

Traditional occupation transformation into profitable opportunities Through rural roads

Introduction:

Rural road connectivity is integral to rural development, sustainable poverty reduction, and inclusive growth. Improved connectivity promotes access to economic opportunities and social services, impacting agricultural and non-agricultural productivity. It leads to expansion of rural growth opportunities and real income, thereby pushing the rural population out of poverty and deprivation.

Background:

Recognising the importance of rural connectivity, the Government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) as the national flagship programme in 2000. The Rural Connectivity Investment Program (RCIP) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) assists PMGSY through a multi-project financing facility to support constructing and upgrading to the all-weather standard of 3,998 rural roads equivalent to 13,884 kilometers benefiting 5,238 habitations in the RCIP States of Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal. PMGSY has identified 79,487 unconnected habitations in the RCIP states that are in urgent need of new road connectivity investments.

RCIP includes two independent yet mutually reinforcing components of road infrastructure development and institutional strengthening. The component of institutional strengthening includes improved institutional arrangements, business processes, and associated capacity building, especially in relation to design, operation, safeguard, financial, road safety, and asset management matters to ensure effective and sustainable investments in physical infrastructure in the RCIP-supported States. The positive impacts of RCIP roads on livelihood diversification, strengthening value chains and augmenting incomes have been observed in the village of Tikana in Odisha.

Details of the Intervention:

The women members of SHGs in the village of Tikana have been rearing cattle for generations. The women could not comprehend the value of their traditional role in cattle rearing till their village was connected under RCIP, and since then the village has witnessed a new direction to prosperity and growth. The village women have formed SHGs and are involved in dairy farming in an organized manner. Milk collection and supply has become easy as several auto-rickshaws and vans are used.

Impact:

The SHG members supply around 200 litres of milk every day to Puri, a popular religious hub in Odisha. As milk is a perishable commodity, it helps to have a timely collection and systematic supply chain. This was made possible due to improved road infrastructure and has provided steady business and income for several women SHGs.

Source: Asian Development Bank. (2019). India Gender Equality Results Case Study—Rural Connectivity Investment Program Connecting People, Transforming Lives.