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## **Press Release**

### **Citizen Monitoring of Rural Roads Reveals Quality Problems**

A pioneering experiment by Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Bangalore, has revealed that more than half the rural roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadhak Yojana (PMGSY) in Karnataka and Orissa have failed to meet minimal standards of quality. Citizen monitors, trained in measuring road quality, conducted tests on a sample of 18 rural roads in two districts each in the two states before reaching this conclusion. A set of simple tests and instruments for this purpose were developed by PAC jointly with RASTA Centre for Road Technology in Bangalore. The tests covered key aspects of roads such as quality of road surface, road specifications (width, thickness, camber, etc.), drainage, and road furniture. Citizen volunteers were trained in the use of the tests by PAC and RASTA in partnership with NGOs such as Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement in Karnataka and People's Rural Education Movement and HUMANITY in Orissa.

PAC's report on this experiment confirms that ordinary citizens who are the users of roads, can monitor the quality of roads being built in their localities, provided they are organized and given training in the tests to be applied. The results of such tests can be used to systematically assess the quality of roads, and to stimulate governments to cross check the veracity of reports on the same roads by the concerned departments. Civic groups and NGOs can also use the findings to exert pressure on governments to make contractors and departments more accountable for their performance. PAC's experiment was supported by the Government of India that has a budget of Rs. 60,000 crores for PMGSY across the country. Road construction in India has been plagued by high costs, delays and corruption.



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The major findings of PAC's road monitoring experiment are summarized below:

- Of the 18 roads (completed and ongoing) on which tests were conducted in Karnataka and Orissa, only eight fell into the "high" score category. A majority (10 out of 18) of roads received only "medium" scores as they did not pass the tests in full. The specific aspects of quality where they lag behind can be found from the scoring details.
- Karnataka's rural roads tested as a part of the PAC study have done better than the rural roads in Orissa. Only a third of the Karnataka rural roads failed to meet the standards laid down by the tests. In Orissa, on the other hand, only two out of nine roads passed the tests in full. It may mean that technical planning and supervision was somewhat better in Karnataka than in Orissa.
- High scoring roads have performed well on all the key components of the tests, namely, road specifications, road surface quality, shoulder, road furniture, etc. Medium scoring roads performed poorly in one or more of these components of quality.
- Overall awareness of rural citizens about the roads being built in their area was reasonably high (60%). In fact, public awareness was higher in Orissa (66%) than in Karnataka (53%). Nearly two thirds of the people were also aware that contractors were responsible for post-construction road maintenance.
- Over 80% of the rural people in the survey noted that roads benefited them most in the transport of agriculture produce to markets, visits to health facilities and sending children to schools.





**Table 1: Consolidated quality/adherence score for completed roads**

Name of the road, Length and no. of stretches	Adherence to Shoulder (Max 4)	Adherence to Road Surface Specifications (Max 3)	Quality of Road Surface (Max 6)	Road Furniture (Max 2)	Overall Adherence Score (Max-15)
Tadavalaga –Agasanal- NH13 12.0 km; 2008 12 stretches- Bij-Kar	2.5 High	2.5 High	6.0 high	2.0 high	13 high
Angathahally 5.4 km; 2007; 5 stretches – Mysore - Karnataka	3.5 high	2.5 high	6.0 high	0.75 low	12.75 high
PWD Road to Deogarh 3 km 2007- 3 stretches- Bol- Orissa	2.0 high	3.0 high	6.0 high	1.75 high	12.75 high
Guddadakoppalu 3.4 km; 2008; 5strecthes; Mysore -Karnataka	3.0 high	3.0 high	5.0 high	0.5 low	11.50 high
Bijjargi-Gonsagi-Alaginal; 7.2 km 2007; 7 stretches; Bijapur -Karnataka	2.0 medium	2.0 medium	6.0 high	0.5 low	10.50 medium
PWD road to Kutumunda 2.2 km 2008; 3 stretches; Bolangir-Orissa	1.5 low	2.5 high	5.0 high	0.75 low	9.75 medium
Ayarabeedu to M.B.Road 9 km 2008; 6 str; Mysore - Karnataka	2.0 medium	2.5 high	4.5 high	0.0 nil	9.0 medium
Saralapadar to Anuguru ; 3.5 km 2008; 4 stretches Gajapathi-Orissa	2.5 medium	2.5 high	3.0 medium	1.0 medium	9.0 medium
RD road to Padhigam 4 km 2006 4 str; Gajapathi -Orissa	2.5 medium	3.0 high	2.5 low	0.25 low	8.25 medium
Krushnapur Chowk to Burujanga 2.9 km 2004; 3 str.; Gajapathi-Orissa	1.5 low	2.5 high	3.0 medium	0.5 low	7.50 medium



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**Table 2: Level of adherence to quality specifications - ongoing roads**

Name of the Road, State and District	Length (Km)	No. of Stretches	Overall Adherence Score (Max 6)
Kathral – Bolchikkalki-Nandyal (WBM III)- Bijapur-Karnataka (max score 8)	7.2	5	6.0 high
Singaripura; Mysore- Karnataka	5.4	3	6.0 high
RD Road to Raipur; Gajapathi -Orissa	2.9	3	5.0 high
M.M. Road to Malali ; Mysore-Karnataka	9.0	4	4.5 high
Tumbagi, Gotkandki, Gudisomnal; Bijapur - Karnataka	3.43	5	4.0 medium
Barkani Chowk to Khujanpalli Rly colony; Bolangir- Orissa	13.36	3	4.0 medium
Titlagarh to Gulmi; Bolangir-Orissa	10.20	2	4.0 medium
RD Road to Minjiri; Gajapathi-Orissa	6.09	3	3.5 medium
Average score			4.6

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