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SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF PMGSY ON MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT (WEST BENGAL), INDIA

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Abstract

Sustained economic development of any region requires an efficient road transport network. It is generally considered a key ingredient for the growth and development. Roads play a significant role in promoting desirable transformation particularly in rural areas. Government of India has initiated Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) for the development of rural areas. PMGSY is intended to bring social transformation by establishing transportation link to the inhabited but unconnected villages apart from providing employment opportunities to the rural masses. Therefore, prime objective of the present study is to examine the impact of PMGSY scheme on socio-economic transformation of rural areas in Murshidabad district. For this purpose 10 PMGSY road segments connecting 10 villages of Murshidabad district have been selected to collect primary data from 250 respondents. The study reveals that due to improved road connectivity, physical distance has been reduced by 16 per cent and travel time has been reduced to the tune of 40 per cent in Domkal sub-division with implementation of PMGSY. Similarly, the travel cost has reduced by 20 per cent in the district as a whole.

Introduction

Transportation is generally considered an important indicator of development and thus, road transportation routes may truly be viewed as arteries through which impetus of development flows. The nation cannot achieve higher level of development without percolating fruits of development in rural areas of India, channeled through road network. Roads play very significant role in the socio-economic development of the areas by providing access to the outer world. Kanthimathinathan (2006) noted that improvement in transportation services lead to the improved access to market centers for the rural producers and better availability of farm

inputs at reduced prices. He has further observed that improved market access resulted in diversification of agriculture in favour of cash crops and commercialization of agricultural activities. Road infrastructure is a prerequisite both for the foreign direct investment inflow and economic growth (Ivanova and Masarova, 2013). Similarly, Aldagheiri (2009) investigated the role of road transport network in the economic development of Saudi Arabia and observed that “without a functional and modern road network, national development on the scale achieved would not have been possible, as the existence of an adequate network of roads is a basic necessity for the economic and social

progress of any developing country”.

Road network is considered to be the single most important factor for economic development and promotion of quality of life. Implementation of many schemes largely depends on efficient road connectivity. There is a considerable body of evidence that demonstrates the links between rural road investment, decline in poverty, and improvement in the quality of life. Road investment contributes directly to the enhancement of agricultural yield by facilitating the use of fertilizer and other agricultural inputs. Thus, improvements in rural roads are also helpful towards alleviation of poverty in rural areas. Agricultural development in India is the result of road infrastructural development. Improvements in rural connectivity especially in the agricultural states may be helpful to reduce large differences between prices at the agricultural marketing yards and the farm gate prices (Lokesha and Mahesha, 2016). Similar observations are also pointed out by Mamun and Paul (2017) about Jalangi block of Murshidabad district in West Bengal. On the other hand, inequality of road infrastructure leads to disparity in the level of development (Adedeji et al., 2014). Kapoor (2014) analyzed the role of road transport in Himachal Pradesh and pointed that all weather road connectivity in rural areas impacts socio-economic and infrastructural development. Similarly, Singh (2015) noticed the role of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) on socio-economic development and infrastructural improvement of Bastar district.

In the contemporary period of electronic and digitally driven world, the relevance of roads has not been lost. In spite of ensuing the era of digital communication and information technology revolution, physical connection or linkage is considered to be one of the most

effective criteria for the overall development of any region. Rural area, being the smaller unit of civilization, certainly requires physical linkages to be developed. In this regard, roads have been considered as the fundamental arteries of human civilization and backbone of the nation especially in the rural areas where other modes of transportation are largely not available. Thus, the role of roads in development is imperative to a number of spheres of rural life including diversification of livelihood opportunities, enhancement of agricultural income and improved rural services etc. The study of connectivity by roads gains importance when one is interested to know the level of socio-economic development in any area, as the roads provide basic infrastructural facilities to improve development. In fact, roads are cause as well as effect of development (Rani and Chamar, 2016).

PMGSY was launched on December 25, 2000 as a centrally sponsored project to provide good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected rural areas with a minimum population of 500 in the plains and 250 in the hill states, tribal districts and desert areas. The scheme also permits the up-gradation of the existing roads in such areas if they have not all-weather road connectivity. Thus, effort has been made in this study to assess the role of PMGSY in bringing socio-economic and cultural transformation in the study area.

Objectives

Major objectives of the study are:

- to find out the changes that have occurred with respect to physical distance, travel time, selection of service centers and marketing centers after implementation of PMGSY.
- to find out the changes that have taken place in the socio-economic conditions

of the rural population of study area after the road connectivity provided under PMGSY.

Study Area

The study area (Murshidabad district) is located between 23°43' 30" N and 24°52'30" N latitudes and 87°49'17" E and 88°44'00" E longitudes (Fig. 1). With 5316.11 km² of area, the district is situated on the eastern peripheral plains of the state of West Bengal and it is the northern most district of the Presidency Division. Administratively, the district is divided into 5 sub-divisions and 26 Community Development (CD) Blocks. The demographic feature of the district reveals that it is primarily a rural district with merely 19.7 per cent of the residents living in urban areas according to Census of India, 2011. Literacy rate of the district stands at 66.6 per cent in 2011; much lower than the state average of 76.3 per cent. On the other hand, the density of population of the district is 1,334 persons per km² in 2011. During the 2001-11 decade, the district recorded a staggering population growth rate of 21 per cent, the third highest in the state.

The population of the district primarily depends on intensive subsistence agriculture. However, a few cash crops such as jute and oilseeds are produced along with mango and lichi orchards. There exists large scale poverty, unemployment and illiteracy in the predominantly minority dominated district. Therefore, the district is characterized as one of the most backward districts in the state. The district has 1226.49 km of pucca roads resulting road density of only 0.163 km per km². As a matter of fact, the district is having one of the lowest road lengths per 1000 persons in the state.

Database and Methodology

The present study is based on primary

data collected by administering a survey schedule during 2018. The district has five sub-divisions. Two blocks have been selected from each sub-division and one PMGSY road connecting a habitation with adjoining urban centre has been chosen from a village of each selected block. Finally, 25 respondents have been chosen from each habitation connected by selected PMGSY. Thus, 250 sample respondents were administered survey schedule to assess benefits of the scheme (Table 1). Group discussions and in-depth-interview methods are also applied for better understanding of the effectiveness of PMGSY programme. The study is also supplemented with information collected from different books, journals, websites etc. to fulfill the objectives. The detailed information on PMGSY roads is taken from Murshidabad Zila Parisad Office, Berhampore. Subsequently, the data have been tabulated, synthesized, and presented in tables.

Results and Discussion

Road Connectivity to the Nearest Administrative Headquarters

Prior to the implementation of PMGSY, the villagers generally used to visit the panchayat office, urban centres, sub-divisional office, district headquarters etc. to avail urban and administrative services with great hardship. With the improvement of road connectivity after the implementation of PMGSY, travel problems being faced by the villagers have been reduced. Considerable changes have taken place in terms of travel time incurred to undertake journey to avail administrative services at the nearest municipality, sub-divisional headquarter and district headquarter. The study reveals that there has been substantial reduction of travel time due to implementation of PMGSY. However, impact on travel distance has been

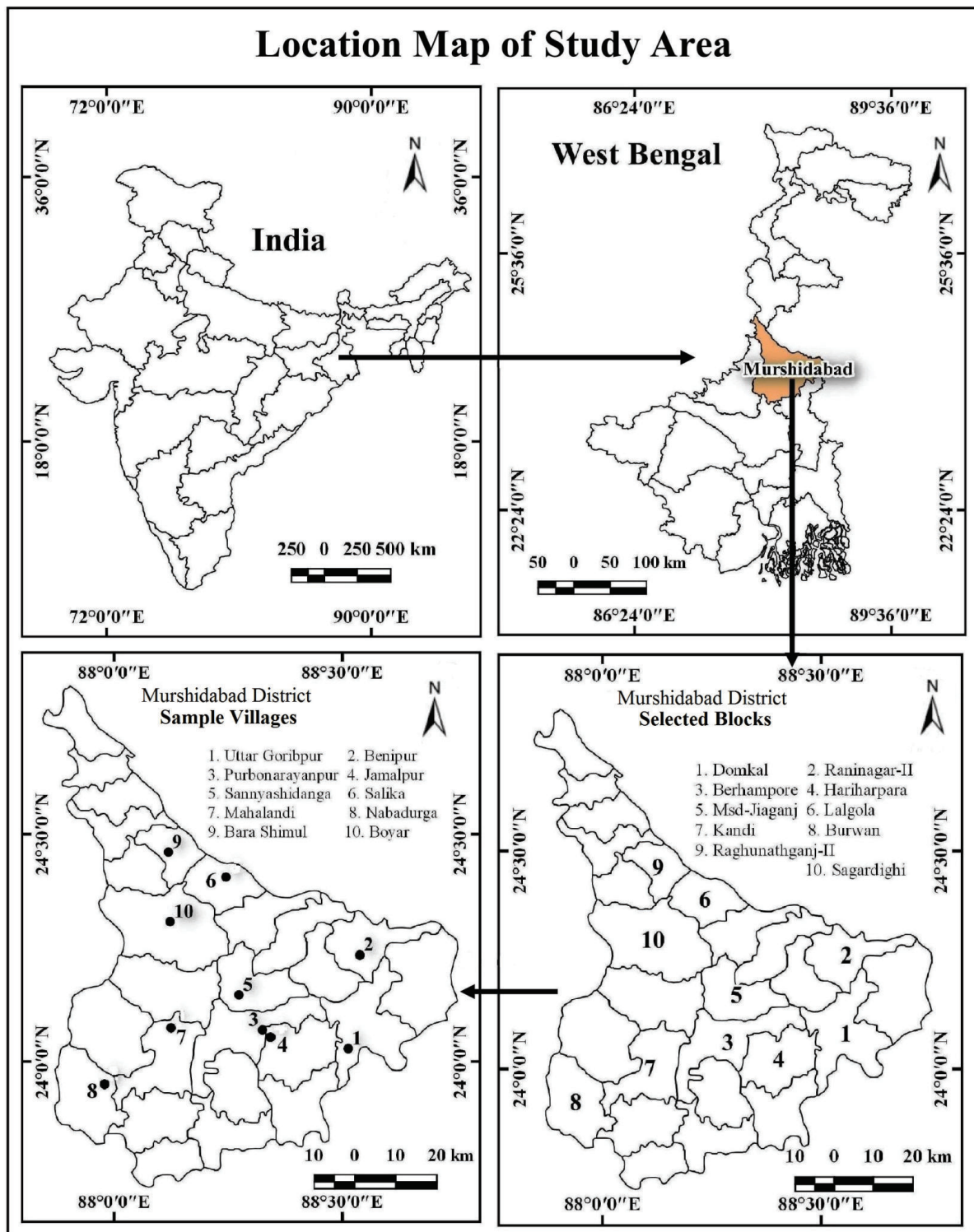


Fig. 1

Table 1
Murshidabad District: Habitations Surveyed and number of Sample Respondents

C.D. Blocks	Habitations	No. of Respondents	Connecting PMGSY Roads
Domkal	Uttar Goribpur	25	Bildamas to Garibpur
Raninagar-II	Benipur	25	Sitanagar Pucca Road to Banipur
Berhampore	Purbonarayanpur	25	Kumarardaha to Kadbeltala via Tiktikipara
Hariharpara	Jamalpur	25	Baruipara Telkal to Jamalpur
Msd-Jiaganj	Sannyashidanga	25	Talgachi to Motijhil
Lalgola	Salika	25	Link of Siteshnagar to Salika
Burwan	Nabadurga & Kumrai	25	SH11 to Nabadurga
Kandi	Mohalandi	25	Nabagram to Mahalandi Pucca road
Raghunathganj-II	Bara Shimul	25	Bahura to Kodarampur
Sagardighi	Boyar	25	Boyer to Popara

Table 2
Murshidabad District: Impact of PMGSY on Availing Urban/Administrative Services

Sub Divisions	C. D. Blocks	Nearest Municipality Change (per cent)		Sub-Division Office Change (per cent)		District Headquarters Change (per cent)	
		Distance	Time	Distance	Time	Distance	Time
Domkal	Domkal	-1.19	-40.00	-1.19	-40.00	0.00	-18.00
	Raninagar-II	-29.19	-34.79	-29.51	-34.25	0.00	-21.43
	Average	-15.58	-36.91	-15.67	-36.59	0.00	-19.23
Berhampore	Berhampore	0.00	-22.73	0.00	-22.73	0.00	-22.73
	Hariharpara	0.00	-30.61	0.00	-30.61	0.00	-30.61
	Average	0.00	-26.09	0.00	-26.09	0.00	-26.09
Lalbag	Lalbag	0.00	-34.62	-12.50	-32.31	0.00	-32.69
	Lalgola	0.00	25.97	0.00	-15.29	0.00	-14.77
	Average	0.00	-29.46	-2.36	-19.28	0.00	-21.43
Kandi	Burwan	0.00	-32.50	0.00	-32.50	0.00	-25.00
	Kandi	0.00	-33.33	0.00	-34.29	0.00	-33.33
	Average	0.00	-33.00	0.00	-33.64	0.00	-27.78
Jangipur	Raghunathganj-II	0.00	-34.15	0.00	-34.88	0.00	-18.09
	Sagardighi	0.00	-27.17	0.00	-29.25	0.00	-20.73
	Average	0.00	-29.32	0.00	-30.87	0.00	-19.32
District average		-3.12	-30.96	-3.61	-29.29	0.00	-22.77

Source: Computed by Authors based on primary survey

nominal. Taking into account district average, it has been found that the travel time to access the nearest municipality, sub-divisional and district headquarter has been reduced by 30.96, 29.29 and 22.77 per cent, respectively after the implementation of PMGSY (Table 2). Such reduction in travel time has taken place due to

the introduction of faster mode of transportation and better road condition.

It is further revealed from the analysis of change in travel time that it is the Domkal sub-divisional areas which have been benefited most with 36.91 per cent and 36.59 per cent decline in travel time to reach the nearest

municipality and sub-divisional headquarter, while Kandi sub-division received maximum benefit of reduction of travel time (27.78 per cent) to reach the district headquarter to avail administrative services. On the other hand, Berhampore, Lalbag and Domkal sub-divisions are least benefited by recording 26.09, 19.28 and 19.23 per cent reduction in travel time to avail administrative services of municipality, sub-division office and district headquarter, respectively (Table 2).

However, at district level there has been little reduction in travel distance as it was only 3.12 per cent for the nearest municipality and 3.61 per cent in case of sub-divisional headquarter, while no change has been recorded in travel distance to district headquarter (Table 2). To be specific, it can be said that it is the Raninagar-II block that has been benefited most in terms of reduction in the travel distance after the implementation of PMGSY roads. The travel distance in this block has been reduced by 29.19 and 29.51 per cent to reach the nearest municipality and sub-divisional headquarters, respectively (Table 2). A minor reduction of 12.50 per cent in travel distance to reach sub-divisional headquarter has also been noticed in case of Lalbag block. Thus, after the implementation of PMGSY, the villagers can now easily visit the administrative offices due to the reduction of physical distance and availability of faster and less time consuming modes of transport. The study reveals that due to change in types of vehicles used from small individual-vehicle to large public vehicles and also due to change from traditional and manual/animated energy driven vehicles to modern and motorized vehicles, the travel cost has also been reduced.

Improvements in the Utilization of Educational Facilities

Education is very important ingredient of

development of human resources in the modern society. Schooling improves human resources leading to increase in income associated with better productivity both in primary and secondary sectors of economy (Mangat and Gill, 2015). During pre-PMGSY period, most of the villagers were not sending their children for education to the institutions located at far away places. It was particularly true for the girls. The risks owing to hazardous path as well as inclement weather condition etc. used to be the major deterrents. However, due to increasing interactions with the urban centres after the development of PMGSY connectivity, the villagers are coming out from their traditional conception and started sending their children for education out of villages at distant places. Scientific thoughts and available technology have prompted them to utilize modern educational facilities. In the changed scenario, they have not only started sending their children out of the villages for education, but also started choosing educational institutions on the basis of quality of education imparted. Thus, with improved transportation facilities, distance as a deterrent in the way of education has largely lost its relevance.

Table 3 shows that the distance covered by the students of sample habitations to avail primary school education remained unchanged after the construction of PMGSY roads in all the sub-divisions. However, the travel time has been reduced by 19.62 to 15.13 per cent in Berhampore and Kandi subdivisions. While, at the district level, travel time to avail primary education has been reduced by 17.26 per cent after the PMGSY roads came into existence. The study reveals that there has been no change in travel distance to avail secondary education during pre-PMGSY and post-PMGSY period (Table 4). On the other hand, the time taken for availing higher secondary school education is remarkably reduced in all the sub-divisions due

Table 3
Murshidabad District: Impact of PMGSY on availing Primary School Education

Sub-Divisions	Distance of Primary School (km)			Travel Time to reach Primary School (Minute)		
	Before	After	Rate of Change (per cent)	Before	After	Rate of Change (per cent)
Domkal	0.64	0.64	0.0	10.24	8.38	-18.16
Berhampore	0.63	0.63	0.0	10.60	8.52	-19.62
Lalbag	0.68	0.68	0.0	10.85	8.95	-17.51
Kandi	0.65	0.65	0.0	10.97	9.31	-15.13
Jangipur	0.83	0.83	0.0	10.70	9.00	-15.89
Average	0.69	0.69	0.0	10.67	8.83	-17.26

Source: Computed by Authors based on primary survey

Table 4
Murshidabad District: Impact of PMGSY on availing Higher Secondary School Education

Sub-Divisions	Distance of Secondary School (km)			Travel Time to Senior Secondary School (Minute)		
	Before	After	Rate of Change (per cent)	Before	After	Rate of Change (per cent)
Domkal	4.35	4.35	0.0	45	23	-48.89
Berhampore	1.90	1.90	0.0	18	11	-38.89
Lalbag	4.45	4.45	0.0	37	26	-29.73
Kandi	1.18	1.18	0.0	18	10	-44.44
Jangipur	1.80	1.80	0.0	26	14	-46.15
Average	2.74	2.74	0.0	28.8	16.8	-41.62

Source: Computed by Authors based on primary survey

to construction of roads in spite of the distance being unchanged. A reduction of 41.62 per cent of travel time to reach senior secondary schools has been recorded at district level (Table 4). While, the Domkal sub-division has been benefited the most as travel time to avail secondary education facilities has declined to the tune of 48.89 per cent. On the other hand, Lalbag sub-division is least benefited with 29.73 per cent reduction in travel time to avail secondary education facilities in the district with the implementation of PMGSY scheme (Table 4).

Change in Utilization of Primary Health Services

Like educational facilities, accessibility to health services also depends on the

characteristics of road network. The study highlights that, although there is no significant reduction in the distance to visit primary health centres after the construction of roads under PMGSY, yet the travel time has significantly declined by 41.18 per cent in the district due to improved connectivity through PMGSY. It has been found that the improved road connectivity has highly benefitted the population of Uttar Goribpur, Nabadurga, Kumrai and Purbonarayanpur villages. People of these villages have to spend less than 50 per cent time than they used to spend earlier for availing Primary Health Centre (PHC) and Block Primary Health Centre (BPHC) facilities located at Dobapara, Kuligram and Tikatipara (Table 5). Now they have to spend 56.84, 52.83 and 51.61 per cent less travel time to visit

Table 5
Murshidabad District: Impact of PMGSY on availing Primary Health Services

C.D. Blocks	Village Surveyed	PHC/BPHC (Service Centers)	Distance (km)			Travel Time (Minute)		
			Before	After	Change (%)	Before	After	Reduction (%)
Domkal	Uttar Goribpur	Dobapara	2.8	2.8	0.00	38	16	56.84
Raninagar-II	Benipur	Godhanpara	3.1	3.1	0.00	31	20	35.48
Berhampore	Purbonarayanpur	Tikatipara	1.1	1.1	0.00	12	06	51.61
Hariharpara	Jamalpur	Baharan	1.4	1.4	0.00	20	14	30.00
Murshidabad-Jiaganj	Sannyashidanga	Sannyashidanga	0.7	0.7	0.00	11	07	34.55
Lalgola	Salika	Krishnapur	4.0	4.0	0.00	40	30	25.00
Burwan	Nabadurga & Kumrai	Kuligram	3.6	3.6	0.00	53	25	52.83
Kandi	Mohalandi	Gokarna	3.5	3.3	-5.71	39	23	41.03
Raghunathganj-II	Bara Shimul	Khodarampur	2.2	2.2	0.00	24	12	48.33
Sagardighi	Boyar	Sagardighi	4.3	4.3	0.00	36	23	36.11
Overall scenario of change			2.7	2.7	-0.6	30.4	17.7	41.2

Source: Computed by Authors based on primary survey

Dobapara, Kuligram and Tikatipara health centres, respectively. Similarly, the residents of villages like Bara Shimul and Mohalandi have to spend at least 40 per cent less time as compared to what they were spending to avail health facilities, respectively found in Khodarampur and Gokarna after the introduction of PMGSY (Table 5). Whereas, some of the habitations such a Salika availing Krishnapur BPHC, Jamalpur availing Baharan PHC and Boyar visiting Sgardighi PHC have been respectively benefited by 25.00, 30.00 and 36.11 per cent reduction in travel time after the construction of PMGSY roads (Table 5). Thus, it is concluded that the residents of all the villages under study have been benefited by construction of roads under PMGSY to avail primary health services.

Further, it has also been noticed during the survey that, due to difficulties in travel and transport, the interaction with people beyond the habitation was much limited prior to construction of PMGSY. It was beyond the vision and capability of many villagers to go to the block, sub-divisional or district level hospitals to avail medical services. But in the post-PMGSY period villagers can easily make use of the facilities of primary health centres

available in the blocks. At present, they can also avail the health facilities located at sub-divisional and district headquarters through ambulance and availability of other means of transportation in the study area.

Impact of PMGSY Roads on the Agricultural Economy

Agriculture and allied activities are the main occupations of the villagers under study. Development of PMGSY roads has benefitted the people not only in selling their agricultural produce at reasonable rates but also to purchase agricultural inputs and tools at competitive rates. The study shows that out of 10 beneficiary habitations, three habitations like Uttar Garibpur, Purbo Narayanpur and Nabadurga-Kumrai of Domkal, Berhampore and Burwan CD blocks, have changed their marketing centres. Now due to the development of PMGSY roads, they are visiting Bagdanga, Chunakhali and Kuli, respectively for selling surplus agricultural produce (Table 6). Although, the residents of all such villages are travelling relatively more distant markets, yet in terms of travel time per unit of distance they have been substantially benefited due to change in the mode of

Table 6
Murshidabad District: Impact of PMGSY on Change in Market Centers for Selling Agricultural Produce and Purchasing Agricultural Inputs

Habitation Surveyed	C D Block	Marketing Centers Visited before PMGSY			Marketing Centers Visited after PMGSY		
		Name	Distance (km)	Travel Time (minute)	Name	Distance (km)	Travel Time (minute)
Uttar Garibpur	Domkal	Uttar Garibpur	0.8	10	Bagdanga	5.0	30
Benipur	Raninagar-II	Godhanpara	1.9	20	Godhanpara	2.1	14
Purbonarayanpur	Berhampore	Kumradaha ghat	1.6	17	Chunakhali	8.0	32
Jamalpur	Hariharpara	Baruipara Bazar	0.9	14	Baruipara Bazar	0.9	09
Sannyashidanga	Murshidabad-Jiaganj	Nimtala	5.6	34	Nimtala	5.6	18
Salika	Lalgola	Deoghar Bazar	1.6	22	Deoghar Bazar	1.6	15
Nabadurga & Kumrai	Burwan	Nabadurga	0.5	07	Kuli	3.6	28
Mohalandi	Kandi	Highway Crossing	1.4	21	Highway Crossing	1.4	14
Bara Shimul	Raghunathganj-II	Fadilpur	2.2	23	Fadilpur	2.2	15
Boyar	Sagardighi	Sagardighi Bazar	4.3	36	Sagardighi Bazar	4.3	23

Source: Computed by Authors based on primary survey

Table 7
Murshidabad District: Impact of PMGSY on Change in Choosing Markets to Purchase Daily Requirements

Daily Requirement Items	Requirement	Distance of Market (km)		Travel Time to Market (minute)	
		Before	After	Before	After
Grocery		2.0	3.0	21	17
Electric goods		4.2	4.4	30	19
Clothes		3.3	6.2	27	25
Dairy Products		2.3	2.0	22	14
Petrol & Diesel		6.6	5.0	41	20
District Average		3.7	4.1	28.2	19

Source: Computed by Authors based on primary survey

transportation. For example, in case of Purbonarayanpur per kilometer distance can now be covered within 4 minutes to reach Chunakhali which was more than 10 minutes to reach Kumradahaghat marketing centre before implementation of PMGSY. Thus, the inhabitants, in the changed environment, are in a position to travel much longer distance within short span of time to sell their agricultural produce. Villagers are also benefited while purchasing agricultural inputs at cheaper rates from the agricultural markets where they sell their produce.

Although, for majority of the beneficiary villages surveyed, the marketing centres have not changed, yet the inhabitants have certainly been benefitted from the construction of roads under PMGSY as they are spending less time to visit marketing centers (Table 6). Thus, after the construction of the PMGSY roads, the villagers can go easily to the nearby market centres to sell their agricultural produce within a short duration of time due to the availability of tractor, truck, motorized van etc. replacing traditional paddle van, bullock cart, and horse cart. Previously, lack of transportation had been a serious problem and villagers were unable to use new agricultural implements, devices and other inputs. They were mostly dependent on farm yard manure as fertilizer and traditional seeds produced by their own efforts. Villagers also used traditional tools and techniques. But the situation went through a major change after the construction of the rural roads under PMGSY.

Change in Distance and Travel Time for Purchasing of Daily Requirements

The study reveals that items such as clothes, grocery and electric goods are now purchased from market located at 87.88, 50.00 and 4.76 per cent more distance (Table 7). The increase in distance can be perceived from the

fact that PMGSY roads offer alternative markets located at distant places. However, residents require 7.41, 19.05 and 36.67 per cent less time, to purchase clothes, grocery and electric goods, respectively (Table 7). The increase of distance has happened as the villagers are now taking different routes following PMGSY roads due to better road condition and availability of public vehicles and thus, ease of travel is prime concern. However, major impact of PMGSY roads is found in case of the purchase of petrol and diesel and dairy products. In case of these items, the new markets are available at shorter distance of 24.24 and 13.04 per cent and travel time has been reduced by 51.22 and 36.36 per cent, respectively (Table 7). Taking into account the district as a whole, it has been noticed that although the travel distance has increased by 21.07 per cent, yet the travel time has been reduced by 30.14 per cent to access various markets.

Thus, PMGSY imprints are quite visible in purchase of basic daily requirements in the study area. After the construction of the road under PMGSY scheme, the rural people access markets for their requirements like grocery, electrical equipment and clothes from relatively long distance markets but spending less time compared to time spent earlier. It has also been found that a number of petrol filling stations have come up in the study area along the PMGSY roads leading to reduction of distance and time to access the refueling stations.

Thus, with the implementation of PMGSY, a number of positive changes have taken place in the selected habitations to avail different services and facilities. A road network is usually established in a region with a view to facilitate economic and social interaction in space both at the intra and inter-regional levels. It plays an important role in shaping the

economy of an area (Rani and Chamar, 2016). With economic progress, the life of people of this rural society has also undergone a change. With the improvement in standard of living, the villagers are now using various kinds of items related to grocery, confectionaries, cosmetics and personal care items, clothes, dairy products, electrical and electronic equipments etc. Before the PMGSY got implemented, these items were either largely not available in the nearby rural areas under study or had to be collected with great deal of difficulty from distant markets. After the implementation of PMGSY scheme, some commodities are now easily available within the area, while others can easily be purchased from the well connected nearby markets.

Conclusions

The present study conclusively reveals that the implementation of PMGSY in the villages of Murshidabad has brought a great deal of transformation in terms of reducing travel time in utilization of different services, while travel distance is reduced in some selected cases. Accessing health and education services and availing different facilities required for agriculture including purchasing agricultural inputs and selling agricultural outputs have gone through positive change to a greater extent. Villagers at present can easily avail improved educational and health services which are mostly available in the urban centres. The people in the study area are now in a position to make much more profit for being able to take their surplus agricultural produce directly to the market bypassing intermediaries. Similarly, different items of daily requirements are now easily available due to improved transportation network. The villagers are now not only in position to avail different services at competitive rates but they can choose these on the basis of quality as well. The interaction of

the inhabitants of these newly connected habitations with outside world has increased. As a result, the socio-political and cultural awareness of the people has remarkably improved. Thus, on the whole, it may be said that implementation of PMGSY scheme has played a substantial positive role in the improvement of socio-economic conditions of the habitations under study. Therefore, the study reveals that connecting 'Rural Bharat' to 'Urban India' has been significantly accomplished through implementation of PMGSY in the study area.

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