

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Objectives, Eligibility

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Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is a flagship scheme that aims to provide an all-weather road connectivity to unconnected rural habitations. Launched in 2000, PMGSY is a strategic project for poverty reduction. Implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, the program connects habitations with all-weather roads. The scheme has been implemented in three phases since its launch. This article is going to look into the objectives, eligibility, and significance related to the scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Overview

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was launched in 2000 as a central sector scheme with an objective to develop all-weather roads that interconnect rural areas. This scheme can help in improving the socio-economic conditions of the rural population by:

- The better interconnectivity of roads will improve access for markets, healthcare, education and other basic amenities.

- The funding will be provided by the central and state government in a 60:40 ratio as recommended by the 14th Finance Commission.
- This will reduce the urban-rural divide in the country and provide access to basic amenities in rural areas.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Objectives

The objective of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is to improve the current rural road conditions by upgrading the existing 'Through Routes and Major Rural Links' that will interconnect the habitations to the following:

- Gramin Agricultural Markets
- Higher secondary Schools
- Hospitals

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Implementation Process

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is implemented by the following agencies:

- State Governments / UT Administrations will designate Executing Agencies to implement the programme.
- At the District level, the programme will be planned, coordinated, and implemented through Programme Implementation Units (PIUs).
- PIUs will be manned by competent technical personnel.
- State Governments will establish suitable linkages with District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs).
- Funds will be released to DRDAs.

PMGSY Scheme Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria under the PMGSY scheme were primarily based on population size and connectivity status. In plain areas, habitations with a population of 500 or more were eligible, provided they were unconnected. For regions in North-Eastern states, Himalayan states, and Himalayan Union Territories, the threshold was reduced to a population of 250 or more, as per the 2001 Census.

The scheme focused on building roads in the core network to ensure connectivity. Special provisions were made for Tribal (Schedule V) areas and selected Tribal and Backward Districts, identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Planning Commission. In these regions, unconnected habitations with a population of 250 or more were eligible for connectivity.

Additional relaxation was extended to Left Wing Extremism-affected blocks, where habitations with a population of 100 or more, as per the 2001 Census, qualified for inclusion in the scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Phases

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is divided into three phases:

PMGSY Phase I

Launched in December 2000, the first phase of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) was a 100% centrally sponsored scheme aimed at providing all-weather road connectivity to unconnected habitations. Eligibility was determined by population size, with thresholds of 500+ in plain areas and 250+ in North-Eastern, hill, tribal, and desert regions, based on the 2001 Census. The scheme targeted socio-economic development by connecting 1,35,436 habitations and upgrading 3.68 lakh km of rural roads, including farm-to-market routes and 40% renewal of rural roads funded by states.

PMGSY Phase II

Approved in May 2013 during the 12th Five Year Plan, Phase II focused on upgrading existing roads to enhance village connectivity. The scheme targeted the improvement of 50,000 km of roads, with cost-sharing between the Centre and states at a 75:25 ratio. In hill states, desert areas, Schedule V regions, and Naxal-affected districts, the Centre contributed 90% of the costs. The extension of PMGSY-I and II, approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, allowed road and bridge works to continue until September 2022.

PMGSY Phase III

In July 2019, the Cabinet approved PMGSY Phase III, aiming to consolidate 1,25,000 km of road networks connecting settlements to higher secondary schools, hospitals, and Gramin agricultural markets (GrAMs). The scheme, operational from 2019-20 to 2024-25, emphasizes rural infrastructure enhancement and socio-economic development. Cost-sharing for most states is set at a 60:40 ratio, while North-Eastern and Himalayan states follow a 90:10 ratio. This phase prioritizes improving rural connectivity and fostering economic growth through better infrastructure.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Significance

The PMGSY scheme is significant for the following reasons:

- **Boosting Socio-Economic Access:** Rural road connectivity significantly enhances access to social and economic services, leading to increased farm incomes, employment opportunities, and effective poverty alleviation.
- **Addressing Gaps in Rural Infrastructure:** Historically, rural road development was the responsibility of state governments. However, limited funds and diverted planning priorities led to neglect. The MGSY scheme bridges this gap, ensuring development reaches even the most remote areas.
- **Improving Access to Essential Services:** Enhanced connectivity enables rural populations to access employment, healthcare, education, and government welfare programs. Reliable roads facilitate faster transportation of agricultural produce to markets, especially for perishable goods, and attract industries to rural regions.
- **Encouraging Rural Service Delivery:** Improved infrastructure motivates government personnel, such as health workers, teachers, and agricultural extension workers, to serve rural communities more effectively, fostering prosperity and sustainable employment.

By focusing on rural road connectivity, the PMGSY scheme aims to drive inclusive development, improve livelihoods, and empower rural communities, laying a strong foundation for sustainable growth in India.

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