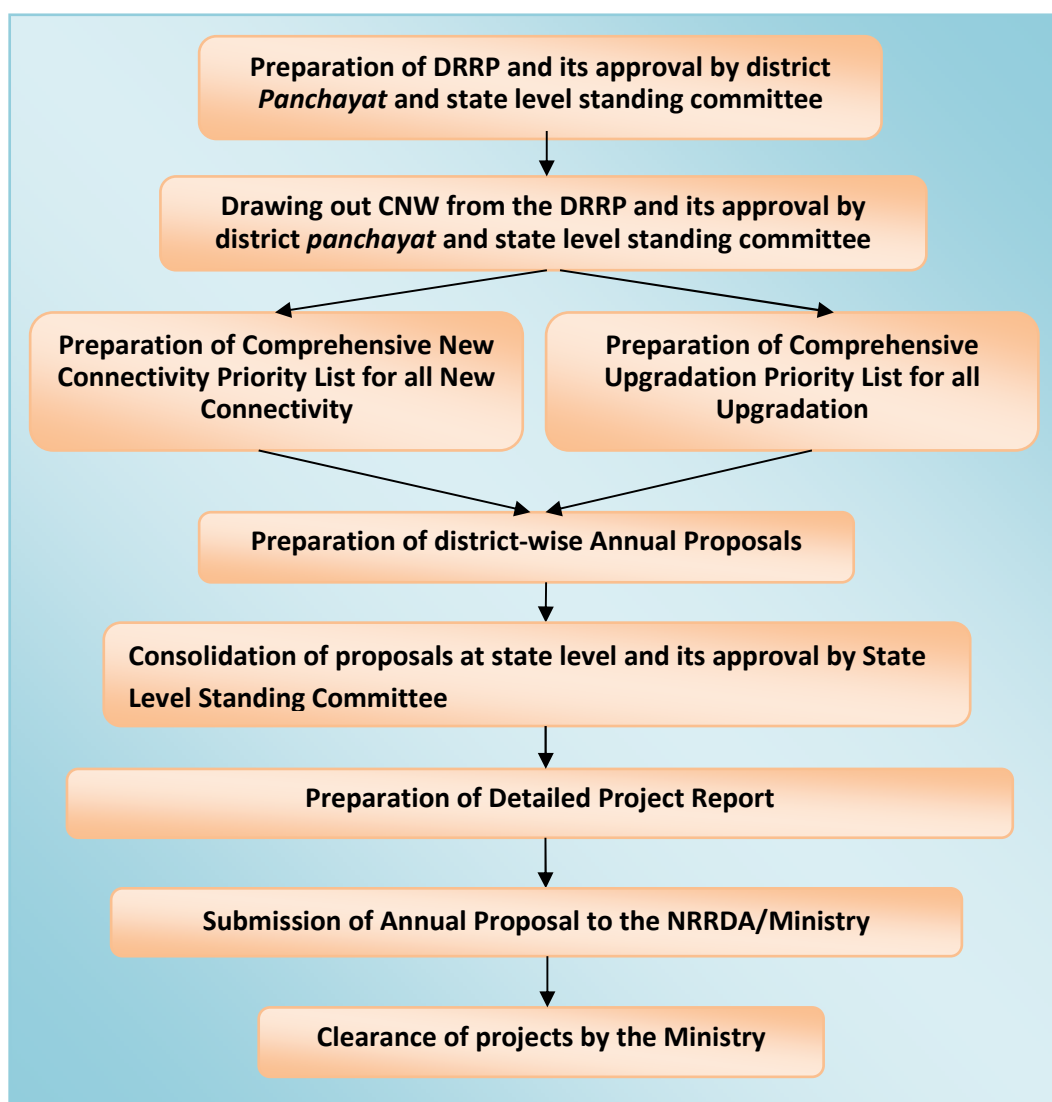


Chapter-3 : Planning

3.1 Introduction

PMGSY has implemented the model of decentralized network planning for rural roads involving all the three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) and local representatives of the State Legislative Assembly and the Parliament. States were required to prepare a master plan at district level for the rural roads called the District Rural Road Plan (DRRP). Based on the position of connectivity of habitations in the DRRP, the Core Network (CNW) indicating the shortest single connectivity was to be extracted from the DRRP. The whole planning process is shown in **Chart-3.1** below:

Chart-3.1



3.2 District Rural Road Plan

The DRRP is a compendium of the existing and proposed road network systems in the district. The DRRP is required to clearly identify the proposed roads for connecting the yet unconnected habitations with all weather roads in an economic and efficient manner and is prepared at two levels i.e., block and district. The plans of all the blocks in a district, after approval of the respective intermediate *panchayat*, are to be integrated into the DRRP. This is placed before the district *panchayat* or DRDA for consideration and approval. The DRRP, thereafter, is required to be submitted to the Nodal Department/SRRDA for the approval of the State Level Standing Committee (SLSC). Approved DRRPs form the basis for selection of road works under the PMGSY through the CNW.

3.2.1 Deficiencies in the District Rural Road Plan

Test check of records in the selected districts revealed that in seven states, DRRPs had deficiencies such as insufficient or incorrect data, non-approval of district *panchayat*, etc. The deficiencies are discussed below:-

- In **Andhra Pradesh**, DRRPs of three¹ districts did not have the basic information *viz.*, details of the population of habitations, connectivity status of the habitations, major district roads, state and national highways, etc. Further, DRRPs were approved by the district *panchayat* without involving the intermediate *panchayat*.
- In **Jammu & Kashmir**, DRRP of district Anantnag was not approved by the district *panchayat*.
- In **Jharkhand**, DRRP and CNW of the districts were prepared taking into consideration village instead of habitations as a unit of connectivity. Further, DRRP did not identify the proposed roads for connecting the yet unconnected habitations.

The Ministry replied that DRRP of **Jharkhand** was revised in 2013 on the basis of habitations and the state had also reconciled the unconnected habitations. The reply of the Ministry was not acceptable as CNW still depicted some villages instead of habitation as a unit of connectivity.

- In **Karnataka**, the district *panchayat* had not approved the DRRP of Sira district.

¹ Anantapur, SPSR Nellore and Vizianagaram

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- In **Meghalaya**, in district West Garo Hills, DRRP was not approved by the DRDA whereas in East Garo Hills, evidence of approval by DRDA was not found.
- In **Mizoram**, nodal department prepared the DRRP without approval of district level authorities.
- In **Telangana**, there was no evidence of approval of DRRP from intermediate *panchayat*, district *panchayat* and State Level Standing Committee. The state government replied (December, 2015) that since elected bodies did not exist at the time of preparation of DRRPs, Special Officers holding the charge of elected bodies approved the DRRPs. The reply of the government was not acceptable as the elected bodies were in existence between 2001 and 2011.

3.3 Core Network

A Core Network (CNW) is a set of roads, extracted from the DRRP, to cover targeted habitations with single all-weather road connectivity. In the identification of the CNW, the priorities of elected public representatives are to be given full consideration. The CNW shall be approved at all levels *viz.*, Intermediate *Panchayat*, District *Panchayat* and SLSC.

3.3.1 Deficiencies in Core Network

The records of the Ministry showed that the Core Network (CNW) of all the states was to be finalised by November 2005. The Ministry, further, in its Action Taken Note informed (October 2008) the Public Accounts Committee (82nd Report of 2008-09 to the Fourteenth Lok Sabha) that CNW had been finalised and frozen after receiving revised data from states. According to the CNW finalized by states, a total of 1,72,772 eligible unconnected habitations were identified.

Audit observed that data discrepancies still existed in the CNW as the Ministry modified (May 2012) the CNW and the number of eligible unconnected habitations due to reconciliation of data was reduced from 1,72,772 to 1,68,268. Further, 32,798 habitations were deleted from CNW on account of non-feasibility. 14,369 habitations of **Bihar**, **Manipur** and **Rajasthan** were added as their CNWs were based on revenue village instead of habitation. In addition to this, 6,000 habitations in 78 Tribal and backward districts under the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) in nine states were added as

these were earlier left out or wrongly shown as connected. For all these reasons, the CNW was revised at 1,64,849² eligible unconnected habitations.

The Ministry further included (February 2013) 13,209³ habitations as these habitations were not included earlier mainly due to inadequacies in surveys by the states. This led to upward revision of number of eligible unconnected habitations to 1,78,184⁴. The Ministry stated (April 2016) that the data of eligible unconnected habitations within the states had again been reconciled; however the overall number remained 1,78,184.

It is, therefore, evident that the assessment of eligible unconnected habitations based on Census 2001 was not frozen though informed by the Ministry to the PAC in October 2008.

Test check of records further showed that in 19 states (**Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand** and **West Bengal**), discrepancies such as unconnected habitations shown as connected, eligible habitations not included, habitations placed in wrong population size, showing emerging and termination point one and the same, variation in data of CNW maintained by PIUs, SRRDA and OMMAS, etc., were observed in preparation of CNW. State-wise details are given in **Annex-3.1**.

² 9,010 habitations were added as a result of policy to include habitations having population 250-499 in 78 Tribal and Backward districts in nine states under IAP.

³ 1,409 habitations of Tribal(Schedule V) areas, 1,278 habitations of border blocks under Border Area Development Programme (BADP) and 1,410 habitations in hill states/desert areas with population 250 and above and 9,112 habitations of plain areas with population 500 and above

⁴ 126 habitations in Arunachal Pradesh were added as a result of policy to extend cluster approach from international border blocks to international border districts.

Case Study: Assam

The Ministry, in September 2006, estimated that 1,72,772 eligible habitations required new connectivity. This included 2,799 habitations with population size of 250 to 499 in **Assam** despite the fact that **Assam**, as per programme guidelines (November 2004) did not fall under the category of 'Hill State' to qualify for inclusion of habitations with population size 250 to 499. By the end of the Tenth Plan period (March 2007), 217 of these habitations were connected with all weather roads.

Further, in July 2013, Ministry changed the nomenclature of 'Hill States' to 'Special Category States' and brought **Assam** on par with other North Eastern States for the purpose of providing connectivity to unconnected habitations of 250 to 499 persons. Contrary to this, the list of eligible unconnected habitations furnished by the Ministry in July 2015 did not show any unconnected habitations of **Assam** with population size 250 to 499.

The Ministry stated (April 2016) that **Assam** had reconciled the eligible unconnected habitations and total number of eligible habitations under the 250 to 499 category was 4,065. Thus, the Ministry revised the data of population size 250 to 499 from 2,799 to 4,065. This indicated that the accuracy of data of unconnected eligible habitations under the programme was still to be achieved.

3.3.2 Variation in road length

In nine states (**Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu** and **Uttarakhand**), 1,203 roads had variations (excess/short) in length on actual execution with the length mentioned in the CNW (**Annex-3.2**).

3.3.3 Non-approval of Core Network

In seven states (**Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Meghalaya, Punjab, Tripura** and **Uttar Pradesh**), CNWs were not approved in selected districts either by Intermediate *Panchayat*, or District *Panchayat* and State Level Agency. Thus, there was no grass root participation in the preparation of the CNW in these states.

3.3.4 Non-participation by Local Elected Representatives

In two states (**Andhra Pradesh** and **Jammu & Kashmir**), local elected representatives were not involved in preparation of CNW. In **Arunachal Pradesh** and **Meghalaya** (three districts), records showing participation of local elected representatives were not furnished. In **Jharkhand**, the Executive Engineers concerned stated that no proposals were received from Members of Parliament or Members of the State Legislature. The reply was not acceptable as audit observed that during revision of CNW in 2010, in district Deoghar, proposals of 27 roads were received from MPs and MLAs for inclusion in revised CNW. Only seven roads were included in the CNW

without recording any reason for leaving out the remaining 20 roads. In **Tripura**, there was no evidence of involvement of local elected representatives in preparing the CNW.

3.3.5 Selection of inadmissible road projects

Para 3.3 of the programme guidelines envisages that an unconnected habitation is one with a population of designated size located at a distance of at least 500 metre or more (1.5 km of path distance in case of hills) from an all-weather road or a connected habitation.

In **Bihar** (7 roads) and **Tamil Nadu** (18 roads) were included in the CNW and provided connectivity at a cost of ₹ 21.31 crore⁵ to targeted habitations having less than required population size. In **Manipur**, seven habitations in three districts having actual population of less than 250 (Census 2001) were included in the CNW by placing them in the more than 250 population category.

In nine states (**Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu** and **Uttarakhand**), road projects of less than 500 metres in plain areas and 1.5 km in hilly areas were included in CNWs. In **Meghalaya**, 22 habitations lying within 1.5 km from an all weather road/connected habitations were included in the CNW (**Annex-3.3**).

3.4 Non-integration of Geographical Information System

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in its 72nd Report to the Fourteenth Lok Sabha (2007-08) recommended that the Ministry should take necessary steps to cut delays, reconcile data prepared at various levels and rectify other deficiencies so as to ensure that accurate and reliable data of unconnected habitations was available. The Committee recommended that a comprehensive Geographical Information System (GIS) data base of Rural Roads Information System should be created for each state which could be shared at different levels and by different agencies involved in construction and maintenance of rural roads.

The Ministry in its Action Taken Notes informed (October 2008) the PAC (82nd Report to the Fourteenth Lok Sabha-2008-09) that it had initiated the development of stand-alone and web based GIS database for Rural Roads Information System and selected **Rajasthan** and **Himachal Pradesh** as pilot states. The system development was entrusted to C-DAC and refined based on user feedback. In the meantime, all the states had been advised to initiate steps to go in for GIS Database Management System.

⁵ Bihar (₹ 11.59 crore) and Tamil Nadu (₹ 9.72 crore)

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It was observed that despite the assurance to the PAC, Ministry did not create the web based GIS database for Rural Roads Information System. The Ministry stated (April 2016) that a MoU was signed with C-DAC in October 2015 with time of completion is two years from date of advance payment (February 2016). Thus, web based GIS database for Rural Roads Information System was still to be implemented despite assurance given to PAC in 2008.

3.5 Comprehensive New Connectivity Priority List/ Comprehensive Up-gradation Priority List

Para 3.3.1 of the Operations Manual (OM) envisages that once the CNW is ready, the states are required to prepare Comprehensive New Connectivity Priority List (CNCPL), at block and district level of all proposed road links, grouping them in the order of priority based on population size i.e., 1000+ habitations first, 500+ habitations second and 250+ habitations last. The programme guidelines provide that a Comprehensive Upgradation Priority List (CUPL) is prepared in respect of those districts where no new connectivity is required to be done. The CUPL is to be verified on sample basis through the State Technical Agencies (STA) and the National Quality Monitor (NQM).

The CNCPL/CUPL shall be placed before the district *panchayat* for its approval. The MP/MLA is to be given a copy of the CNCPL/CUPL and their suggestions and suggestions of lower level *panchayati* Institutions shall be given the fullest consideration by the district *panchayat* while according its approval.

Test check of records in the selected districts in the states disclosed deficiencies in CNCPL/CUPL which are discussed below:

- In 11 states (**Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand**), the deficiencies such as inclusion of road projects both in CNCPL and CUPL, exclusion of road projects, inclusion of habitations below admissible population size, CNCPL having more eligible habitations than CNW, inclusion of already connected habitations in CNCPL, inclusion of Through Routes in CNCPL, CUPL prepared without conducting PCI survey, etc., were observed in CNCPL and CUPL. State-wise details are given in **Annex-3.4**. The Ministry while admitting the facts stated that efforts are being made for removing the deficiencies.
- In six states {**Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala** (except Malappuram), **Manipur, Meghalaya** (except West Garo hills) and **Tripura**}, evidence of obtaining/considering suggestions and recommendations of elected representative *viz.*, Members of Parliament, Members of the State Legislative Assembly and *Panchayati Raj* Institutions was not on record. In

Sikkim, the nodal department stated (November 2015) that records were misplaced by districts.

- In three states {**Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand** (five districts)}, CNCPL/CUPL were not approved by district *panchayat*. In **Manipur** and **Meghalaya** (four districts), there was no evidence of approval of CNCPL and CUPL from district *panchayat*/DRDA. In **Sikkim**, the nodal department stated (November 2015) that records were misplaced by districts.
- In three states (**Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka** and **Meghalaya**), the CUPL was not verified by STA and NQM. In **Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur** and **Tamil Nadu**, there was no evidence of verification of CUPL from STA/NQM. In **Uttar Pradesh**, the CUPL was verified by STA in only three out of 18 districts. However, the required verification of CUPL by NQM was not done in any district. In **West Bengal**, none of the five districts had any documents to indicate that STAs carried out any ground verification of CUPL.

3.6 Annual proposal

Para 6.5 of the programme guidelines envisages that the list of road works to be taken up under the programme will be finalised each year by the district *panchayat* through a consultative process involving lower level *Panchayati* institutions and elected representatives. It is required to be ensured that the proposed road works are part of the CNW and new connectivity is given primacy. In states, the prioritisation of new links is to be taken up for construction in order of the CNCPL where existing rural through routes are in reasonably good condition (i.e., Pavement Condition Index (PCI) above three). In states, where the existing rural through routes are in poor conditions (PCI is three or less), the upgradation/renewal of through routes may be taken up as an adjunct to new connectivity. The proposals of all the districts will be placed before the State Level Standing Committee for its consideration.

3.6.1 Non-preparation of Annual Proposals

In 13 states (**Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Telangana, Tripura** and **Uttarakhand**), annual proposals were not prepared in selected districts. In **Uttar Pradesh**, annual proposals were not prepared since December 2012. In **Sikkim**, the annual proposal was not drawn from the CNCPL/CUPL.

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In **Meghalaya**, in district West Garo Hills, road from Mankachar Mahendraganj to Marhalipara though not included in CUPL was taken up for upgradation at a cost of ₹ 1.66 crore.

In **Punjab**, in test checked districts, three roads in CUPL and five roads in CNCPL though not included were constructed at a cost of ₹ 17.02 crore.

3.6.2 Non-approval by District Panchayat and SLSC

In 10 states (**Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Telangana and Uttarakhand**), road works were selected without obtaining the approval of district *panchayat* and SLSC.

3.6.3 Clearance of works in excess of allocation of funds

Para 4.4.1 of the OM stipulates that states may, each year, distribute the state's allocation among the districts giving at least 80 *per cent* for providing new connectivity and up to 20 *per cent* for upgradation. The district wise allocation of funds will also be communicated to the NRRDA and STAs in order to enable them to scrutinize the DPRs of the district. Depending on the extent of new connectivity backlog, absorption capacity, position of the ongoing works, etc., the state will be asked to prepare DPRs for up to twice the allocation.

The Ministry initiated the process of making indicative annual allocation of fund for states since 2012-13 on the basis of overall budget allocation under the programme, balance works in hand with the states, their execution capacity and unspent balance available with them. The Ministry cleared proposals valued much more than indicative allocations as depicted in the **Chart-3.2, 3.3 and 3.4**.

Chart-3.2: Proposals cleared, works in hand and indicative allocation for 2012-13

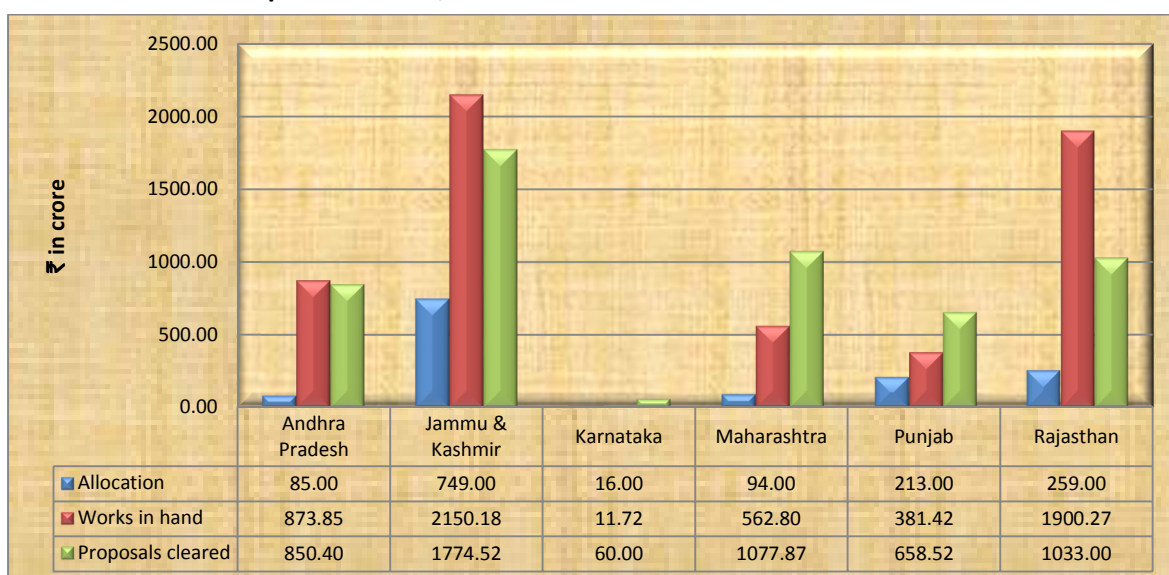


Chart-3.3: Proposals cleared, works in hand and indicative allocation for 2013-14

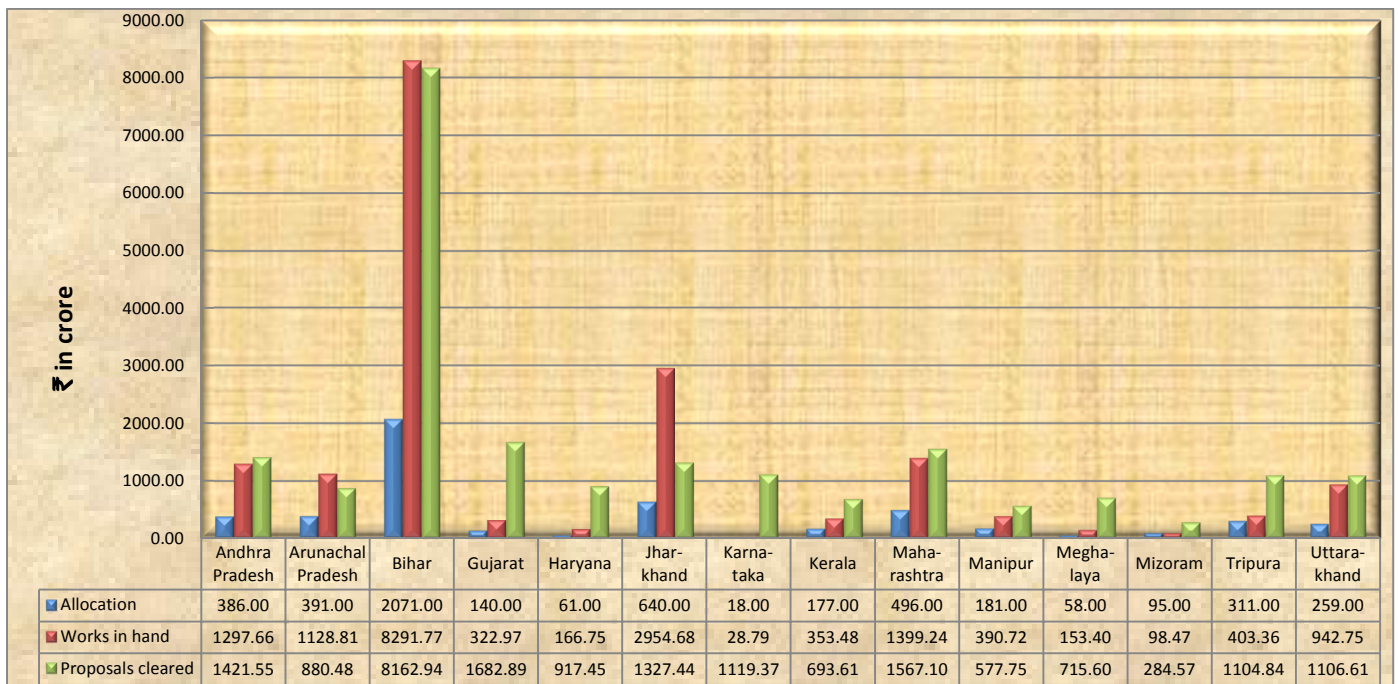
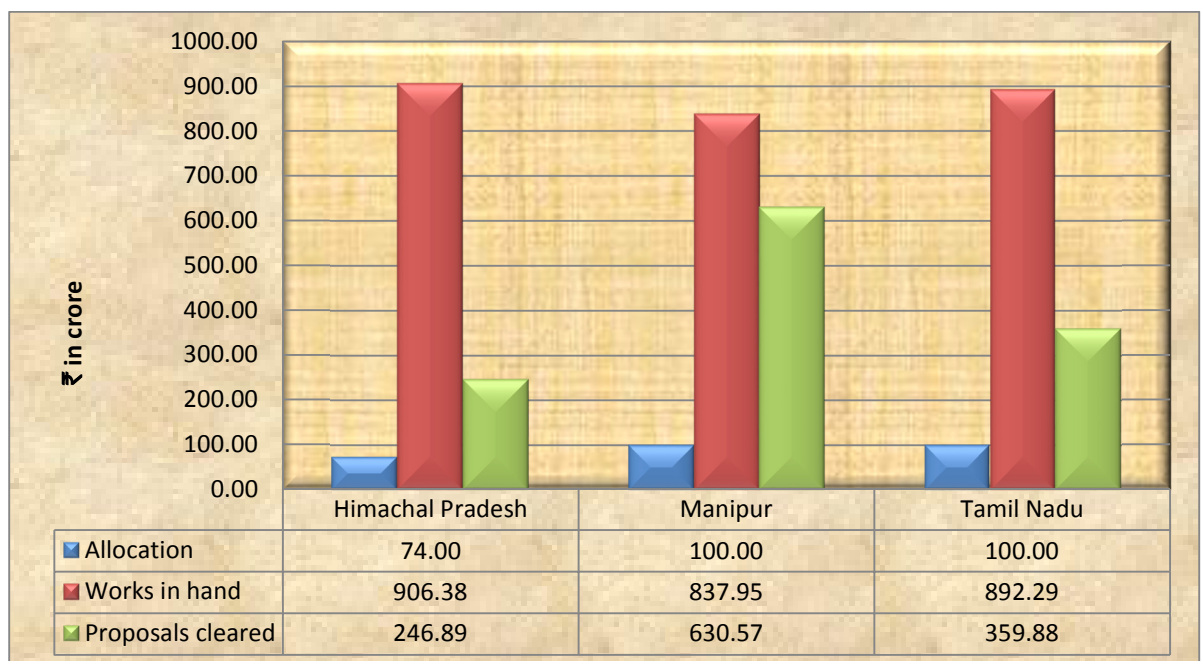


Chart-3.4: Proposals cleared, works in hand and indicative allocation for 2014-15



Source: Ministry's records

The Ministry stated that it was a usual practice to do over-programming under PMGSY and in order to achieve the objective of the programme, a large number of clearances were given to various states. The reply is not acceptable as the quantum of Ministry's clearances ranged between 107 to 1,134 per cent in excess of guidelines.

3.6.4 Works taken up beyond Core Network

Test check of records in selected districts of states showed that in 12 states {Arunachal Pradesh (2), Assam (10), Bihar (48), Jammu & Kashmir (2), Karnataka (1), Kerala (4), Manipur (2), Meghalaya (10), Rajasthan (15)⁶, Sikkim (7), Tripura (6) and Uttar Pradesh (2)}, 109 road works were selected beyond CNW.

Conclusion

District Rural Road Plan and Core Network are basic prerequisites of the programme. However, some states deviated from the prescribed procedures while preparing District Rural Road Plan and Core Network. Consequently, eligible habitations were either left out or wrongly shown as connected. This led to frequent changes in number of eligible unconnected habitations. Some of the road works were taken beyond Core Network. Involvement of elected public representatives in planning process was also found missing. Geographical Information System data base for rural roads was not created. Project proposals were cleared beyond the permissible indicative fund allocation.

Recommendations

- i. Ministry may ensure that deficiencies in DRRP/CNW are removed by the states so that all eligible unconnected habitations are covered under the programme.
- ii. Ministry may ensure creation of GIS data base of Rural Roads Information System for each state.
- iii. Annual proposals of works may be cleared with reference to the indicative allocation of funds to the state.

⁶ Alignments of 12 roads approved by the Zila Parishad were changed by the PIUs to connect habitations not included in the CNW