

EXPANSION AND UPGRADATION OF NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

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Infrastructure sector is the prime mover of the economy and contributes to the faster economic growth and development. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is primarily responsible for development and maintenance of National Highways (NHs), including National High Speed Corridors (HSCs) / Expressways. NH network length in the country has increased from 91,287 km in March, 2014 to 1,46,572 km at present.

Development and maintenance of NHs, including NHs providing connectivity to urban, rural and industrial regions, is a continuous process. Works on NHs, including capacity augmentation, are accordingly taken up based on the traffic density, connectivity requirement, condition of the road and synergy with PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (NMP).

NHs are primarily meant for long distance connectivity. With increased budgetary allocation over the years, quality of roads has improved substantially. The length of operational Access Controlled National High Speed Corridors (HSCs) / Expressways has increased from 93 km in 2014 to 3,052 km at present. Length of 4 lane and above NH network (including Access controlled HSCs / Expressways) has increased by 2.6 times from 18,371 km in 2014 to 48,568 km at present. Also, proportion of less than 2-lane NHs has decreased from 30% in 2014 to 9% of the total NH network. The above developments have increased the connectivity and accessibility of urban, rural and industrial regions to the NH network across the country and also increased the logistics efficiency.

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Based on the study by Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore on impact of development of National Highways projects (2014-2022) in the country, broad findings are as under: -

- i. Every one-rupee expenditure in National Highway development leads to a ₹ 3.2 increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP);
- ii. The time taken for transportation between factories and suppliers has decreased by 9.19% in treatment districts vis-à-vis control districts;
- iii. The time taken for transportation between factories and customers has decreased by 4.93% in treatment districts as compared to control districts;
- iv. The time to access schools has decreased by 16.6% in treatment districts vis-à-vis control districts;
- v. There has been a 9% reduction in time to access health services in treatment districts as compared to control districts;
- vi. The average time to reach Mandis decreased by 7% in treatment districts as compared to control districts; and
- vii. The average number of Mandis accessed increased by 8% in treatment districts as compared to control districts.

Although Government is continuously engaged in the development of NHs to boost the economy, the responsibility for the last mile connectivity to agricultural centers, schools, health care centers, tourism centers etc. lies with respective State Governments only.

As per a seminal study conducted by Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur on the estimation of employment generated during construction of National Highways, construction of 1 lane-km of National Highway leads to direct employment generation of 4,478 person-days and indirect employment generation of 5,297 person-days. Further, the long-term impact of highway

construction leads to an induced employment generation of 52,393 person-days per lane-km over a period of 7 years driven by the increased economic activity in the region.

Government has constructed 57,125 km of NHs during last five years with average construction of 34,215 lane-km of NHs per year. This leads to average annual employment generation of about 33 Crore person-days including direct and indirect employment.

Government has targeted to operationalize 18,000 km of Access Controlled National HSCs

/ Expressways by 2028-29. Also, total 26,000 km of Access Controlled National HSCs / Expressways are targeted for award by 2032-33. Government has taken up the development of ring road / bypasses of cities with population of more than Five Lakh on priority. In addition, connectivity of ports as per the prioritization of Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Waterways and connectivity to Industrial nodes as per the priority of National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) are also taken up for development. The above proposed development will increase the logistics efficiency which will act as driver to economic growth.

This information was given by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari Ji in written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

GDH/HJ