

# Gender and Economic Policy Discussion Forum

## Engendering the Government's Flagship Programmes: Looking at the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)<sup>1</sup>

FORUM IV | 10 September 2012

BRIEFING NOTE 4

### HIGHLIGHTS/ KEY POINTS

There is a need to

- Institutional arrangements at the local level to encourage participation from the community and women groups in the implementation and management of TSC.
- Increase in the allocation of funds for TSC and provision of additional funds for proper drainage and solid waste disposal.
- Focus on maintenance and sanitation of toilet blocks in addition to construction of toilet blocks.
- Better coordination between different but complementary programmes. Sanitation and water need to be jointly programmed.
- Identification of the specific needs of women with regards to road connectivity as they may be different from men
- Greater role and funds for the State governments for maintenance and up gradation of roads. Greater flexibility with regards to State government's role in building optimal connectivity in their area keeping in view the specificities of each state.
- Creation of a sense of ownership and responsibility for roads among the local communities which may be achieved through decentralization and greater role for the community in building and management of roads.

- Convergence between PMGSY and TSP, as well as MGNREGA, has been recommended for a considerable expansion of their positive impact on rural infrastructural development.

### The Background

The Indian government has launched various flagship programmes in the country to meet the immense infrastructural requirements in the field of transport, education, health and sanitation. The programmes were also started to boost the inclusion and mainstreaming of disadvantaged groups and remote geographical areas. The overall goal of the Government's flagship programmes is to bring development to remote areas of the country, resulting in improved living standards for all. Flagship programmes include, among others, the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY), Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), Total Sanitation Campaign Programme (TSC), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

The usual definition of the term “infrastructure” within government reflects an implicit prioritization; the website of the Planning Commission reveals that the central focus in infrastructure ‘is railways, roads, roads transport, shipping, ports, civil aviation, water transport, and construction sector. In other words, India has narrowed down the idea of infrastructure to transport. But water supply, sanitation, solid waste management, is very much a part of a country’s infrastructure which gets neglected.’<sup>2</sup> Water supply and fuel/ energy are critical components of infrastructure that have long been demands of the women’s movement, access to which would reduce women’s unpaid labour.<sup>3</sup> Thus: “Women and men have different needs and priorities and while both men and women suffer from poor access to basic infrastructure, girls and women are disproportionately affected as a result of their gendered reproductive and care giving roles in the family and community.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, “men and women have different priorities, constraints and preferences with respect to development and can contribute to, and are affected differently by, development projects.”<sup>5</sup>

A gendered lens in all development programme designs and interventions is advocated not just for the well being of women, rather for a more equitable and effective development. Good transport facilities and availability of usable toilets at work premises will encourage women to work outside home, and thereby increase family income. Similarly, better infrastructure at school will increase enrolment of female children and by benefitting education and health, lead to reduction in inter-generational poverty.<sup>6</sup>

The GEPD IV discussed two flagship programmes, the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) and the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). TSC was launched in April 1999 as a restructuring of the earlier programme, the Central Rural Sanitation Program (CRSP) launched in 1986. TSC intends to be more people oriented, with an emphasis on capacity building, behaviour change and involvement of local community based organizations. The main areas of intervention are Individual Household latrines (IHHL), School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE), Community Sanitary Complex, Anganwadi toilets supported by Rural Sanitary Marts (RSMs) and Production Centers (PCs). Additionally, the

Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) was started in 2003 to complement the TSC by availing an incentive of up to Rs 50 lakhs awarded to local government for ensuring ‘Open Defecation Free’ village. Nonetheless, a lot is yet to be achieved, as pointed out by the 2011 Census data, 53% of rural and urban households have no latrines within their premises. Furthermore, doubts have also been raised about the use of the toilets constructed under the programme. Toilets are rendered unusable, due to no or very little maintenance, no water supply in the toilets, or toilets being used for other purposes such as storage.

The ‘Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)’ was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) in the year 2000, “to connect with all-weather roads for all habitations with population more than 500 (250 in hilly, deserts, and tribal regions) in the first instance. It has to be recognized that 161,380 habitations with population below 500 or 250 are not covered under the PMGSY.”<sup>7</sup> In 2005 the Government of India integrated the PMGSY into its Bharat Nirman Programme. Bharat Nirman is a flagship Government of India effort to improve rural infrastructure having six components, of which PMGSY is one. PMGSY aims to achieve broader and more sustainable access to market and social services by the rural population in participating districts.

## I. The Total Sanitation Campaign: A Brief Overview

The practice of open defecation due to absence of latrines within the home, followed majorly in India, is against the dignity of women. Women have to face a lifetime of discomfort, due to lack of privacy, time limitations, and risk of sexual violence, associated with open defecation. Pregnant women are especially at risk of contracting infections, such as sanitation-related hookworm infections that pose a considerable health burden. Lack of safe, separate and private sanitation and washing facilities in schools is associated with poor attendance of girls at schools, particularly when menstruating. Hence, poor sanitation when seen from a gendered perspective becomes a priority concern for women, for reasons that go beyond impact on health.

The magnitude of the problem related to open defecation is reflected in the UNICEF and WHO (2012) estimates for 2010. According to the data,

15 percent of people in the world openly defecate without any toilet or latrine; 60 percent of these live in India.<sup>8</sup> During the decade of 1990-2000, the coverage of sanitation facilities in India increased from 21 percent to 31 percent<sup>9</sup>, implying that significantly large number of people, about 70 percent of population of the country, lives without proper sanitation facilities. In recognition of this huge sanitation problem and the poor performance of the Government's CRS programme, the TSC was initiated in 1999 as one of the important flagship programmes of the Government. The TSC has been designed to be people centered and demand oriented, it focuses on behavior change, rather than simple construction of toilets. The programme emphasizes participation of all sections of the rural community, promotes involvement of community based organization, and incorporates reinforcement of positive behavior through economic incentives. It also encourages development of information, education and communication (IEC) activities for increasing awareness, and change in attitudes towards sanitation and hygiene.

Many claims have been made for the TSC: "TSC projects have been sanctioned in 593 rural districts of the country with a total outlay of Rs. 17,885 crore with a central share of Rs. 11,094 crore. Since 1999, over 5.56 crore toilets have been provided for rural households under TSC. A significant achievement has also been the construction of 8.71 lakh school toilets and 2.72 lakh Anganwadi toilets. With increasing budgetary allocations and focus on rural areas, the number of households being provided with toilets annually has increased from only 24.41 lakh in 2002-03 to 98.7 lakh in 2006-07."<sup>10</sup> Positive impacts of the TSC have already become noticeable: "In the decade from 2001 to 2010-11, when the TSC reported building almost 0.6 latrines per rural household on average, rural infant mortality fell by about 20 babies per 1,000 and urban IMR fell by about 9."<sup>11</sup> Additionally, "children who lived their first year of life in years and districts with better sanitation grew taller by about 0.2 standard deviations, on average."<sup>12</sup>

The figure 1 below, details the annual allocation and expenditure on sanitation in India. It is a cause of serious concern, that from the year 2006 onwards, the central budget allocation has been declining. Furthermore, the year 2009-10 noted a

decline in budget releases, causing a decline in the expenditure as well. The declining investment in the area of sanitation raises serious concerns with regards to reaching the full coverage of sanitation. Another point of concern is the disparity in the usage of toilets, "while only 40 per cent of the BPL households use the constructed toilets, around 80 per cent of the constructed toilets are used by those above poverty line."<sup>13</sup>

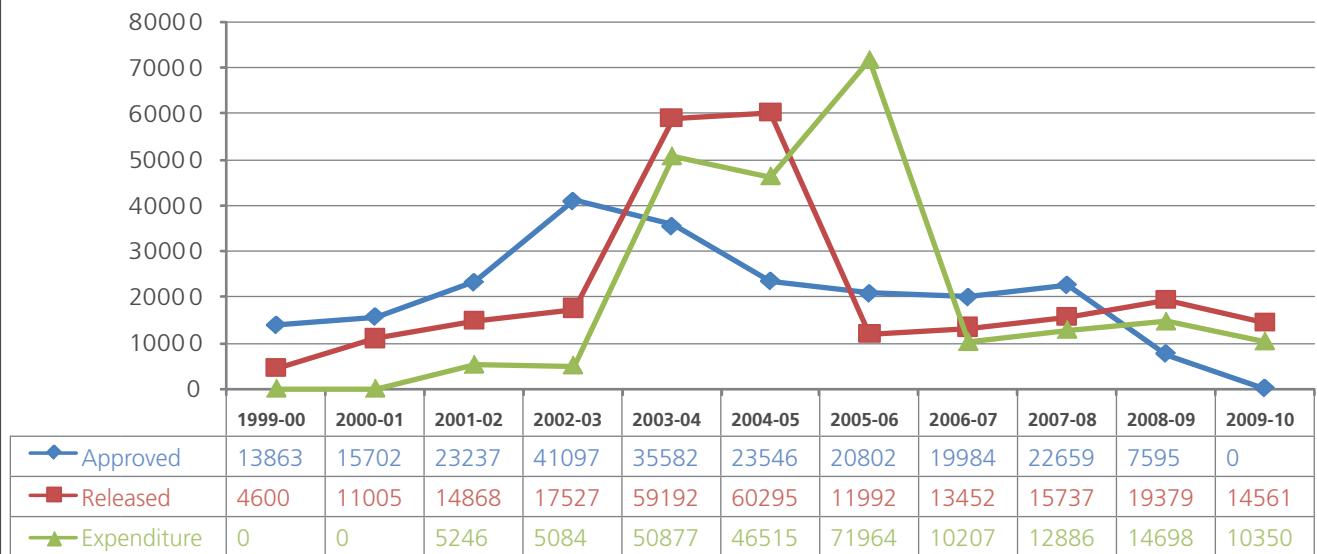
Very often the use of the toilets already built under the programme, is not for its intended use, they are used for other purposes such as storage. Implying that sustainability of investments may become a serious concern, as communities lack in awareness on health and hygiene requirements, or there is inadequate community and especially women's participation in planning leading to inappropriate construction. Moreover, the construction of a latrine in rural areas implies a significant cost of about Rs.10, 000 for a household, while the TSC makes a provision of Rs 3500 only, and the rest of the amount has to be filled in by the household. But, as latrine is mainly a woman's need, expenditure on its construction does not become a priority for the poor families. Recognizing this problem, some nonprofit organizations, such as Amul, have initiated loan services to supplement the TSC subsidy, supporting many households in the construction of private latrines.<sup>14</sup> Provision of water supply inside latrines and the maintenance of latrines accrue an additional continuous cost, non application of which, especially in case of schools, often results in unclean toilets rendering them unusable.

## Implications for India's Total Sanitation Campaign

Achieving total sanitation in India is a very challenging task due to several complex issues involved, and better outcomes in implementing the TSC can be achieved, if policy makers give precedence to the problem of sanitation and involve local participation at all level of decision making, implementation and monitoring.

Some of the implications of the TSC emerging from the discussion above are-

- **Ensuring participation from the communities, particularly women:** There is

**Fig 1: Year-wise Allocations and Expenditure on Sanitation in India.**

Source: www.ddws.nic.in dt: 01:01:2010, Snehalata & Anitha (2011) op cit

a need for institutional arrangements at the local level to encourage participation from the community and developmental organizations in the implementation and management of TSC. Gram Sabha is an important sphere for the participation of the community in decision making and it is particularly important to encourage women's participation in such general meetings. This also implies that greater funds are needed for capacity building of women, increasing participation in PRIs, as well as to raise critical awareness about the important need for sanitation and hygiene. Local civil society organizations are better equipped in understanding the local customs and traditions relating to sanitation. There are different kinds of women's group that are involved in sanitation movements. Giving women the responsibility of hiring contractors for toilet construction and maintenance will make a big difference as this will be a way to involve them in the process of sanitation and decision making at PRI level.<sup>15</sup>

- **The allocation of funds for TSC needs to increase, rather than decline:** The declining trend in the budgetary allocation and expenditure as seen in figure 1 needs to be corrected, and greater amounts of fund need to be allocated if the challenging aim of total sanitation has to be achieved. "The allocated amounts for building the individual sanitary latrines and school sanitation blocks and anganwadi complexes are very low and ensuring the quality is a major challenge given the present

unit costs. Further the individual beneficiaries are complaining that they have to invest a lot apart from the Government subsidy."<sup>16</sup>

- **Provision of additional funds for drainage and solid waste disposal:** The total sanitation task is left incomplete with no or limited work on solid waste disposal or a proper drainage system. Hence, it is crucial to pay equal attention to construct a proper waste disposal system, which would also require different allocation of funds.
- **Focus on maintenance of toilets and sanitation:** "The initial sanitation programme of government was focused on toilet construction and not toilet use or maintenance, and similarly in many places school toilets were created without water, having no use-function. The present Nirmal Bharat sanitation programme of the Government is taking care of water supply and sanitation; the two have been converged in this programme. However, technology for maintenance is not being given adequate attention. There is a need to think more creatively about maintenance and thereby avoid the evil of manual scavenging. Vacuum technology for toilet maintenance is one idea, although its cost effectiveness needs to be seen as per context."<sup>17</sup>
- **Better coordination between different but complementary programmes:** It has been noted that coordination between the departments of various implementing agencies of interlinked programmes is either partial or

non-existent. Sanitation and water need to be jointly programmed.

## II. The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

Connectivity in rural areas through roads is crucial to promote access to economic and social services of various kinds, resulting in higher agricultural income, and better employment opportunities. Recognizing the importance of road connectivity and its absence in many habitations in the country, the Government of India introduced the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in the year 2000. The main aim of the PMGSY is to construct all-weather roads for hitherto unconnected habitation with a population of 500 persons and above, and above 250 persons in case of hilly, deserts and tribal regions. The programme is completely funded by the central government through the Central Road Fund (CRF), a fund created for the purpose with borrowings from multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, and contribution from 50% cess on High Speed Diesel. Since the year 2000 under PMGSY, “the projects for 1,09,010 habitations have been sanctioned out of total 1,36,464 eligible habitations by clearing the proposals for 4,20,637 kms roads. In order to achieve the targets, Rs. 84,731 crore were released up to March 2011 against the sanctioned projects of Rs. 1,18,949 crore. The balance requirement of funds has also been estimated as Rs. 1,85,438 crore for works yet to be sanctioned including projects for left out habitations, new habitations of 250+, with Left Wing Extremists, missing bridges, impact of increase in length of bridges to 75m, impact due to snow fall/ landslides, administrative expenses, repayment of NABARD loan, launching of PMGSY-II, connecting smaller IAP habitations (100-250 population), relaxation of norms for the Special Category States, in line with IAP districts etc. Funds available in year 2011-12 are Rs. 20,000 crore.”<sup>18</sup>

Needless to say, the lives of women in rural India can improve substantially with construction of roads and connectivity through good transport. Women play multiple economic and social roles and their responsibilities include production, reproduction, household management, community management, and maintenance of social infrastructure which result in very specific needs of mobility. Hence lack of time is a key constraint on the ability of women

to build their assets and reduce their vulnerability. By reducing the burden of travel, development projects can increase women’s productivity and income and also enhance their assets.<sup>19</sup> Despite the critical importance of roads to women, specific consideration of women’s needs or a gendered lens is missing from the programme. There is no mention of women anywhere in the guidelines with regards to PMGSY, neither are they mentioned by the MoRD when assessing PMGSY at three levels, viz. – ‘an unbiased review of social and environmental aspects, identification of potential environmental and social risks, and associated mitigated mechanisms for the identified risks’<sup>20</sup> While, a body of evidence shows that there are common gender differences in preferences for pedestrian areas, travel patterns, travel timings, transport services, road safety, personal security and accessibility. Yet, project experience has shown that these gender differentiated needs are rarely captured without gender analysis, which is essential to address the differential needs.<sup>21</sup>

Under spending is another serious problem in PMGSY. In the Financial Year 2005-06, 84% of total value of proposals was spent; this decreased to 48% in financial year 2008-09.<sup>22</sup> There is a vicious cycle of low release and low expenditures- as expenditures from states slow down, the release of GOI funds also reduces.

## Implications for Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

India faces a major challenge to not only connect the large number of unconnected villages by building roads, but also to upgrade and maintain the already existing road network, and to do so with a comprehensive gender perspective, resulting in incorporation of heterogeneities and specificities relating to the ground realities of women living in different regions and situations.<sup>23</sup> Following are some of the key implications that deserve attention for the proper implementation of the PMGSY.

- **Identification of the specific needs of women with regards to road connectivity:** Transport-based gender differences include Intensity of Transport Usage, Trip Purpose, Trip Patterns, Distance of Travel, Frequency of Travel, Mode of Transport, and Mobility Constraints. Women-specific needs are Transportation of

especially Primary Products as Head-load, Local Markets, Inter- and Intra-village Roads & Paths, NMT (non-motorised transport), Walking, Pedestrian & Sidewalk Use, and Security.<sup>24</sup>

- **Need for a greater role and funds for the State governments for maintenance and up gradation of roads:** Development of rural roads was originally a state subject. Still, from the fifth five year plan onwards, the central government took on some of this responsibility through several programmes such as, Minimum Needs Programme (MNP), the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP). PMGSY, a programme completely devoted to roads, is fully funded by the Central Government. The focus of the programme is more on building new roads, than on maintaining or up gradation of roads. But, the maintenance of roads is also very important for the sustainability and longevity of roads. The state governments need to be encouraged to take up a greater role in maintenance of roads, by equipping them with greater amount of funds and for more than the 5 year period currently inbuilt in the contractor conditions of the programme.

It is also suggested that the task of building the village roads may be assigned to the state governments, as the state governments are in a better position to understand the geographical particularities and nature of habitation of the area. For instance, “in the state of Kerala there are issues of connectivity in large expanses of water ways, the backwaters. Thus, Kerala should be allowed to include small pathways constructed between settlements (not necessarily surfaced) in the backwaters under PMGSY, including building bridges across Main District Roads or state highways to settlements along the backwaters which makes an enormous difference to peoples’ mobility.”<sup>25</sup>

- **Need for greater flexibility:** The point made above also points out to the need of building higher flexibility in the programme. If we take the case of Kerala again, unlike other parts of India where the inhabited part of a village and the cultivated part are easy enough to distinguish, in Kerala the settlement pattern is dispersed, not clustered and the houses are located near the cultivated fields. Additionally, there is sparse population in tribal/certain hilly areas where connectivity is really essential. It is therefore suggested that the state governments, may be allowed to build optimal connectivity in their states keeping in view the specificities of that state. Furthermore, a flexi pool of funds to be created for the State governments, to use it as per their specificities.<sup>26</sup>
- **Decentralization and greater role for the community:** To create a sense of ownership for the roads and to feel responsible for their maintenance, it is strongly recommended that local Gram Sabhas be involved in undertaking work at all levels under PMGSY. A sense of ownership for community assets, such as a road, will help in improving the longevity and responsible use of the asset. Women and men of the local community need to be proactively involved in the planning and implementation, including procurement activities. A key to building gender sensitivity would be the involvement of local women groups for community infrastructure management, including roads.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, guidelines could be disseminated in local languages for management and maintenance of roads.
- **Convergence between interlinked schemes:** Convergence between PMGSY and TSP, as well as MGNREGA, has been recommended for a considerable expansion of their positive impact on rural infrastructural development.<sup>28</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>This was the topic of discussion during the fourth Gender and Economic Policy Discussion (GEPD) Forum, co-organized by Heinrich Boll Stiftung, New Delhi and Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), New Delhi. Representatives from the non-profit sector and the government participated, to review the infrastructural development programmes, Total Sanitation Campaign and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in India. This paper presents the ideas and discussions that took place during the forum, and substantiates these ideas with some relevant data and research available. This paper is not meant to be a comprehensive and exhaustive presentation of the topic. It seeks to contribute to the body of research on the subject by presenting a mix of, academic, private and government experiences. This brief paper is mainly aimed to encourage further dialogue on the subject with a gender sensitive perspective.

<sup>2</sup>As shared by Ms. Jhabvala, at GEPD IV

<sup>3</sup>Eapen, M (2012), PPT slide 3

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, PPT slide 2

<sup>5</sup>Kumar, M (2012) PPT slide 3

<sup>6</sup>Nayyar (2005)

<sup>7</sup>MoRD (2010), p 3

<sup>8</sup>Spears, D (2012) p 2

<sup>9</sup>Snehalata & Anitha (2011) p 5

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, p 8

<sup>11</sup>Spears, D (2012) p 12

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, p 3

<sup>13</sup>Wateraid India (2006), p 3

<sup>14</sup>As shared by Ms. Jhabvala, at the GEPD forum IV

<sup>15</sup>Ibid

<sup>16</sup>Snehalata & Anitha (2011), p 34

<sup>17</sup>As opined by Dr. Kumar, at the GEPD forum IV

<sup>18</sup>Planning Commission & MoRD (2011), p 3

<sup>19</sup>As opined by Dr. Eapen, GEPD IV

<sup>20</sup>Dewan, R (2012b), p 1

<sup>21</sup>As opined by Dr. Eapen, GEPD IV

<sup>22</sup>Kapur (2011) p 2

<sup>23</sup>Dewan, R (2012b)

<sup>24</sup>Dewan, R (2012b)

<sup>25</sup>Eapen, M (2012) PPT slide no 21

<sup>26</sup>Ibid, PPT slide nos. 10, 17, 22

<sup>27</sup>Dewan, R (2012a), slide nos. 9 and 10

<sup>28</sup>Dewan, R (2012a), slide no 11

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