGNREGA beneficiaries who sometimes are not even able to get primary medical help on time needs to be looked into with compassion. The Committee feel that MGNREGA workers despite having provisions of insurance and other claim facilities still have to run helter skelter in getting due approvals and completion of formalities. For a person belonging to marginalized section of the society, a prompt and urgent redressal to accidental claims is perhaps the least that can be paid by the Government within 15 days of such accidents' occurrence. Hence, the Committee recommend DoRD to create easy mechanisms of ex-gratia payment of a fixed compensation amount for the MGNREGA workers so as to have some solace in the need of hour.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the committee noted for further deliberation with States and to create simplified mechanisms of ex-gratia payment of a fixed compensation amount for the MGNREGA workers.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 9)

The Committee were enlightened during their deliberations on the examination of Demands for Grants and also through their on-the-spot review of implementation of scheme in course of study visit about the widespread evidences of non-needy persons availing the benefit as beneficiaries under PMAY-G. This is a matter of serious concern that the genuine beneficiaries who are deprived of the benefits of the PMAY-G scheme. The Committee found to their dismay prima-facie instances of such beneficiaries who in no way seem to appear in shortage of funds to be worthy of this scheme. The Committee, therefore, recommend DoRD to spruce up its mechanisms so that only genuine and needy homeless persons are added as beneficiaries to the ambit of this scheme.

Reply of the Government

Under PMAY-G, identification of beneficiaries is based on the housing and other socio-economic deprivation parameters as per Socio-Economic Caste Census – 2011. Accordingly under PMAY-G all rural houseless and households living in zero, one or two room kucha houses, subject to the exclusion process as per SECC and duly verified by Gram Sabha are included in the Permanent Wait List and provided assistance for construction of houses.

The Gram Panchayat wise system-generated eligible beneficiaries' lists are referred to the Gram Sabha to verify the same. The Gram Sabha will verify facts based on which the inclusion has been done in the meeting of Gram Sabha. If the inclusion has been done based on wrong facts, if the household has constructed a pucca house or migrated since the survey or has been allotted a house under any government scheme, the Gram Sabha shall delete the name of such families. Further the Gram Sabha can change the priority of the households based on the facts. The list of such persons deleted, including reasons for deletion, changes made in the priority will form part of the minutes of the Gram Sabha resolution. The Gram Sabha can delete the household and change the priority based on the facts but cannot include new households into the Permanent Waitlist. This ensures that only genuine households are included in PWL and all the ineligible households are removed.

To address grievances of beneficiaries, the scheme guideline of PMAY-G provisions for constitution of a three-member Appellate Committee by the States/UTs at the District level. It may be headed by the District Magistrate/Collector or his nominee, another official and at least one non –official member.

Furthermore, for households who though eligible as per provisions of SECC data for inclusion into PWL of PMAY-G but could not be included due to any reasons, an exercise was conducted by States/UTs for identification of such left out households through mobile application Awaas+. The last date for such identification was 7th March, 2019 and States/UTs had captured details of 3.57 crore left out households. Based on the exclusion criteria prescribed under SECC and other exclusion criteria given by MoRD, the States/UTs are removing the names of

ineligible households from Awaas+ data so that only genuine eligible households remain for inclusion in PWL of PMAY-G.

In cases, instances of irregularities in the scheme viz., misappropriation of funds, allotment of houses to ineligible persons, release of funds to some other person's account, bribe seeking and non release of installments in time whenever reported to the Ministry are immediately taken up with the concerned State Government for investigating the matter and taking appropriate action. Further, the complaints in respect of irregularities are discussed with the respective States for taking appropriate action during the Quarterly Performance Review Meetings. In the case of complaints received from VIPs and in respect of complaints where the issue raised, prima-facia seems to be serious in nature, National Level Monitors (NLMs) on the panel of this Ministry are deputed to investigate the complaints. If irregularities are established, the concerned State Government is requested to take appropriate action.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 10)

One of the complicated bottleneck in the implementation of PMAY-G is to provide homes to such beneficiaries who do not have lands. The essential requisite for building a home is that of the presence of land without which the dream of 'Housing for all' by 2022 would perhaps not be realized. The Committee note from the document of DoRD that as on 03.12.2020, against total identified 4.09 lakh landless beneficiaries in Permanent Waiting List of PMAY-G, 1.80 lakh beneficiaries have already been provided land and 2.29 lakh beneficiaries are remaining to be provided land by States/UTs. This is a huge number of landless beneficiaries and thus the Committee are of the view that the exercise of providing land to such beneficiaries be expedited. The Committee, therefore, in coordination with the States/UTs recommend DoRD to ensure the speedier allocation of lands to the landless beneficiaries so that they may also avail the benefit of home under PMAY-G.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is continuously reviewing the issue of landlessness and requesting States /UTs to accord top priority to such beneficiaries and to allocate

land to landless beneficiaries. As per reconciled status 2,26,535 Landless beneficiaries have been provided land/ financial assistance for land purchase against 4,58,087 landless beneficiaries in the PWL of PMAY-G. Remaining 2,31,552 landless beneficiaries are yet to be provided land/ financial assistance for purchase of land. Continuous persuasion has led to State specific actions to provide land to the landless, e.g. in Bihar, Assam, Jharkhand, Maharashtra etc. Hon'ble Minister for RD has also written letters to Hon'ble Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment and Hon'ble Minister for Tribal Affairs to explore possibilities in their existing Schemes and to provide land to SC/ST beneficiaries.

A letter from Secretary (RD) to the Chief Secretaries/ Advisors to Administrators of all States / UTs were written on 9th April 2021 wherein it was conveyed that the States / UTs to constitute a Task Force comprising of Secretary (Revenue) and the Secretary dealing with PMAY-G in your State/UT with an objective to provide land to all the landless beneficiaries under PMAY-G within next two months. The Task Force should ensure to provide land to landless with specific timeline say 50% beneficiaries by 30th April, 2021, 75% by 20th May, 2021 and 90% landless beneficiaries by 31st May, 2021 and 100% by 15th June, 2021.

Further, the matter of providing land to landless beneficiaries was also taken up formally by Hon'ble Minister Rural Development with the Hon'ble Chief Ministers of 10 major States with high number of landless beneficiaries. The Hon'ble Minister has also reviewed progress of landless issue during review meeting held on 22.05.2021.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 11)

The Committee were enlightened with a very disconcerting reality during the examination of Demands for Grants pertaining to the list of eligible beneficiaries under PMAY-G. It was witnessed that the actual compilation of figures at the grass-root level differed from the figures reflected in the portals of Ministry (DoRD) by reasons of huge reduction in the number of beneficiaries who were found to be eligible at the grass-root level but their names did not figure in the list of eligible beneficiaries at block level. Several places also were reported with exhaustion of their

quota while on the ground, eligible beneficiaries were left stranded. This is a grave deficiency in the implementation of PMAY-G and needs urgent redressal. Such errors not only undermine the efficiency of scheme but also are detrimental to the needy and deprived sections of eligible beneficiaries under PMAY-G. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend the DoRD to review the list of eligible beneficiaries at the earliest and ensure that no eligible and bonafide beneficiary is left behind from the domain of PMAY-G.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has adopted a robust mechanism for identification of beneficiaries of PMAY-G. The households in the Permanent Waitlist of PMAY-G found ineligible at any stage are remanded by the States / UTs following due procedure of remanding the beneficiaries.

Further, the Ministry had conducted more than a year long exercise of Awaas+ survey for identification and inclusion of those households who were though eligible for the benefits under PMAY-G but got left out in the SECC 2011 based permanent waitlist. Considering the cases of erroneous data entry in Awaas+, expert committees including members from various other disciplines and subject experts were constituted for analysis of data and recommending the appropriate approach of allocation of targets. The targets from Awaas+ data based on the recommendations of the expert committees has been allocated to the States/ UTs.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 12)

The Committee are dismayed to learn that as against the PMAY- (G) target of 63.76 lakh houses to be constructed by 2020-21, as low as 22.78 lakh houses were constructed as on 27.01.2021. The Committee apprehend that with this pace of house construction the target for 'Housing for All' by 2022' which is not very far is hardly achievable. The Committee feel that there is a need for proper synergy between different agencies and stakeholders to work together for achieving the intended objective. Therefore, the Committee recommend DoRD to hasten its agencies for expediting the completion of houses within the target period.

Reply of the Government

Though the pace of construction of houses due to pandemic got affected for a shorter period, the pace had been somewhat regained after the lockdown. With the continuous follow-up with the States/ UTs, regular monitoring at higher levels and visit to States/ UTs to understand the problem and sorting it out on priority, the Ministry could achieve completion of 35.27 lakh houses in the year 2020-21. In terms of financial progress, the highest utilization of fund amounting to Rs.46,376 crore was also recorded for the year 2020-21.

However, the 2nd and more severe wave of pandemic and resultant lockdown in many states across the country has again hit the progress of the Scheme. The Ministry is in touch with all the States and working with them to expedite the execution of works.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 13)

One of the issue that arose before the Committee was that of the base upon which the current PMAY-G beneficiaries have been selected. At present, the beneficiaries listed under PMAY-G are on the basis of deprivation parameters under SECC, 2011 Census. It has been observed by the Committee that a long period has since elapsed and within the same family of beneficiaries, newer generations of beneficiaries have cropped up. This development indeed merits attention as the expansion of families would definitely add in the list of eligible beneficiaries even on the existing deprivation parameters. In view of this scenario, the Committee feel that this issue acquires great relevance and hence the Committee urge DoRD to formulate or review its policy suitably in order to incorporate new emerging needy beneficiaries under PMAY-G.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry had conducted more than a year long exercise of Awaas+ survey during the period January 2018 to March 2019 for identification and inclusion of those households who were though eligible for the benefits under PMAY-G but got left out in the SECC 2011 based permanent waitlist. Considering the cases of erroneous data entry in Awaas+, expert committees including members from various other disciplinarians and subject experts were constituted for analysis of data and

recommending the appropriate approach of allocation of targets. The target from Awaas+ data based on the recommendations of the expert committees has been allocated to the States/ UTs.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 14)

One of the sustained grievance under PMAY-G is that of the non-timely release of installments. The delay in the release of installments under PMAY-G have collateral effect on the broader picture of the non-completion of houses within the target period while also adding to the grief and hardship of eligible beneficiaries who belong to marginalized section of the society. Despite repeated observations of the Committee and the cognizance of the Department of this pertinent fact, still the issue remains and the grievances keep cropping up. In view of this, the Committee recommend DoRD to shed its lackadaisical approach towards this genuine concern and ensure a full proof robust mechanism in coordination with all involved agencies to maintain timely release of installments under PMAY-G.

Reply of the Government

As per the Framework of Implementation of the PMAY-G scheme, the funds were released to States / UTs in two equal installments. The 1st installment is released to the States / UTs on allocation of targets subject to utilization of previous releases whereas the 2nd Installment is released on 60% utilization of 1st installment fund submission of prescribed documents like Audit report, UC, document for release of corresponding State share, reflecting physical progress to certain level, etc.

As per the Modified Exchequer Control based Expenditure Management (vide DoE, MoF guide lines dated 22.8.2017) releases of Rs.200 cr to 2000 cr. may be kept between 21st to 25th of a month to take advantage of GST inflows. Further, not more than 33% and 15% of expenditure of BE shall be permissible respectively in the last quarter and last month of the of the financial year in respect of scheme-wise and Demands for Grants as a whole.

As per the procedure regarding release of funds under the Centrally sponsored Schemes guidelines issued by Department of Expenditure, Ministry of

Finance dated 23.3.2021, the releases are now made to States/UTs in four installments (two tranches of each installment) and utilization of funds upto 75% of funds released earlier (both Central & State share).

It is submitted for the kind information of the Committee that the release of the funds to the States is not hampered for lack of any efforts on part of the Ministry.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 15)

On several occasions, the Committee have been enlightened with the fact of glaring disparity between the assistance component under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Urban) and Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Gramin). The Committee in this vital aspect note the nature and quantum of assistance under both the Schemes and also take due cognizance of the submissions made in this regard by the DoRD. Taking an all-encompassing view with regard to the financial provisions cited under both the Housing Schemes, the Committee, are still not able to comprehend the simple prima-facie fact that building a house in a rural set-up with multi-faceted logistics and infrastructure constraints cannot be ignored. Even if one compares the purchasing power parity of the rural and urban beneficiary, it is obvious that which sector of population requires more assistance. Thus, without delving into greater details, the Committee are of strong belief that a semblance of parity be brought about between both the Housing Schemes at rural and urban levels and hence urge DoRD to take all possible means to ensure the increase in unit assistance component under PMAY (G) also at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

Under PMAY-G, beneficiaries are provided an enhanced unit assistance of Rs. 1.20 lakh in plains (which was Rs. 70,000 under the erstwhile Indira Awaas Yojana) and Rs. 1.30 lakh in hilly states, difficult areas and Integrated Action Plan (IAP) districts (which was Rs. 75,000 under the erstwhile Indira Awaas Yojana) for construction of pucca house (keeping in view of the availability of transportation materials). In addition, there is provision of 90/95 persondays of unskilled labour wages through convergence with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and Rs.12,000 for construction of toilets through convergence with Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin (SBM-G), MGNREGS or any other dedicated source of funding. At present, there is no proposal considered by

the Ministry for enhancing the unit assistance under PMAY-G. However, vide this Division's OM dated 22.7.2020, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has been requested to consider the increase of assistance from Rs. 12,000/- to Rs. 20,000/- for construction of toilet/ IHHL as per suggestion of the Standing Committee on Rural Development. Under PMAY-G the area of construction of house is mandated to be 25 sq m.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has been implementing Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U) since 25.06.2015 for providing assistance to States/ Union Territories (UTs) for addressing the housing requirement of the people belonging to Economically Weaker Section (EWS), Low Income Group (LIG) and Middle Income Group (MIG) categories in urban areas through following four verticals:

SI No	Vertical	Area of the House	Unit Assistance
1	Insitu Slum Redevelopment	30 sq m	1 lakh
2	Affordable Housing in Partnership	30 sq m	1.50 lakh
3	Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme	Ranging from 30sq m to 200 sq m depending upon Annual Income	Subsidy Ranging from 3-6.5% on loan amounts
4	Beneficiary led individual House Construction	30 sq m	1.50 lakh

The Ministry is considering revision of Rural Housing Interest Subvention Scheme (RHISS) to bring the benefits at par with that of its urban counterpart.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 16)

The Committee note that the progress and development of the entire country is very much dependant on the robust connectivity to every corner of the country. This scheme is aimed at this very aspect but somehow or the other it has been witnessed over a period of time that the projects under PMGSY do not get completed within the set time-frame. Such delays even cause the escalation in the project cost due to the inflationary aspect affecting the expenditure in the raw materials. It has been also witnessed that the nodal agencies of the projects fail to get requisite clearances from different Ministries like forests which also have a prolonging effect

on the completion of PMGSY projects. In view of the above situations, the Committee with profound concern recommend DoRD to shed its casual approach towards the projects and ensure the completion of targets under PMGSY with full alacrity.

Reply of the Government

The onus of execution of the PMGSY is on the States, while the Ministry supports them with approval of the projects, technical advisory, quality control and other facilitation. The Ministry is making all efforts to facilitate the execution of PMGSY by the States.

To detail, almost all the states have adequate funds to meet the expenditure and timely funds are released from Central Government for execution of works. As a result 99% of eligible and feasible habitations under PMGSY-I has been provided all weather road connectivity. Similarly the progress of PMGSY-II is also satisfactory and most of the states have either completed the target given to them or are on the verge of the completion barring a few states in the northeast and Himalayan states. Progress has been relatively slow in these States due to the following reasons: -

- i. Inadequate execution and contracting capacity.
- ii. Shorter working season and difficult terrain particularly in Hill States due to weather etc.
- iii. Security concerns
- iv. Some works are held up due to delay in obtaining clearance under Forest Conservation Act 1980.
- v. Insufficient availability of the construction materials such as gravel, morum, sand, stone aggregate, bitumen, machinery, personnel to handle machinery etc.
- vi. Banning of morum/ gravel/ sand /Stone quarries by various authorities.

The Ministry of Rural Development has taken a number of initiatives to support the states to meet the above challenges which are as under:

- i. For resolution of the issues relating to pending forest clearance, meeting has been held at various level including jointly at Secretary (RD), Home Secretary and Secretary (MoEF&CC) level.
- ii. The Ministry has engaged Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) in some of the States to augment execution capacity of the States.

- iii. Conducted number of Contractor's Outreach Programmes in the States to attract good Contractors.
- iv. In order, to encourage new materials in road construction, Ministry has mandated that the states should adopt these technologies in at least 15% of the annual proposals. Necessary steps have also been taken to build confidence among the executing agencies through training programmes, brochures, do it yourself guidelines etc. to further enhance the scope of these works under PMGSY. Moreover, MoRD specifications have also been relaxed in respect of grading of materials for GSB layer in order to encourage the usage of locally available/ naturally occurring materials/ marginal materials. Through these measures, MoRD has been making efforts to address the issue of materials shortage and also to expedite the works under PMGSY.

Further, during the year 2018-19, 49017.47 km rural roads were constructed. During the year 2019-20, 27,307 km road length was constructed. During the year 2020-21, 36,676.64 km road length with an average speed of 100 km per day has been constructed under PMGSY despite COVID related lockdowns. It is also proposed to wind up the work relating to PMGSY-I and II by 31st March 2022 and states are encouraged to complete all pending works by then.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 18)

The Committee note that one of the major lapse in the implementation of the projects under PMGSY that has huge bearing upon the quality of the construction of roads is that of subletting of projects to petty contractors who were not in the initial fray at the time of bidding of the tender. While the few major names in the field of contractorship maintain their hegemony by winning the tender bids but thereafter, these contractors simply pass on the baton of actual construction work in smaller fragments to the petty/lesser equipped contractors for further cost-cutting and profiteering. This is a criminal breach of provisions as such petty contractors have no accountability and are in the project just to acquire profit. They are least bothered with the durability and quality of construction and as such have detrimental effect on the road construction. These practices cannot be possible without the officials being 'hand in gloves' with the contractors. Norms need to be tightened to ensure proper accountability of erring personnels and thus, the Committee, recommend the DoRD

to keep close watch on such issues and bring things in order through greater monitoring for efficacious implementation of PMGSY.

Reply of the Government

As per Standard Bidding Document, for PMGSY works, the Contractor may subcontract part of the construction work with the approval of the Employer in writing, up to 25 percent of the contract price, also part or full routine maintenance work after completion of construction work but will not assign the Contract. It is expressly agreed that the Contractor shall, at all times, be responsible and liable for all his obligations under this Agreement notwithstanding anything contained in the agreements with his Sub-contractors or any other agreement that may be entered into by the Contractor and no default under any such agreement shall exempt the Contractor from his obligations or liability hereunder.

Moreover in order to ensure that more and more contractors become eligible for execution of PMGSY works, it is proper if they are made partner and some limited amount of works are subcontracted to them, while keeping the main contractor responsible. This has resulted in enlarging the pool of contractors over the years and has resulted in increased competition.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 20)

The Committee note that National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) has set itself with the objective of mobilization of more than 9 crore rural poor women into over 78 lakh SHGs (Self Help Groups) by the end of 2023-24. This is an appreciable goal set out by the DoRD which will go a long way in the Universal Social mobilization of rural poor households through formation of Women SHGs. The Committee learn from DoRD that NRLM is lagging behind, particularly during the current financial year, witnessing delayed release of funds in a few States from the State Treasury to the State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLMs) retarding the growth of NRLM. Thus, noting that with the cumulative achievement of bringing a total of 7.26 crore rural households into 66 Lakh SHGs till December 2020, the Committee recommend DoRD to expedite its approach in an earnest way so as to achieve the desired target in a time-bound manner for the upliftment of rural women.

Reply of the Government

Out of 6,944 blocks reported for DAY-NRLM expansion, the programme is being implemented in 6517 blocks by mobilizing 7.52 crore rural households into 69.08 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs) till March 2021. Out of remaining 427 blocks, expansion to 311 new blocks has been planned for FY 2021-22 to mobilise 87.48 lakh households into 7.80 lakh SHGs. By expansion to additional 96 blocks in the FY 2022-23, DAY-NRLM will be implemented in all 6944 blocks. DAY-NRLM is continuously putting efforts to achieve the target of mobilizing 9 crore rural households into 78 lakh Self Help Groups (SHG) by the end of 2023-24.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 21)

The relevance of a marquee Scheme like National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) in reaching out to the poor and downtrodden section of the society does not go amiss in the eyes of the Committee. The Committee note the extremely important objective of the Programme and the target group of its beneficiaries like old aged persons, widows and disables and are of the firm view that Social Programmes of such stature are a blessing for such sections of the society. However, the Committee are baffled to observe the meager amount of assistance ranging from Rs. 200/- to Rs. 500/- per month under the different components of this Scheme. The Committee had earlier too made recommendations to this effect through Recommendation Numbers 16 and 19 in their First and Fourth Reports (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands For Grants (2019-20 & 2020-21) respectively. However, to the utter dismay of the Committee, nothing much has been forthcoming so far. The Committee do not endorse the nonserious approach of DoRD on this issue. In view of this laxity, the Committee again vehemently recommend the DoRD to look into this issue with utmost sincerity and hasten their processes for bringing an increase in the assistance amount under NSAP.

Reply of the Government

The Department is working actively on early completion of the 3rd party Evaluation Study of NSAP. The Agency conducting the evaluation study has submitted its report. After examination of the report, the Department may initiate further action with regard to increase in the amount of pension / assistance in

consultation with States/UTs and other stakeholders to take final decision on the outcome of the Study.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 22)

The Committee note that Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission (SPMRM) is a unique programme, designed to deliver in a manner which can catapult villages on the periphery of growth with urban facilities. Under this Mission 300 Rurban clusters are being developed across the country. The Committee are also of the firm opinion that the sole essence to the success of this vision is the preparation of a holistic DPRs which take into account the local experiences of grassroot level and the administrative acumen of the Officials/Elected representatives (ERs) present at local level. Faulty DPRs are generally prepared by the visiting companies hardly taking into consideration local sentiments and realities and become a source of resentment in the public. The Committee also take into account the submission of the Department that the States have been authorized to incorporate the changes felt by Members of Parliament even after the finalization of DPRs, if required. An advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of concerned Member of Parliament at District level has also been constituted to this effect. Thus, acknowledging this approach of the Department, the Committee are still of the view that it is of paramount importance that the DPRs be prepared after holding proper consultations with all the stakeholders of local population, Officials and ERs. In view of this, the Committee urge upon DoRD to review its modalities pertaining to SPMRM, so that effective DPRs may be prepared at the initial stage itself and provisions for inclusion of rectification through suggestions of Members of Parliament at later stages may be followed in 'letter & spirit' for the realization of vision under the Mission.

Reply of the Government

Steps already taken by the Program Division to improve the DPR preparation and approval process, and the participation of local stakeholders, including MPs, has been highlighted in the Committee's comments above. The Committee is still of the view that it is of paramount importance that the DPRs be prepared after holding proper consultations with all the stakeholders of local population, officials and elected representatives.

2. Therefore, to ensure that DPR preparation / revision process is through proper stakeholder consultations, the Ministry shall issue advisory and also sensitize States/UTs / build capacities of the professionals / fellows in undertaking such consultations.

3. The District level advisory committee for Rurban Cluster development will be institutionalized to become an important guide. This is chaired by the Hon'ble Member of Parliament.

4. Further, to seek guidance of the Hon'ble MPs in the development of Rurban clusters, Hon'ble Minister (RD, PR, A&FW) has written letter to all the MPs having Rurban clusters in their constituencies.

5. After the pandemic, many clusters are witnessing changes in development priorities, requiring revisions in DPRs. Ministry has also shared advisory with States, to consider any modification in existing DPRs of SPMRM clusters, if required, within the existing Framework to contain Covid-19 pandemic, mitigation and facilitating rebooting the rural economy through Rurban investments.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 23)

With a view of developing 'Adarsh Grams' which would serve as models for other villages to follow, the Members of Parliament were directly involved in Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) that was launched on 11 October 2014. No separate funds were allocated for SAGY, instead a new approach was mooted under which the on-going development schemes would be implemented on priority basis, through convergence, in the adopted villages under SAGY by the local MPs. However, the Committee are seriously concerned to witness the sorry state of affairs being faced by the MPs who have adopted the villages under SAGY but are not able to see any prioritized implementation of development schemes in the concerned villages. For some reason or other, the real intent and efforts of the MPs are also going in vain to see a holistic development of the villages under SAGY. Primarily, there is extreme callousness and lethargy in carrying out convergence/implementation of Schemes at ground level on priority basis. The nodal agencies not only need to be adequately cautioned for providing desired impetus to the development of SAGY villages. Therefore, echoing the sentiments of MPs, the Committee strongly recommend the DoRD to ensure priority based implementation of Rural Development Schemes in the SAGY villages effectively.

Reply of the Government

The following initiatives have been taken for better implementation of the Scheme:

1. The Honorable Minister of Rural Development has written to Honorable Members of Parliament requesting to identify five Gram Panchayats (GP) together under SAGY-II (2019-24) instead of identifying one GP each year. This was done to give enough time to the GPs for implementation of the projects taken up under their VDP. As a result, 49 more Gram Panchayats have been taken up as on 21 May 2021 (26 GPs in 2022-23 and 23 GPs in 2023-24).
2. The SAGY Guidelines envisage sound institutional support for the Yojana in the form of State Level Empowered Committees (SLEC) headed by Chief Secretary at State level and District Level Committees under the Chairpersonship of Hon'ble Member of Parliament at the District level. The States have been requested to ensure that SLECs meet at least once a quarter and perform various tasks for effective implementation of SAGY in addition to DLEC on a monthly basis.
3. The guidelines of as many as 23 Central Schemes have been amended to accord priority for the SAGY Gram Panchayats. A compilation of 127 Central Sector/ Centrally Sponsored and 1,806 State Schemes for convergence under SAGY for the benefit of Members of Parliament, District and Village level officials have been prepared and shared with the States/UTs and also uploaded on the scheme portal (saanjhi.gov.in).
4. The Saanjhi portal of SAGY has been revamped with more pertinent information of the scheme to facilitate better implementation and monitoring.
5. A MP Dashboard to facilitate Hon'ble MPs to develop SAGY GPs through effective convergence of schemes is also being developed. A convergence toolkit is being provided therein which would be a handy tool for Hon'ble MPs to select the relevant schemes for convergence in SAGY GPs.
6. SAGY Division has requested the member Ministries of NLC and other Programme Divisions of MoRD (vide DO letters in the month of February 2021) requesting to consider making necessary provisions in the Guidelines of their corresponding schemes for enabling priority to SAGY Gram Panchayats and issue advisories to States/UTs. The third meeting of the National Level Committee (NLC) on Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) was convened under the chairmanship of Secretary, RD on 9 December 2019.

7. Recognising that the implementation of SAGY requires highly motivated and knowledgeable personnel, the Ministry has been organising periodic capacity building exercises for State Team of Trainers, State Nodal Officers, Charge Officers and other stakeholders. So far, more than 1,500 SAGY functionaries have been trained on the convergence process.
8. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, SAGY Division has organised a capacity building programme on SAGY in coordination with NIRDPR through webinars for the Charge Officers and other stakeholders of SAGY GPs during 28-31 July 2020 and 1-3 September 2020. A total of 304 Charge Officers have participated in this programme from 23 States/UTs.
9. The State Governments have been requested to give priority to SAGY GPs implementing State schemes and to explore the possibility of availing CSR funds for supporting Village Development Plan under SAGY.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 24)

Time and again, the Committee have taken notice of the casual conduct of District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) Meetings. With the prime objective of monitoring the progress of major social development projects at the district level, such Committees were formed by the DoRD way back in June, 2016 headed by the local MPs of Lok Sabha, the provision of quarterly Meetings of such Committees was envisioned to facilitate the ERs to have a proper interaction with the Government Officials heading the various projects. However, the purpose for holding such Meetings is defeated with the non-appearance of responsible Officials at the helm of affairs, in lieu thereof, junior officers with no knowledge of the projects attending such DISHA meetings has become the order of the day. Strict punitive action requires to be taken against the Officials deliberately excusing themselves from DISHA Meetings to ward off their accountability. Such instances have been also noted wherein strict compliance to the quarterly holding of DISHA meetings is also not complied with causing long periods without any meetings. Therefore, the Committee implore upon DoRD to take serious note of this matter and ensure that the Meetings of DISHA Committees are held regularly as per the provision and also do not become infructuous in the absence of concerned Officials.

Reply of the Government

Formation of DISHA Committee is a crucial and effective step towards Good Governance. DISHA Committee Meetings provides a platform where discussion on implementation of developmental schemes can be held in detail and further course of action can be decided in the meeting taking valuable views of all stakeholders including Hon'ble Members of Parliament. It has come to notice of this Ministry that meetings of DISHA Committee are not being held regularly in the State, which is a matter of great concern.

Taking cognizance of the matter, Ministry of Rural Development is vigorously pursuing with State Governments for holding DISHA meetings as stipulated in the Guidelines. Keeping in view the importance of DISHA Committee meetings in implementation of developmental schemes, recently, Secretary (RD) vide his letter No. Q-13016/03/2021-Disha, dated 3rd March 2021, has requested Chief Secretaries of all States to instruct District Collectors to ensure regular Meetings of DISHA committee with full attendance of all HoDs within the district in the meetings.

Recently, on receipt of complaint from Shri Vijay Kumar, Hon'ble Member of Parliament and Chairperson of DISHA regarding non – participation of NHAI officers in DISHA Committee Meetings of Gaya District of Bihar, the matter was taken up with Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, who have informed that Chairman NHAI has been requested vide letter No. NH-35014/04/2021-H, dated 10th March 2021, to ensure participation of concerned officers in DISHA meetings.

States have also been advised that performance of District Officers in convening DISHA Committee meetings needs to be commented upon in APAR.

Thus, consistent efforts are being made by the Department to make DISHA meetings for more effective and result oriented. It is anticipated that consistent interventions by Ministry will certainly help in sensitizing the District authorities to convene DISHA Committee meetings regularly.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 25)

One of the primary facet of the successful implementation of the Schemes of the Central Government under the domain of DoRD is the Key role played by the State Government. The Committee are aware of the peculiar situation as a result of

the Federal Form of the Government Machinery in the country wherein the States play a key role in the ground level success of any Scheme. Majority of the Central Schemes have the Fund structure of 60:40, whereby, the State Governments need to release their matching funds timely and the progress of the Scheme hinges upon this very aspect. The Committee note this fact, but are still of the view that merely passing the onus from one to other is not at all acceptable, as in the broader picture, it is the needy citizen of the country who is at the suffering end. Instead of harping upon the bureaucratic issues, the Department cannot absolve their duty to take the Central Schemes to the doorsteps of the needy. Methodologies need to be evolved for better coordination with the State Governments and to ensure that the funds are timely released by the States' in order to have smoother operation of Schemes. Therefore, the Committee recommend the DoRD to carry out constructive and meaningful coordination with the State Governments in the larger interest and strategise prudently for resolution of such bottlenecks.

Reply of the Government

MGNREGA:- Under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, Ministry is responsible for 100 % wage payment and 75% of material cost payment while state Governments are responsible of 25% of material cost payment of the scheme during a financial year.

Further Ministry ensures that prior to next installment of the release, the due state's share must have been released by the concerned state Government.

Ministry reviews the state's share release status regularly and in case a delay observed, Ministry issues advisory to the state.

PMAY-G:- Under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin the cost of unit assistance is to be shared between Centre and State Governments in the ratio of 60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 in North Eastern and Himalayan States including UT of Jammu & Kashmir. For the remaining UTs including Ladakh implementing the PMAY-G, 100% cost of the house is borne by the Central Govt. The State Government shall release the full State Share corresponding to the Central Share within a period of 15 days of the release of Central Share. In the event of the Short Fall of the State Share in the previous release, the corresponding amount shall be deducted from the 2nd Installment of the Central Share. The State Share released by States is to be reported on Awaasoft so as to process the release of next installment. As reported by States/UTs on Awaasoft, out of the Central Share of Rs. 39,268.96 crore, an amount of Rs. 20,553.66 crore is reported as State Share. As per the reconciled data, the State share pending to be released is remarkably less when compared to the total pendency and this ministry is in a process to monitor the same.

PMGSY:- As per the guidelines of the Scheme, State Government to transfer Central Share along with the matching State Share in the Nodal Account of SRRDA within a period of 15 days. However, State Government takes longer time in not only releasing Central Share but they even take longer time in releasing State Share.

In order to ensure that State release both the shares in time, it is ensured that subsequent fund is released to states only when they have released their previous Central as well as matching State Share

Letters have been written from Hon'ble Minister and Secretary to Hon'ble Chief Minister and Chief Secretary/Additional Chief Secretary of the States/UTs respectively for timely release of States/UTs' Share.

Due to all these efforts the release of funds from states are getting streamlined. Matter is constantly reviewed in the monthly meeting with states.

DAY-NRLM:- Funding ratio under DAY-NRLM between Centre and State is 60:40 for plan areas and 90:10 for NE States, Himalayan State and UT of J&K. Other UTs are financed 100% by the Centre. After the release of Central share to the States/UTs, this Division monitors the release of State share regularly through PFMS, quarterly report (IUFs), online MPRs, sending special messages etc. Letters are also sent to Principal Secretaries/Chief Secretaries of the defaulting States. By all these measures, this Division tries to ensure the timely release of State share.

DDU-GKY SKILLS:- Under DDU-GKY funds are released on Demand basis. States, upon reaching the 60% expenditure mark, apply for funds along with substantiating documents. On this basis funds are released to the State. The contribution of matching State share towards past release is always a pre-condition for subsequent releases. Further, release of State share is taken up during review meeting taken up with States.

NSAP:- NSAP is a 100% centrally funded Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), wherein State contribution is optional and not compulsory.

SPMRM:- The Program Division has issued directions to all States to ensure release of State share within 15 days from the receipt of central funds in the State treasury. The Program Division is doing close follow up with the States through VCs, periodic communications and various forums such as Annual Action Plan meetings, Performance Review Committee Meetings to ensure this. In addition, no further funds are released to States until all the pending State share for the program has been released into the State Nodal account.

The approach of the Ministry is to work with the State Governments to enhance their capacity for programme implementation, constructive and meaningful

coordination with them and to ensure that the schemes are taken to the doorsteps of the needy. The Ministry adopts constructive and meaningful collaboration with all the States/UTs through the following steps:

- i. Capacity building of program functionaries through programs carried out through NIRD & PR, SIRD and other means
- ii. Through policy advisories, program guidelines, periodic reviews, evaluations and feedbacks
- iii. Standard MIS platforms for various data analytics and reports that aids the Central and State governments to take better decisions.
- iv. Engages in regular experience sharing by the Clusters / community representatives
- v. Undertakes consultations with States/UTs on Mission strengthening and ensures that the feedback of States/UTs is channelised into constructive actions / policies.
- vi. Sharing of communication material, approaches and media facilitation for carrying the program messages to the lowest rungs of society
- vii. Knowledge Platform framework include sharing of best practices, ecosystem of technical support and mentorship etc.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 26)

The Committee are of the firm opinion that any noble intent behind the creation of Welfare Schemes for the Country is bound to fail in the absence or lack of dedicated, robust and effective monitoring mechanism with provisions of accountability and punitive measures. DoRD is running Schemes of vital importances which are directly related to the upliftment of poor and marginalized sections of the rural populace. The Committee also note that almost all the Schemes have inbuilt mechanisms of monitoring but it is hardly used to deliver the desired results. Be it MGNREGA, which is afflicted with the unscrupulous practices of issue of fake job cards, needy beneficiaries not getting wages timely, false geo-tagging of houses for getting completion certificates, nexus between contractors and officials in PMGSY, rampant malpractices at the Gram Panchayat levels in the allotment of houses and release of funds the instances are rampant. The Committee are

extremely pained at this sorry state of affairs and feel that the need of the hour is to fix the accountability against the erring officials. The Committee, therefore, vehemently urge the DoRD to sharpen its monitoring systems under each Scheme in 'letter and spirit' to reign in the menace of corruption.

Reply of the Government

MGNREGA:- The Mahatma Gandhi NREG Scheme is implemented on an end-to-end integrated transaction based MIS platform called NREGAssoft, which monitors all aspects relating to planning, administrative and technical approval of the scheme, issue of job cards, acceptance of demand, issue of muster roll, measurement, approval of payment and finally payment to the beneficiary through a DBT-PFMS platform.

The Scheme has built in various monitoring and evaluation arrangements for assuring the proper utilization of the funds placed for the Scheme, as enumerated below: -

1. Monitoring by Gram Sabha, GPs, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishads
2. Monitoring by Programme Officer, District Programme Coordinator, DRDA
3. Monitoring by District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee
4. Geotagging of all assets- 3 during the project implementation
5. Social audits: twice every year
6. Internal audit
7. Monitoring by Area Officers
8. Common Review Mission
9. Monitoring by National level Monitors- regular & special
10. Grievance Redressal Mechanisms- Ombudsmen, Gram Panchayats, CPGRAMS
11. Janmnrega/ Gram Samwad app for seeking citizen feedback and information
12. Special monitoring by Senior officers of the Ministry
13. Special enquiry by central team under the leadership of senior officer of the Ministry.

The complaint of misappropriation of funds or malpractices or any grievance is dealt as per the provisions of the Act and guidelines of the schemes.

Ministry has engaged third party agency to cross check the geo-tagged assets by making field visits and the agency will submit its report soon.

Recently Ministry has launched National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) mobile app and Area officer Monitoring visit mobile App. This is one step further to

ensure accountability and transparency in the scheme. The NMMS App permits taking real time attendance of workers at Mahatma Gandhi NREGS worksites along with geotagged photograph, which will increase citizen oversight of the scheme besides potentially enabling processing payments faster. Area officer Monitoring App facilitates them to record their findings online along with time stamped and geo-coordinate tagged photograph for all the schemes of Department of Rural Development including Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

PMAY-G:- Evidence based monitoring of construction of house through uploading of geo-tagged photographs with time and date stamping at each pre-identified stage of house construction Use of geo-tagged photographs to monitor / review of quality of PMAY-G houses constructed by using “House quality review application” in AwaasSoft. States/ UTs have also put in place a mechanism to speed up house construction. They have not only put incentives for the beneficiaries for early construction but also tagged a few houses to Awaas Sahayaks, Awaas Mitra etc. who not only hand-held the PMAY-G beneficiaries but they are also given incentives for timely / early completions of houses. To encourage healthy competition among the States / UTs and to motivate them for better performance under PMAY-G, Performance Index Dashboard has been developed to monitor different aspects of implementation of the programme, both geographically and parameter-wise, wherein States / UTs, Districts and Blocks are ranked, both nationally and within the State, based on their daily performance. Annual Awards to States / UTs are also based on their performance as captured on Performance Index Dashboard. To track the flow of admin funds (activity-wise) till the end-user Administrative Fund Management System i.e. Admin Module has been developed by the Ministry on request of the States.

PMGSY:- All issues pertaining to implementation of the scheme are regularly reviewed with States by way of Regional Review Meetings (RRMs), Performance Review Committee (PRC) Meetings & Pre-Empowered/Empowered Committee meetings, monthly review meetings through VC and necessary hand holding of states are done, obstacles are identified and remedial course of actions are taken. As a result of the constant monitoring, the number of projects held up due to pending forest clearance has reduced substantially. Number of projects which were still unawarded due to various reasons has also reduced, as states have awarded pending projects due to close monitoring.

2. Online Monitoring tool: In order to effectively monitor the entire Programme and bring about greater efficiency, accountability and transparency in implementation, a modern web based On-line Management, Monitoring and Accounting System (OMMAS) has been set up for PMGSY. The main Application Software Modules include Rural Road Plan & Core Network, Proposals, Tendering & Contracting, Execution (Physical and Financial Progress), Quality Monitoring, Funds Flow and Receipt & Payment Accounts (work accounts). The web site is

www.omms.nic.in. e-Payment and e-Procurement are the new dimensions being integrated to it. The States are required to input the progress data directly on OMMAS which facilitates follow up with laggard States.

3. Use of Satellite Imagery: It is used for capturing the variance between data captured by OMMAS and actual construction/coverage.

4. Use of Project Management Tools: Across the country, there are variance in the ease and availability of raw material. Some States /Distt, either lacking on availability of natural aggregates or mining is banned due to environmental or other reasons. Besides this the weather condition across the country is varying, especially NE states /Hilly states , which gets very less working season due to incessant rain or snowfall .Besides hard to reach areas have delays and difficulties in transportation of Bitumen affecting its availability round the year. In some terrain protective works, cross drainage works and due to low lying area, the quantum of work for the similar KM of road is high in comparison to plain areas. These are some of the factors which affects the progress on ground .Due to these condition, the progress across all regions and states may not be uniform. However to mitigate all such difficulties with good planning and project management, a Project Management Information System is being integrated with existing OMMAS . This PMIS will help in project management in a better way as it will analyze and flag activities which are slowing and will identify reasons for rectification. It is expected that with close supervision and project management, project execution time across difficult geographies may be addressed suitably.

5. With the view to achieve the objectives of e-Governance and Digital India, a new Mobile App for PMGSY roads, “MeriSadak” was launched on 20th July, 2015 and integrated into OMMAS for user friendly and transparent Citizen Feedback and complaint redressal system. The citizens, with the use of this application, can express their concerns related to slow pace, abandoned work or bad quality of PMGSY works.

DAY-NRLM:- DAY-NRLM has a rigorous monitoring system in place which directs the department to get apprised regularly on the progress made by different States and UTs. The regular progress update of the DAY- NRLM is available through MIS portal and Bank Linkage portal. The MIS of sub schemes are also updated regularly. Monitoring is done on a regular basis by each program vertical with all the States and UTs. There is also review of the program undertaken on a quarterly basis on all components of the program and such meetings are conducted in presence of all senior officers of the Department. Performance Review Committee evaluates the performances of all States/UTs regularly every year. Annual Common Review Mission has also been one of the important monitoring mechanisms under DAY-NRLM. The monitoring processes help the Department to direct different States on the progress made. The National Level Regular Monitoring undertaken twice in a

year evaluate the program and recommendations are made. DAY-NRLM responds to the findings of the National Level Regular Monitoring for course corrective actions. In addition, State Anchors have been assigned to every State/UT for providing all technical support to the States/UTs. Some of the advanced States are also recognised as National Resource Organisations for providing support to the less advanced States. Through all such mechanisms efforts are made to bring the lagging States at par with the more advanced States.

DDU-GKY SKILLS:- Monitoring and evaluation is a critical component of DDU-GKY. This is particularly so because the program is run as a partnership between MoRD, SRLMs and both private and public agencies. Monitoring is a continuous measurement of progress (quantity and quality) for pre-training activities, during on-going trainings and post training activities. This involves checking and measuring progress, analyzing the situation and reacting to new events, opportunities, and issues. Monitoring of a DDU-GKY project is done by the Project Implementing Agencies, by the nodal agency implementing DDU-GKY in States, i.e., State Rural Livelihood Mission(SRLM)/State Skill Development Mission(SSDM) or States Technical Support Agencies and Central Technical Support Agency, i.e., NIRD&PR and NABCONS on behalf of MoRD, in their allocated States/UTs.

DDU-GKY follows concurrent monitoring system, in which all activities and processes are monitored based on milestone and periodicity defined as per Standard Operating Procedures. The monitoring is done through quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of performance of projects. Further, necessary updation and automation of monitoring process and activities are done, based on business process restructuring.

NSAP:- The States/UTs have been advised to designate a Nodal Officer at the State level to report the progress of implementation by coordinating with different departments concerned with the implementation of the schemes. The progress of implementation of the schemes is to be reported online by the State Nodal Department in a given monitoring format, every month. Non-reporting of the physical and financial progress reports is construed as lack of progress and therefore, may result in the non-release of central assistance. Data of almost all beneficiaries has been digitized on NSAP portal and release of funds has also been linked with the digitized data.

At the central level the scheme is monitored through quarterly Performance Review Committee (PRC) meetings, Nodal Officers Meetings, Visits of Area Officer and regular and special monitoring by the National Level Monitors (NLM).

State/UTs have to furnish Annual Verification reports regularly. States/UTs have been directed to conduct Social Audit at village level and submit its report to

the Ministry on regular basis. Separate guidelines of Social Audit have also been provided to States/UTs.

SPMRM:- As required by the Committee, the Program Division is continuously taking different steps to sharpen its monitoring system. Following are the steps so being taken:

- a. The RurbanSoft MIS platform provides transaction based dynamic updates of the use of the Critical Gap Funds (CGF). Every transaction made is linked to the respective sub-work, project, sub-component and component. Expenditure against any project is permissible only after appropriate approvals of the State Level Empowered Committee (SLEC) is obtained.
- b. For each approved project, entries are done in the Rurbansoft alongwith uploading the approval/sanction copies, geotagging, photographs of before and after stages. These are also verified by the District and State authorities before project closure. The Program Division also does sample checking of the geo-tagged images.
- c. To further facilitate integrated monitoring, all the payments to end vendors are being made through PFMS based transactions directly to the vendor's account. As per the Standard Operating Procedure followed under SPMRM, all the funds earmarked for the cluster are kept in a single State Nodal Account, instead of different accounts at different levels. When the fund release milestones are achieved, funds are transferred from the State Nodal account directly to the account of the vendor/ agency through PFMS transaction.
- d. Further, post settling down of the pandemic situation in the Country, an intensive social audit exercise is being planned to be undertaken for the Rurban Clusters to ensure community participatory monitoring of Mission progress.
- e. To make monitoring more feedback driven, a community feedback feature for respective projects / development changes being seen in the Cluster is proposed to be introduced through a digital and offline facilitation platform.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Recommendation (Serial No. 27)

The Committee are of the view that the grass-root experience of MPs can be much better utilized in the implementation of the Schemes, if they are actively involved in the consultative capacity. Being the Elected Representatives, the MPs

represent the sentiments and ethos of local population in an extremely efficient manner. Utilising the wealth of local knowledge in various aspect of the different schemes would perhaps only help to strengthen and enrich the policy formulations. Inspecting teams, DPR preparation teams, etc. should definitely avail the benefits of the local inputs from the MPs to have a real picture of the issues concerning that locality. In view of such scenario, the Committee recommend the DoRD to review its consultative mechanisms in such a way so that MPs are mandatorily kept in the loop of advisory set-ups.

Reply of the Government

MGNREGA:- The recommendation of the committee noted for further deliberation with States.

PMAY-G:- DISHA (District Development Coordination and Monitoring committee) is a monitoring mechanism to ensure that Schemes are implemented in accordance with the Programme Guidelines. The meetings of DISHA Committee provides a platform in which implementation of development schemes in a district can be discussed and taking the valuable inputs from the elected representative including Members of Parliament, strategy for greater impact of the programmes may be formulated. This committee is chaired by Hon'ble Member of Parliament.

PMGSY:- PMGSY Guidelines provides key role to the public representatives and Hon'ble Members of Parliament in the implementation of the programme including selection and construction of roads. Consultation with Members of Parliament is provisioned at both the DRRP finalization and Annual Proposals stages. In addition, at the stage of preparing DPRs, the DPIU conducts a transect walk along the road alignment, involving the local panchayat. State Governments are required to arrange joint inspection of ongoing as well as completed works under PMGSY by Hon'ble MPs, Hon'ble MLAs and representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Some important provisions of PMGSY-III guidelines, which provide detailed procedure for consultation with the Members of Parliament during the process of planning and selection of roads, are detailed below:

Para 3.6: The suggestions given by the Members of Parliament are to be given full consideration while finalizing the District Rural Roads Plan (DRRP).

Para 5.5: The Annual proposals will be based on the CUCPL following the Order of Priority (subject to PCI). However, it is possible that there are inadvertent errors or omissions, particularly in the selection of Through Routes. Accordingly, it is desirable to also associate public representatives while finalizing the selection of

road works in the annual proposals. The proposals of the Members of Parliament are required to be given full consideration, for this purpose:

The CUCPL should be sent to concern MPs with the request that their proposals on the selection of works out of the CUCPL should be sent to the District Panchayat. It is suggested that at least 15 clear days may be given for the purpose.

In order to ensure that the prioritization has some reference to the funding available, the size of proposals expected may also be indicated to the Members of Parliament while forwarding the CUCPL list to them. District wise allocation may be indicated to enable choice with the requisite geographical spread. It is expected that such proposals of Members of Parliament which adhere to the Order of Priority would be invariably accepted subject to consideration of equitable allocation of funds and need for upgradation.

The proposals received from the Members of Parliament by the stipulated date would be given full consideration in the District Panchayat which would record the reason in each case of non-inclusion. Such proposals that cannot be included would be communicated in writing to the Members of Parliament with reasons for non-inclusion of such proposals in each case. It would be preferable if the communication is issued from the Nodal Department at a senior level.

Para 7.1: After approval by the District Panchayat, the proposals would be forwarded by the PIU to the SRRDA. The PIU will at that time prepare the details of proposals forwarded by the Members of Parliament, and action taken thereon, in Proforma MP-I and MP-II and send it along with the proposals. In all cases where the proposal of an MP has not been included, cogent reasons shall be given based on the reasons given by the District Panchayat.

Para 7.3: The State Level Standing Committee (SLSC) would scrutinize the proposals to see that they are in accordance with the Guidelines and that the proposals of the Members of Parliament have been given full consideration.

In order to ensure that the State Government give due attention towards this aspect of the guidelines while submitting the proposals to the Ministry of Rural Development for sanction, the Ministry has issued a fresh advisory to the States on 2nd June, 2020. The State Governments have been advised, inter-alia, to communicate the final list of proposals in the order of priority to the Member of Parliament with the reasons for non-inclusion of certain roads in the proposals and incorporate their recommendations with the proposals sent to NRIDA/Ministry for approval.

Further, with a view to ensure effective participation of Hon'ble Members of Parliament, the following stipulations have been made with regard to laying of foundations stone and inauguration of PMGSY works: -

- a. All elected representatives associated with the programme should be duly invited to the foundation laying and inauguration ceremonies;
- b. The function should be held in a manner befitting social functions with due regard to protocol requirements, particularly in relation to Hon'ble Union Ministers and Hon'ble Ministers from States; and
- c. The foundation stone for a PMGSY road should be laid and the road should also be inaugurated by the Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) with the function presided over by the local Hon'ble Minister or other dignitary, as per the State Protocol.

Further, to promote transparency and effective monitoring, the Superintending Engineer concerned of the zone/region has been asked to request the concerned Member of Parliament and Zilla Panchayat Pramukh representing the zone/region, once in six months, to select any PMGSY project(s) for joint inspection.

DAY-NRLM:- At least one woman member from each identified rural poor household, is to be brought under the Self Help Group (SHG) network in a time bound manner. Special emphasis is particularly on vulnerable communities such as manual scavengers, victims of human trafficking, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and bonded labour.

The inclusion of the target group under NRLM is determined by a well-defined, transparent and equitable process of participatory identification of poor, at the level of the community. All households identified as poor through the PIP process is the NRLM Target Group and is eligible for all the benefits under the programme.

Target Group is identified through the Participatory Identification of Poor (PIP) method. The NRLM Target Group (NTG) derived through the PIP is de-linked from the BPL. The efforts to roll-out PIP in the States have begun. PIP needs to be a community-driven process. To ensure this, the first PIP exercise is conducted after the formation of the primary federation (6-12 months after village entry). The PIP is conducted at frequent intervals to revise the list of poor in the village. The list of poor identified through the PIP must be vetted by the Gram Sabha and approved by the Gram Panchayat. All the households in the PIP list are eligible to receive all benefits under NRLM.

The Hon'ble MP can give inputs & monitor the DAY-NRLM through DISHA meetings.

DDU-GKY SKILLS:- DDU-GKY is a demand driven scheme where in Action Plan of States are approved by Empowered Committee of NRLM at MoRD. States invite proposals for skill training of rural poor youth from Project Implementation Agencies (PIAs) and award training targets to PIAs taking into consideration existing skill gap and other priorities. As such, no DPRs or Projects are received in DoRD for finalisation / approval. District Development Coordination & Monitoring Committee (DISHA) is formed for better coordination & implementation of the programs in accordance with prescribed procedures & Guidelines. This committee is Chaired by Member of Parliament and oversees works of various schemes of DoRD including DDU-GKY

NSAP:- National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Ministry of Rural Development wherein monthly financial assistance is provided to elderly, widows and disabled persons belonging to BPL families. Schemes under NSAP are implemented in rural as well as urban areas of the Country. Identification of beneficiaries, sanction and disbursement of benefit under the scheme is done by the States/UTs. As per the guidelines of NSAP, if an applicant applies for any scheme of NSAP and in case of rejection of the application, the ground for rejection has to be recorded and intimated to the beneficiary with a copy to Gram Panchayat / Municipality. Such applicant may prefer first appeal to an Appellate Authority and the second appeal (review) to a Reviewing Authority. Both the Appellate and Reviewing Authorities shall be nominated by the State Governments, and their role should be publicized in such a manner that beneficiaries, public representatives, CSOs are aware.

SPMRM:- The Program Division acknowledges the suggestions of the Standing Committee. Based on the feedback from the august members of the Standing Committee, SPMRM is forming a **District Level Advisory Committee (DLAC)** led by the local MP both at the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, local MLAs and concerned PRI members. This DLAC would be over and above the existing provision in the State Institutional Framework (SIF) for the District Level Committee (DLC) headed by the District Collector/ Deputy Commissioner/ District Magistrate. This DLAC would provide a platform for active involvement of the elected representatives in the planning, implementation and supervision of SPMRM.

In addition, to seek guidance and active involvement of the Hon'ble MPs in the development of Rurban clusters, Hon'ble Minister (RD, PR, A&FW) has written letter to all the MPs having Rurban clusters in their constituencies in November, 2020.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

CHAPTER III

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

NIL

CHAPTER IV

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

Recommendation (Serial No. 2)

During the course of examination, the Committee observed that there is huge shortage of technical manpower at the level of Panchayats for implementing prominent schemes like MGNREGA, PMGSY etc. therefore, adversely impacting the progress of these schemes including causing delay in day-to-day formalities required at various stages of policy implementation. Thus, sensing the need of hour for the proper maintenance of strength at grass root level, especially Gram Panchayat, the Committee urge the DoRD to look into the matter with utmost seriousness and make all out efforts to coordinate with the nodal bodies for appointment of requisite officials' strength so that delay in the implementation of policies can be avoided.

Reply of the Government

"MGNREGA:- As per Section 18 of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, Act, the State Government shall make available to the District Programme Coordinator and the Programme Officers necessary staff and technical support as may be necessary for the effective implementation of the Scheme.

Central Government has directed the states to have "Junior Technical Assistant" (also known as Panchayat Technical Assistant/ technical Assistant) for every panchayat. Further Central government have trained "Bare foot Technician" (BFT) as per the demand of the states. Such BFT are trained for the civil work related technical matters and are extending support to Junior Engineers / JTAs in discharging their technical works. BFTs are available for Panchayats.

The cost of payment to the technical personnel including TAs and BFTs is part of the material component of the funds released to states. Further every state Government has been directed to have at the State level a chief engineer headed cell in case of those States whose annual expenditure under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS is more than Rs.1000 crore. In those cases where expenditure is less than Rs.1000 crore, the Cell shall be headed by a superintendent engineer rank official. Such positions shall be full time and filled on deputation from other technical departments of the State Government.

Central Government has directed that at the sub-state/division level, district level and block level, the State government should ensure that a regular executive engineer, assistant engineer, junior engineer respectively, have been assigned the fulltime responsibility to oversee all the engineering activities pertaining to execution of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS works.

Currently, as reported by states/UTs, a total 19,103 numbers of Junior Engineers/Assistant Engineers at block level and 45,010 Technical Assistants/GP Technical Assistant (Total- 64,113) at Gram panchayat are working in all States/UTs.

PMAY-G:- As per the Framework for Implementation (FFI) of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G), Although the construction of the house is to be undertaken by the beneficiary, State to ensure that the beneficiary is provided with the requisite guidance in the process and also closely monitored to ensure that construction of the house is completed. The States/ UTs shall set up a dedicated Programme Management Unit (PMU) at State, District, and Block level to take up the task of the implementation, monitoring, and supervision of the quality of construction.

Further as per FFI, every house sanctioned under PMAY-G to be tagged to a village-level functionary (Gram Rozgar Sahayak, Bharat Nirman Volunteers, SHGs, representatives of Civil Society Organizations, or any other village level worker), whose task is to follow up with the beneficiary and facilitate construction.

The expenditure towards hiring of these personnel are met from the Administrative expenses of the scheme. The administrative fund of the scheme was 4% at the time of inception of the scheme in the year 2016 which was later reduced to 2%. This has made it difficult to place the full complement of manpower at relevant levels.

The proposal for increasing the administration cost from 2% to 4% is under consideration by the MoRD. Once, the same is approved, would facilitate recruitment of adequate staff for the program implementation at various levels including at the field level.

PMGSY:- State Governments and UTs Administration are implementing the PMGSY programme. The PMGSY roads are executed by Block level/ Subdivision level officers and supervised by the district level/ circle level officers of the implementing department of the State governments. This official machinery is responsible for the implementation of PMGSY projects.

To help the State governments in the preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), MoRD has permitted the State Governments to prepare the DPRs through outsourcing by engaging qualified consultants for the preparation of DPRs of bridge and road works under PMGSY duly following the Quality Cum Cost Based Selection System (QCBS). Also, the State Governments were permitted to engage Project Implementation Consultants (PICs) to improve the quality of roads and speed of construction activities.

The position of staff available at PIU level and State level for implementing PMGSY is being reviewed during the Pre EC and EC meetings and also during monthly review meetings. State Governments are requested to fill all the vacancies at block level/ district level either through transfer among their departmental officials or on deputation drawing officials from other engineering organizations of the State Governments for the effective implementation of the scheme. Also, the States are permitted to outsource the qualified personals for analyzing the inspection reports

submitted by the State Quality Monitors (SQMs) and National Quality Monitors (NQMs) at the State level. The pace of execution of works is monitored through various regional review meetings and the quality of works is also monitored through SQMs and NQMs.

Under PMGSY efforts have been made to provide training to various officers related to DPRs preparation, works management, contract management, quality management, construction of bridges and Road safety, etc., through reputed institutions like CRRRI, IAHE, AITD, IITs, NITs, and various reputed engineering institutions. The need-based training programs are organized through experienced faculty at the district level, at the regional levels, and also at the State and Central level for officers of all categories ranging from Chief Engineers up to Junior Engineers.

MoRD is making consistent efforts through the State Governments to fill the vacancies at various levels and also for capacity building of staff involved in the PMGSY programme to implement/ execute the road & bridge works efficiently and qualitatively.

DAY-NRLM:- Till March 2021, DAY-NRLM is being implemented in 6517 blocks of all States and UTs and is working with 7.52 crore rural households by promoting 69.08 lakh Self Help Groups towards strengthening the livelihoods of the poor. DAY-NRLM has adopted the policy to deploy the community resource persons (CRPs), a experienced community practitioner to support the programme implantation at the village level. A total of 3.30 lakh CRPs has been deployed, mostly by SHG Federation.

DDU-GKY SKILLS:- Projects under DDU-GKY scheme are being implemented by the Project Implementing Agencies (PIA) on their engagement by State Nodal Agencies. The nodal agency implementing DDU-GKY in States are State Rural Livelihood Mission(SRLM)/ State Skill Development Mission(SSDM). There is no requirement or provision of manpower at Panchayat level under DDU-GKY.

NSAP:- Under the NSAP Schemes, technical support is required for identification / verification / selection / registration of new beneficiaries and digitisation of data of beneficiaries, DBT payment of pensions and other financial benefits etc. Besides, trained manpower is also required for social audit and IEC activities under the scheme. All these activities are completed by State Governments through Block / Gram Panchayat level functionaries. The State /UT Governments are permitted to utilize the 3% of the NSAP funds, released during the year towards administrative expenses to streamline implementation of schemes under NSAP. The administrative funds may be utilized for training of Nodal Officers, officials of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) and Urban Local Bodies. States have already been informed in this regard.

SPMRM:- Under SPMRM, as per the Mission's Framework of Implementation, two professionals are to be engaged at the Cluster level and three at the district level - who shall provide the required technical support to the panchayats in the cluster. Presently, 302 out of 1328 such required professionals have been recruited after

regular follow-ups by the Ministry. Even after regular reminders, 13 States/UTs have not onboarded any professional at the District or Cluster.

2. Provisioning of technical support at the panchayat level therefore, continues to be a challenge under the Mission. States/UTs have raised concerns with respect to non availability of adequate administrative funds for such recruitment.

3. The Ministry has a three pronged agenda to fulfill these technical support vacancies as per detail below, which has been taken up with the concerned authorities.

- iv. Provisioning of Rs. 60 lakh / cluster as additional administrative budget for the coming 2 financial years (proposed in the EFC Memorandum without any increase in the overall budget outlay). This will ensure that the States/UTs complete the remaining requirements at the District and Cluster level.
- v. NITI Aayog has recommended that a Rurban Fellow be posted at the Cluster level to provide hand-holding, training and intensive technical support to the Panchayats in the cluster. This is proposed to be undertaken through the Mission's Innovation Fund.
- vi. Mentor Institutions (India's leading institutions specializing in regional planning and economic development) are being onboarded (28 Institute of repute till date) through nomination by the States. These institutions will also provide technical support to the panchayats and the clusters for spatial planning and other mission related activities."

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 8 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 4)

While evaluating the performance of MGNREGA during the last financial year, the Committee note the delay in the release of 40% component of fund meant for the wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers and materials. MGNREGA is a flagship welfare oriented programme of the Government through which willing job-less rural population get a chance to improve their life through the earnings under this programme. At the time of economic distress caused due to COVID-19 pandemic in particular, there was an increase in the demand of work under MGNREGA. However, inordinate delay in the release of funds for skilled/semi-skilled workers under MGNREGA is a huge discouraging aspect and does not go in consonance

with the underlying spirit of the scheme. It has been noticed that due to such contingency, skilled/semi-skilled workers get discouraged to take up the works under MGNREGA for which not only the works suffer but also the idea behind providing works to the rural population get defeated. Therefore, the Committee are of the view that the Department should appropriately modify it's approach and ensure that the 40% part of the fund also reaches on time so that the wages are paid on time and the works get completed too. Hence, the Committee strongly urge the Department to view this lacuna seriously and entail all measures for the timely release of funds.

Reply of the Government

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS) is a demand driven wage employment programme. Fund release to the States/UTs is a continuous process and Central Government is committed to making funds available keeping in view the demand for work. The Ministry releases funds periodically in two tranches with each tranche consisting of one or more installments based on " agreed to Labour Budget ", opening balance, pace of utilization of funds, pending liabilities of the previous year, if any, timely submission of relevant documents by the States and overall performance.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 11 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 5)

One of the often repeated and pertinent issue that has always attracted the attention of the Committee is that of the existing disparity between the wage rate assured under MGNREGA in different States/UTs. It is still beyond comprehension as to how is it possible that a single scheme having the provision of hundred days of guaranteed work to willing person from the rural settings can have different yard-stick when it comes to the payment modalities across the length and breadth of the country. The Committee further observe that as per clause (d) of Article 39 of the Constitution directing certain principles of Policy to be followed by the State provides that there is equal pay for equal work for both man and woman. Hence under the directive there cannot be different wages for different States under the MGNREGA.

In view of Article 39 of the Constitution and to have parity in wages, the Committee strongly recommend that MGNREGA beneficiaries must be paid wages without any disparity in order to bring equality in wages under MGNREGA across all States/UTs urgently.

Reply of the Government

Mahatma Gandhi NREGS is a demand driven wage employment Scheme which provides livelihood security, i.e. fall back option for livelihoods for the rural households, in the situation when regular employment is absent.

The wage rate for the scheme Mahatma Gandhi NREG Act 2005 is mandated in sec.6 of the Act.

Sec 6 of the Act is reproduced as below:

6. Wage rate *-(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (11 of 1948), the Central Government may, by notification, specify the wage rate for the purposes of this Act:*

Provided that different rates of wages may be specified for different areas:

Provided further that the wage rate specified from time to time under any such notification shall not be at a rate less than sixty rupees per day.

(2) Until such time as a wage rate is fixed by the Central Government in respect of any area in a State, the minimum wage fixed by the State Government under section 3 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (11 of 1948) for agricultural labourers, shall be considered as the wage rate applicable to that area.

As per section 6(1) of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (Mahatma Gandhi NREGA), the Ministry of Rural Development notifies Mahatma Gandhi NREGA wage rate every year for States/UTs. To compensate the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers against inflation, the Ministry of Rural Development revises the wage rate every year based on change in Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labour (CPI-AL). As the CPI (AL) varies across the states/UTs, so wage rate is different across the States/UTs.

The wage rate is made applicable from 1st April of each Financial Year.

Further as schedule -I of the Act – following are the provisions to ensure equal wage payment to men and women –

Para 17: The state Government shall link the wages, without any gender bias, with the quantity of work done and it shall be paid according to the rural schedule of

rates fixed after time and motion studies for different types of work and different seasons and revised periodically.

Para18. A separate schedule of rate shall be finalized for women, the elderly people with disabilities and people with debilitating ailments so to improve their participation through productive work.

Para 19(a) The scheduled of rates of wages for various unskilled labourers shall be fixed up so that an adult person worked for eight hours which include an hour of rest will earn a wage which is equal to the stipulated wage rate.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 14 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 17)

With grave concern, the Committee note the widespread prevalence of manipulative behaviour of the contractors at the bidding stage to acquire the tender of projects under PMGSY by quoting 25-30% lower amount than the minimum bidding amount. This obnoxious approach by the seemingly unscrupulous contractors in nexus with the erring officials has a cascading detrimental effect over the quality of construction of roads under PMGSY. Such contractors who initially acquire bid at lower rates, in the garb of profiteering further decrease the quality of roads to increase their margin of profits. This is a rampant criminal strategy which does not augur well for the effectiveness of the scheme. The Committee are of the view that the DoRD should bring out a mechanism at least by which a certain quantum of amount component equivalent to the difference between bidding and actual quoting is kept aside as security and may be released only after ensuring that the constructed road satisfy the quality norms. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend the DoRD to entail all measures for curbing the down-tendering in PMGSY and review its provision to incorporate the security component for quality assurance of roads.

Reply of the Government

Works are awarded in accordance with the provisions as contained in Standard Bidding Document, Programme Guidelines, General Financial Rules and CVC guidelines which allows the works to be allotted to the bidder whose bid value has been found to be the lowest.

Relevant provisions of SBD and Programme Guidelines are given below:

PMGSY Guidelines:

Para 11.1

After the project proposals have been cleared and Technical Sanction has been accorded, the Executing Agency would invite tenders. The well-established procedure for tendering, through competitive bidding, would be followed for all projects. All the projects scrutinized by the STA and cleared by the Ministry, will be tendered as such, and no changes shall be made in the work without the prior approval of the NRIDA. The States will follow the Standard Bidding Document (SBD), prescribed by the NRIDA, for all the tenders.

Para11.2

Since PMGSY places high emphasis on time and quality, States shall take steps to increase competition and to realistically assess Bid capacity. To this end States shall ensure that all Tender notices are put out on the Internet under the OMMAS. Centralised evaluation of Bid capacity will be done to give effect to the provision of the SBD. States may empower the SRRDA to call and decide tenders in the interest of speeding up the process. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

Para 11.3

The tendering and contracting process and time periods will be as per the SBD (please refer to Para 13.1 also). The State shall at all times update the OMMAS tendering module to enable downloading of tender documents. Details of contracts entered into shall also be immediately entered into database.

Provisions Of SBD:

Para 25: Examination of Bids and Determination of Responsiveness

25.1: During the detailed evaluation of "Part-I of Bids", the Employer will determine whether each Bid (a) meets the eligibility criteria defined in Clauses 3 and 4; (b) has been properly signed; (c) is accompanied by the required securities; and (d) is substantially responsive to the requirements of the bidding documents. During the detailed evaluation of the "Part-II of Bids", the responsiveness of the bids will be further determined with respect to the remaining bid conditions, i.e., priced bill of quantities, technical specifications and drawings.

25.2: A substantially responsive "Financial Bid" is one which conforms to all the terms, conditions, and specifications of the bidding documents, without material deviation or reservation. A material deviation or reservation is one (a) which affects in any substantial way the scope, quality, or performance of the Works; (b) which limits in any substantial way, inconsistent with the bidding documents, the

Employer's rights or the Bidder's obligations under the Contract; or (c) whose rectification would affect unfairly the competitive position of other bidders presenting substantially responsive bids.

25.3: If a Bid is not substantially responsive, it will be rejected by the Employer, and may not subsequently be made responsive by correction or withdrawal of the nonconforming deviation or reservation.

Evaluation and Comparison of Bids

Para 26.1: The Employer will evaluate and compare only the bids determined to be substantially responsive in accordance with Clause 25 of ITB.

Para 26.2: In evaluating the bids, the Employer will determine for each Bid, the evaluated Bid price by adjusting the bid price through making an appropriate adjustment for any other acceptable variation, deviations or price modifications offered in accordance with sub-clause 21 of ITB.

Para 26.3 : *If the Bid of the successful Bidder is seriously unbalanced in relation to the Engineer's estimate of the cost of work to be performed under the contract, the Employer may require the Bidder to produce detailed price analysis for any or all items of the Bill of Quantities, to demonstrate the internal consistency of those prices. After evaluation of the price analysis, the Employer may require that the amount of the Performance Security set forth in Clause 30 of ITB be increased at the expense of the successful Bidder to a level sufficient to protect the Employer against financial loss in the event of default of the successful Bidder under the Contract. The amount of the increased Performance Security shall be decided at the sole discretion of the Employer, which shall be final, binding and conclusive on the bidder.*

Award Criteria :

Para 27.1: Subject to Clause 30 of ITB, the Employer will award the Contract to the Bidder whose Bid has been determined: (i) to be substantially responsive to the bidding documents and who has offered the lowest evaluated Bid price, provided that such Bidder has been determined to be (a) eligible in accordance with the provisions of Clause 3 of ITB, and (b) qualified in accordance with the provisions of Clause 4 of ITB; and (ii) to be within the available bid capacity adjusted to account for his bid price which is evaluated the lowest in any of the packages opened earlier than the one under consideration.

It could thus be seen that the SBD and Programme Guidelines does not debar quoting the amount below the estimated value. However in order to ensure that Government interest is protected it has been laid down in the SBD that *If the Bid of the successful Bidder is seriously unbalanced in relation to the Engineer's estimate of the cost of work to be performed under the contract, the Employer may require the Bidder to produce detailed price analysis for any or all items of the Bill of Quantities,*

to demonstrate the internal consistency of those prices. After evaluation of the price analysis, the Employer may require that the amount of the Performance Security set forth in Clause 30 of ITB be increased at the expense of the successful Bidder to a level sufficient to protect the Employer against financial loss in the event of default of the successful Bidder under the Contract. The amount of the increased Performance Security shall be decided at the sole discretion of the Employer, which shall be final, binding and conclusive on the bidder.

The tendering/ procurement process is done by the states. States have to make provision of asking for increased performance guarantee if the bids received are below a certain threshold. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the contractor to maintain road for a period of 5 years. The Ministry is implementing an online system (e-Marg) for monitoring of maintenance works, wherein all the payments have to be done through this system. This will further improve the maintenance work during the defect liability period.

There is a three tier quality control and quality assurance mechanism already in place to deal with the issue of construction of poor quality of road by the contractor at PIU level, State level and National level. Further there are provisions in the Standard Bidding Document of NRIDA to Black list such contractors who do not complete works as per specifications laid down in the bid document.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 23 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 19)

The success of any welfare oriented Scheme rests firmly on the result of its implementation at grass root level and not merely through the myopic vision of data analysis. The Committee are of firm resonance with this sentiment but are disappointed on observing the performance of the projects taken up under PMGSY. The roads constructed under this Yojana at numerous sites are not at all upto the prescribed norms and standards and glaring loopholes in the construction and quality of materials are apparently visible. Not only this, the PMGSY roads are witnessing visible deterioration, even if they survive five years of the warranty period. The Committee note that the two separate issues starting initially with the quality of construction and later the maintenance aspect, both require equally strict regulation. In view of this scenario, the Committee strongly recommend DoRD to ensure that the quality norms as prescribed under the provisions of PMGSY are not at all compromised and the roads built have strong durability. Moreover, DoRD is also

expected to ensure due coordination with the Nodal agencies and requisite surveillance for proper maintenance of the post constructed PMGSY roads.

Reply of the Government

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

As a measure of enhancing the focus on maintenance of roads during the defect liability period (five years from the date of completion of road) and also streamlining the delivery of routine maintenance of PMGSY roads, eMARG has been implemented in all the states. eMARG is an online platform, used by all the states, that ensures maintenance of PMGSY works for five years since the date of completion and upkeep of roads in good condition. eMARG has been implemented in all the states, ensuring a universal system for maintaining quality of completed works. System and procedures of quality monitoring is consistently refined to increase the accountability of the PIU in ensuring the quality of works.

To take care of the maintenance of rural roads, PMGSY III guidelines stipulates that States shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India before launching of PMGSY III in the concerned State for providing adequate funds for maintenance of roads constructed/ upgraded under PMGSY for initial five years routine maintenance, and for further five year routine maintenance including periodic renewal as per requirement.

Special emphasis is being given to quality and maintenance of DLP and post DLP roads under PMGSY. During the PRC meeting, EC and Pre EC meetings, monthly review and other meetings, it has become focal point of review with states in terms of routine maintenance, length renewal and expenditure incurred.

NRIDA in collaboration with ILO has prepared a Policy Framework for the development of rural roads maintenance policy. The Policy Framework along with a Guidance Note for the States has been shared with the States since Rural Roads Maintenance Policy needs to get adopted and notified at state level. The policy and

guidance note would be helpful for the road agencies of the States to have a clear understanding about expectations for rural road maintenance and intentions of States to sustain the created network of rural roads. All the States/UTs except UT of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have notified Rural Road Maintenance Policy. It has, however, been observed that the State Governments are not making adequate provisions in their budget for maintenance of the rural roads constructed under PMGSY and, as a result, the roads constructed with huge investment of public money deteriorate in the absence of the proper maintenance and require replacement/relaying with huge cost.

With the advent of fund sharing mechanism 60:40 and 90:10 from April 2015, the burden on States has increased. In addition, the States are also bearing the entire cost of maintenance, the costs of utility shifting and forest clearance. The cost overrun, if any, other than expenditure mentioned in the proposal is also borne by the concerned State Government from their own budgetary resources. Further, the maintenance liability on the States is increasing with the construction of more roads under PMGSY and completion of DLP of the roads already constructed.

Due to increasing construction and maintenance liability on the States, the State Governments are not able to make adequate provisions in their budget for maintenance of the rural roads constructed under PMGSY.

As on date, Rs. 4,123.13 crore (since 2016-17 to 2020-21) has been released as Financial Incentive to the States/UTs (best performing States/UTs that achieve the targets allocated to them, within the prescribed timeframe). These funds are exclusively meant for periodic maintenance of roads already constructed under PMGSY.

In order to ensure to improve quality the following further steps have been taken:

- For the financial year 2021-22, target has been set to conduct 15,000 NQM inspections and 85,000 SQM inspections, subject to COVID situation in the field.
- SQM inspections are being conducted on each 5 km section length, as compared to the whole road length earlier.
- 49 New NQMs have been empanelled and efforts are being made to increase the number of NQMs even further.
- Specialized NQMs and SQMs are deputed for inspection of bridges.

- Uploading of Geo-tagged photographs has been made mandatory for field laboratory, before any payment.
- Payment of cement concrete roads are made only after verification of core test results.
- Comprehensive guidelines have been issued for empanelment and performance evaluation of SQMs.

(DoRD O.M. No. G-20011/3/2021-B&A dated 14/06/2021)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 26 of Chapter I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

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

NIL

**NEW DELHI;
03 August, 2021
12 Sravana, 1943 (Saka)**

**PRATAPRAO JADHAV
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on Rural Development**

ANNEXURE I**STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2020-2021)****EXTRACTS OF THE MINUTES OF THE TWELFTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 03 AUGUST, 2021**

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1555 hrs. in Committee Room. 'B,'
Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe (PHA), New Delhi.

Prataprao Jadhav -- Chairperson

MEMBERS***Lok Sabha***

2. Shri C. N. Annadurai
3. Shri Rajveer Diler
4. Shri Vijay Kumar Dubey
5. Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuria
6. Dr. Mohammad Jawed
7. Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi
8. Shri Narendra Kumar
9. Shri Janardan Mishra
10. Shri B. Y. Raghavendra
11. Shri Talari Rangaiah
12. Smt. Gitaben Vajesingbhai Rathva
13. Smt. Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah
14. Shri Vivek Narayan Shejwalkar
15. Dr. Alok Kumar Suman
16. Shri Shyam Singh Yadav

Rajya Sabha

17. Shri Shamsheer Singh Dullo
18. Shri Iranna Kadadi
19. Shri Sujeet Kumar
20. Shri Rathwa Naranbhai Jemlabhai

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. Shri D. R. Shekhar | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. Shri. A. K. Shah | - | Director |
| 3. Smt. Emma C. Barwa | - | Additional Director |
| 4. Shri Nishant Mehra | - | Deputy Secretary |

At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened for consideration and adoption of the XXX Draft Action Taken Reports on Demands for Grants (2021-22) in respect of (i) Department of Rural Development (ii) XXX XXX XXX, (iii) XXX XXX XXX, (iv) XXX XXX XXX.

2. The Committee considered and adopted the Draft Reports without any amendment and authorised the Chairperson to present Reports to the House.

The Committee then adjourned.

XXX Not related to the Draft Report

APPENDIX - II

[Vide para 4 of Introduction of Report]

**ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE THIRTEENTH REPORT (17TH LOK SABHA)
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

- I. Total number of recommendations: 27
- II. Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:
Serial Nos. 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
Total: 22
Percentage:- 81.5%
- III. Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of replies of the Government:
Serial No. NIL
Total: NIL
Percentage:- 0%
- IV. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:
Serial No. 2, 4, 5, 17, 19
Total: 05
Percentage:- 18.5%
- V. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited:
Serial No. NIL
Total: NIL
Percentage:- 0%