

Role of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in Rural Development

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How to cite this article:

J Balamurugan. Role of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in Rural Development. *J Soc Welfare Manag.* 2020;12(2):77-82

Abstract

Poverty in India is a serious problem for which many poverty eradication programs have been run by the government time to time. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) is one of them which are defined in term of 'road connectivity' for rural poor remedies by policy makers. A successful steps has been made to lessen the poverty by connecting the rural area through PMGSY. The objective of this study is to understand the realism of PMGSY in rural development. Under this study, an attempt has been made to get the impact and how much this program has been supportive in increasing the income and employment opportunities for non-agricultural labourers. The result of this study shows that PMGSY have a significant impact on increasing the employment and income opportunities of the people. This study will contribute the role of the road connectivity in the rural employment and income opportunities.

Keyword: Road Connectivity; Rural Development; Poverty Alienation; Employment; Education; Health; Livelihood.

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Introduction

Poverty in India is a serious problem, for which many poverty eradication programs have been run by the government. However it has been noticed that such schemes cannot be permanent solutions to the employment problem because of the very high cost and less productivity nature of the type of works taken up under such programmes. The ultimate solution for the employment problems in rural areas lies in creating infrastructure, better connectivity and increased employment opportunities by connecting such areas to the markets and to places

of employment in abundance. The availability of roads will simplify more business in the villages thereby growing the job opportunities as well as helping people to travel outside for jobs. It has been observed that better connectivity can also result in increase in production capacities of the existing enterprises in the villages as well as creation of new opportunities in the villages, both will result in more people getting jobs in these enterprises.¹

Rural roads play an important role in creating employment for unskilled workers and social awareness. Effective transport system is essential for sustainable economic development and modernization; there is no doubt that transport has an important role in the overall development of the country's economy.² This is not only the main infrastructure for the development process, but also plays an important role in maintaining national integration. High rate of growth will definitely indicate high transport demand. It is believed that the growth of GDP and transport sector is a progressive relationship. Policy maker have been

given great significance to road connectivity for rural poor remedies. Efforts have been made to reduce poverty by connecting the rural area with road connectivity through the launch of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in 2000.

The empirical evidence at the macro-economic level of the significant correlation between road improvements and GDP per capita growth is extensive. Yet, the distributional effect of road projects, particularly the impact on the poor, is also needed to be considered. In the absence of baseline data, it is very difficult to disentangle the effects from the road developments from those of other interferences and overall growth of the economy. A well-planned valuation of the impacts of the program was therefore felt necessary.

Rural roads provide basic inputs for all-round socio-economic development of the rural areas. The construction of roads brings numerous socio-economic benefits to the rural areas and outcome in forming a strong support for the agro-based economy. The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) is planned to support Government of India's agenda to encourage poverty alleviation in rural areas by helping economic development and providing access to basic services that can recover the quality of life of the rural poor. It is believed that eradicating the isolation of populated areas with previously limited accessibility can deliver the population better access to critical goods, as well as essential social services. It also produces the chance for development of these amenities in their areas. Improved access to jobs provides chances for the poor to more fully engage in the economy and thus gain from the benefits of growth.

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) was launched on 25th December, 2000 and has now been under implementation for over nine years. It is a hundred percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme, which mainly aims to provide road connectivity to over 1.60 lakh eligible unconnected residences. The works are implemented by the State Governments and supervised by the Ministry of Rural Development through the National Rural Roads Development Agency (NRRDA) set up for this purpose. Objectives of the study are to assess the impact of PMGSY roads on the local areas and on economic sectors in general and in particular on:

- Agricultural growth, particularly, in growing market access for agricultural products;
- Income and employment generation (both direct and indirect, in short-run and in long-run);

- Access to healthcare, education and other facilities and the resultant outcomes;
- Gender empowerment and upliftment of socially and economically disadvantaged sections;
- Poverty reduction.

Literature Review

The number of literature available on the issue under consideration is very limited for the study area. However, very few similar studies are available. A small review of the available literature is presented below.

Ministry of Rural Development (2015)¹, "Impact Assessment Study of Improved Rural Road Maintenance System under PMGSY" findings of the study are "Significant improvements were found in increased employment and income amongst households engaged in other occupation than their own farms. In the habitations where roads have not been maintained a marginal decrease in the gains achieved due to better connectivity was noticed. The savings in travel time to the place of employment was found higher in case of sample habitations where the roads are maintained as compared to control habitations. Better availability of transport facility had an impact and poor maintenance of roads has adversely impacted them".

Ghosh, M (2017)², "Infrastructure and Development in Rural India" concluded in his article "Among various infrastructure indicators, electricity, irrigation and roads have been most important for agricultural productivity and output growth, poverty reduction and human development in terms of improvements in health and education. Access to the quality of roads in bringing socio-economic changes in rural areas is more important than the quality of roads."

Jain, P (2014)³, with titled "Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana: A path to Inclusive Growth of MP" mention under impacts of PMGSY "After the construction of PMGSY roads, an improvement in the employment situation in terms of more job opportunities was observed. A lot of housewives were mentioned that they have started small scale industries like making, pickle, papad, bidi, sivai, jhadu etc. And after that also revealed that rural roads have reduced the rapid growth rate of poverty and have improved the participation of people in the state's development process.

Biswas, Rand Anwaruzzaman KM (2018)⁴, "Impact of PMGSY on Socio-Economic Development: A Case Study of Chandpur-

Kushabaria Road, Murshidabad District, West Bengal" According to the researcher "There is a positive impact on employment generation by the PMGSY road as 78% respondents affirmed responded and about 22% respondents say that it has no impact.

Parida, A. (2014)⁵, "Role of Rural Road Connectivity (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) in Accelerating Development and Improving Quality of Life". According to the researcher Growth with social justice have been basic objective of planning in India. The Government views Rural Development as critical to India's economic and Social Development. The policy objective is to achieve "Samagra Gramin Vikas" addressing all the issue of basic needs of the people in the rural areas. In this direction the PMGSY aims at improving the life-both individuals and community of the rural people

Development of PMGSY

According to the vikaspedia⁶, the PMGSY is not only a key component of Rural Development by promoting access to economic and social services and thereby generating increased agricultural incomes and productive job opportunities in India, it is also as a result, a key element in ensuring sustainable poverty alleviation.

PMGSY Phase-1

PMGSY-Phase I was launched in December, 2000 as a hundred percent centrally sponsored scheme with an objective to provide all-weather road connectivity to eligible unconnected habitation of designated population size (500+ in plain areas and 250+ in North-East, hill, tribal and desert areas, 00 - 249 population in LWE districts as per Census, 2001). Also, upgradation (to prescribed standards) of the current roads in those Districts where all the eligible residences of the chosen population size have been provided all-weather road connectivity was to be taken up. However, upgradation is not central to the program. In upgradation works, priority was to be given to through Routes of the Rural Core Network, which carry more traffic. Under the scheme, 1,35,436 habitations were targeted for providing road connectivity and 3.68 lakh km. for upgradation of existing rural roads (including 40 % renewal of rural roads to be funded by the States) in order to ensure full farm to market connectivity.

PMGSY Phase-2

The Phase II of PMGSY was approved during May, 2013. While the ongoing PMGSY - I continued,

under PMGSY phase II, the roads already built for village connectivity was to be upgraded to enhance rural infrastructure. For the 12th Five Year Plan period a target of 50,000 Km length under PMGSY-II. 75 per cent of the cost of the upgradation was by the Centre and 25 per cent by the state. For hill states, desert areas, Schedule V areas and Naxal-affected districts, 90 per cent of cost was borne by the Centre.

Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Area

Government launched Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism affected Areas in the year 2016 as a separate vertical under PMGSY to provide all-weather road connectivity with necessary culverts and cross-drainage structures in 44 districts (35 are worst LWE affected districts and 09 are adjoining districts), which are critical from security and communication point of view. Under the project, construction/upgradation of 5,411.81 km road and 126 bridges/Cross Drainage works was targeted to be taken up at an estimated cost of Rs.11,724.53 crore in the above district. The fund sharing pattern of LWE road project is in the ratio of 60:40 between the Centre and States for all States except for eight North Eastern and three Himalayan States (Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) for which it is 90:10.

PMGSY Phase-3

The Phase III was approved by the Cabinet during July 2019. It involves consolidation of Through Routes and Major Rural Links connecting habitations to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals. Under the PMGSY-III Scheme, it is proposed to consolidate 1,25,000 Km road length in the States. The duration of the scheme is 2019-20 to 2024-25. The funds would be shared in the ratio of 60:40 between the Centre and State for all States except for 8 North Eastern and 3 Himalayan States (Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) for which it is 90:10.

Findings

Connectivity Provided by PMGSY

In order to assess the success of the scheme, information on type of road access before PMGSY, changes in all season motorized access after the construction of the road and resultant improvements in public transport facilities in these habitations were collected and analyzed.

- PMGSY has benefitted mostly those habitations, which were acutely deprived of all-weather road connectivity. Before the PMGSY road was constructed, more than one third of the habitations were connected by only earth work roads, nearly one third of the habitations were connected by earth work roads though motorable and few of the habitations had gravel/water bound macadam layer road access to the habitations. One fourth of the habitations had all weather road connectivity even before PMGSY road was constructed for them.
- Overwhelming of the habitations covered in the states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh have reported improvement in terms of all season motorized access after PMGSY road was constructed. In Jharkhand, where none of the habitations had motorized access during all season, now all the habitations are having all season motorized access.
- Improvements have also happened in terms of public transport facilities to these habitations. In one third of the habitations where prior to the construction of PMGSY road no bus transport was available, have at least one bus plying in a week after the PMGSY road was constructed. Similarly half of the habitations have jeeps/cars coming there after the PMGSY road was constructed. In almost two fifth of the habitations light trucks have started plying after the PMGSY road was constructed.

Impact on Agriculture

It is believed that better connectivity resulting in easier access to markets and upgraded flow of information can attribute to many improvements in agricultural production and incomes of the farmers in the area.

- Enhanced connectivity can result in changes in cropping patterns followed by the farmers in the area. It reflects that there has been an increase of cropped area under vegetables, fruits and other cash crops after the PMGSY road was constructed.
- Number of households growing cereals in their land have also reported increased use of fertilizers after the PMGSY road was constructed. Some of the households rising cereals also reported increased use of improved seeds post PMGSY. Most of the households have reported increase in quantity of production post PMGSY.
- The road connectivity under PMGSY also has

an impact of the marketing related factors; roads have brought markets to the villages and facilitated farmers accessing the markets easily. Farmers growing cereals have shifted from selling their produce to on-farm gate local traders to outside traders after PMGSY road was constructed whereas this change was reported by only few farmers in the control habitations.

- Improved agricultural incomes and prosperity in the areas are also reflected by the fact that in the connected habitations.

Impact on Employment Generation

The ultimate solution for the employment problems in rural areas lies in creating infrastructure, better connectivity and increased employment opportunities by connecting such areas to the markets and to places of employment in abundance.

- More than one third households reported increase in number of days of employment in the principal occupation of their earning members post PMGSY.
- Above half of the persons who reported their principal occupation as construction labour have reported increase in number of days of employment.
- Some of the households have reported that at least one of their earning members has shifted their place of employment from within the habitation to outside the habitation.
- Only few of them reported change in their principal occupation after the road was constructed.

Impact of Income and Poverty Alleviation

In the absence of roads the rural populace is deprived of reducing to opportunities and opportunities reaching them. The aim behind providing all season connectivity under PMGSY has been to link these areas to the markets and other facilities so as to counter their deprivation and help them improve their incomes and alleviate themselves from the burden poverty.

- More than one third of the households reported increase in the gross value realized of the total production as compare to the gross value realized before construction of the PMGSY road. Two third of the households reported an increase in the average annual income in their principal occupations.

- Some states like Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Sikkim, and Tamil Nadu have reported comparatively less number of households reporting an increase in average annual income in all occupations as compared to their average annual income during the year before the construction of the PMGSY road.
- In overwhelming habitations the respondents have reported that there has been an overall increase in the income levels of the people in the habitations as a result of the PMGSY road.
- In order to assess the changes and improvements in the quality of the life of the households living in the habitations after the construction of PMGSY road, an assessment of their status on 13 socio-economic parameters used in the BPL Census 2002 was conducted.
- Some of the households have reported owing better dwelling unit as compared to the type of house they owned before the construction of PMGSY road. Few habitations there has been new enterprise/industry setup, feasibility of which was possible only after the new connectivity was provided.
- Both in and out migration has increased due to the road connectivity.

Impact on Health Aspects

Better roads provide faster all season access to the health facilities and time remains very crucial in case of health emergencies.

- Most of the habitations were such where the road has provided all weather connectivity to the nearest PHC. Majority of the habitations have also been provided all weather connectivity to the nearest Government hospital now and greatest habitations have all weather connectivity to nearest private hospital/nursing home after PMGSY road was constructed. All these habitations did not have a pucca road to reach these facilities before the road was constructed.
- Majority of the habitations there has been a reduction in the travel time to reach the nearest health facility in case of maternity emergencies.
- In case of highest habitations there has been a reduction in the travel time to reach the nearest health facility in case of serious physical injuries/accidents.
- Some of the habitations also reported that there

has been an increase in availability/visits of government doctors to the habitations after the road was constructed.

Impact on Education

The provision of an all season road in the village facilities creation of infrastructure, institutions, increase in manpower and other improvement in the educational aspects. In order to assess the changes in the sample habitations, details on status of education facilities before and after PMGSY road.

- It was found that there has been an increase in number of Anganwadi centers in some of the sample habitations after the construction the PMGSY road.
- A countable of the habitations provided connectivity under PMGSY have reported increase in number of school's post PMGSY.
- One fifth of the habitations have reported that after the construction of PMGSY road, there has been a regular provision for mid-day meals for the students in their habitations.
- The male children of eligible age were enrolled in a college before PMGSY road which increased. The female children were enrolled in a college which was reduced.
- Two third of the habitations families in these habitations are willing to send more of their girls for higher schools now after the road connectivity have improved.

The overall findings is the significant impact has found in increasing in employment opportunities of non-agriculture labors of several districts. Moreover, in study are better and fast connectivity provided by PMGSY is a help to increase in means of transport and reduce travel time to reach the workplace. Furthermore, due to the all-weather road connectivity provided by PMGSY principal occupation of labors has been changed.

Summary and Conclusion

The most important purpose of the government is to include the rural area in the development process by providing all-weather road connectivity with the construction of rural PMGSY. Two important dimensions of development are income and employment. In this study, the impact of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana on these dimensions has been studied and it has been concluded that the Prime Minister Gram Sadak Yojana has a positive impact on the employment

and income opportunities for non-agricultural laborers. PMGSY help to increases numbers of employed days, an annual income of labours, means of transport to reach the workplace, change in principal occupation, made easy up-down for the worker and last but very important, this road construction helping to increases the employment opportunities for women hence rural roads under PMGSY help to attain the overall development of the country and its citizens.

This study is very important for policymakers and academic researchers. The policymakers will need to pay more attention to the increase facilities by developing road connectivity and; this will help to increase more income and employment opportunities for labours. The maintenance of the road continues from time to time, so the labours require less time to reach the workplace and to be free from the fear of accidents. This plan is working very well, whose positive impact has been studied, therefore, it should be extended for a few years and connectivity should be provided to all the villages.

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