

**Gender Monitoring of  
New Development Bank Project**

**Major District Roads  
Madhya Pradesh, India**

**Key Findings**

## Introduction

The study was undertaken to monitor NDB project namely: **“Major District Road Construction Project”** implemented by the Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation (MPRDC) with gender perspective. The study was conducted in January 2019 by Programme for Women’s Economic Social and Cultural Rights (PWESCR) and BRICS Feminist Watch (BFW) in collaboration with Ekta Parishad in three districts namely: Sagar, and Ashok Nagar in Madhya Pradesh. The road construction project of NDB is aimed at up-gradation and widening of major district roads. The implementing agency i.e. MPRDC categorized the road construction project in to 24 packages with 64 roads in the state.

## Area

For field research we chose Ashok Nagar and Sagar district and 7 roads were studied from social and environmental aspect from a feminist approach and included issues of land, labour. Roads visited included:

In Ashok Nagar District:      Aron Ashok Nagar Road (11.69 km.)  
   Bharoli Ajlesjwar Road (19.72 Km.)  
   Hapakhedi Panwari Road (16.50 Km.)

In Sagar District:                Devri Sehejpur Road (21.30 Km.)  
   Pali Peergate Kanjiya Road (36.81km.)  
   Bhapel Jaisinagar Road (24.76 km.)  
   Shahgarh Baraytha Road (25 Km)

The study is based on the visits, interviews, observations and discussions with various stakeholders. The villagers, men, women contractors, subcontractors, engineers, workers and travelers whoever were affected, both positively and negatively were contacted. We are grateful for the support provided by MPRDC and all its engineers.

## Key Findings:

Many facts were observed, reported and discussed with the villagers (both male and female), labour engaged in construction sites, farmers, contractors, sub-contractors, engineers, MPRDC consultant during the visits. Many glaring problems emerged during the interviews and discussions. The following were key findings of the study:

- MPRDC contracted the work to private contractors. It was further subcontracted to some other contractors. Final work execution was done by some third parties or the local contractors. The local contractor further engaged another contractor for labour and the workers. Following are the contractors, subcontractors and engineering consultancy firms engaged for the roads under this study:

District	No of Roads	Contractor Name	Sub-Contractor	Engineer Consultant Firm
Ashok Nagar	3	M/s Gawar Cosntruction Ltd Gurgaon	Parivartan Construction	L.N Malviya Infra Projects Pvt. Ltd. Bhopal
Sagar	3	M/s KCC Buildcon Ltd Gurgaon	Parivartan Construction	Highway Engineering Consultancy Bhopal
	1	M/s Diamond Construction Company- M/s Gawar Construction Ltd.	Diamond Construction	Highway Engineering Consultancy

- The engineers and the contractors engaged are experts in technical aspects of road construction but there is absolutely **no understanding of any environment and social framework (ESF)** including gender among anyone working on this project.
- **We could not find any proof of any training on ESF framework for the contractors, subcontractors or the engineers done.** The only training, we learnt of was on HIV Aids awareness program has been conducted in Hapakhedi Panwadi village.
- **System of bidding:** The tender goes to the lowest bidder. Sometime the contract is given to contractors that bid 30 to 40% lower than the estimated costs. Under such circumstances the contractor is not able to squeeze in raw material or process as it is monitored well. The area such squeezes are made are usually in labour.
- The emphasis is on 'efficiency' – there is pressure as engineers shared to get timely execution of the project. Under such pressure environment and social safeguards are totally ignored. There is no costing done to ensure environment and social safeguards are followed and hence totally ignored.
- The project **lacks transparency and accountability** at all levels. Project related documents including ESF assessment, contact details of implementation organization, information about consultations, and other details are not made public. This prevents women's and people's participation.
- **Gender blind, women are totally ignored:** There are no women in any aspect of the project. – not in the team – all male team of male engineers, male contractors, male workers. No women were involved in any village consultations if they were held at all. Not a singlewoman got employment in this project at any level.
- As per the **Environment and Social Framework** *"NDB believes that gender equality is important to successful and sustainable economic development and accordingly considers it imperative to mainstream gender equality issues in all its operations"*.
- The general understanding is that it is road construction- it benefits both man and women. There is absolutely no understanding of gender, and hence of the differential gendered impacts of infrastructure. **By ignoring women, the project perpetuates gender stereotypes and increases gender inequalities at all levels.**

## Community Consultations:

- *Community consultations is an important component of NDB policy framework. NDB ESF policy actually says “consultation must be a meaningful process that is gender inclusive and responsive, tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups.*
- *People we met reported they were not consulted, and no systematic thorough assessment was done before the road was constructed. No public consultations prior to the sanction and construction of the roads.*
- *According to E&S progress report submitted by MPRDC only a total of 57 community consultations were done. The number of participants at these consultations are not representative of the village population or demographics. This was done as a compliance requirement as opposed to an important step to ensure sustainable development – people’s ownership and engagement. We could not verify such consultation in several of the villages we visited.*
- *Women totally absent from such consultations. Neither NDB nor the implementation agency (MPRDC in this case) have any mandatory requirements to include women/improve representation in community consultations. Women are discouraged and often not considered to participate in gram-sabhas or in community decision making process due to existing social norms.*
- *People expressed their extreme insecurity and said they did not want the road. They are afraid their houses will be broken, and their land will be taken forcibly.*
- *At Bharoli where such meeting was held the conversation was about school education with 13 people and lasted only 15 minutes.*
- *Most of the people we met said they did not want this road. People complained in some of the villages that the road was not the significant requirement in the area because majority of the households are agriculture based.*





Workers at Pali Kanjiya Road Worksite

## Labour Rights: Bonded Migrant labour

- No women are hired in the entire project
- Labour contractors are subcontracted.
- Contractors don't hire locals but bring migrants from other states or poorer tribal areas of the state.
- Workers are not given any labour contract, no clear transparent document that lists wages and other terms and conditions. Could not be verified if minimum wages are being paid.
- Workers don't have any daily attendance document
- Wages are withheld and workers are given weekly subsistence allowance of Rs 500 only. The fear is if the workers are paid in full, they will quit and leave.
- Workers are living (cooking, working, sleeping on the roads in cramped tent (one tent housing 8 to 10 workers) with no provision for toilets or water. In some places the contractor gave the workers a water tanker. Workers lived in horrendous along the road side.
- We did not find workers using any protective gear
- In one road workers we found were not paid for 2 months.
- No worker found aware of Cess for Construction worker and no one is given any Cess benefits.
- Labour rights were also violated. It was reported by the workers that though the wages were fixed but they were not paid, and the payments were not done in time.



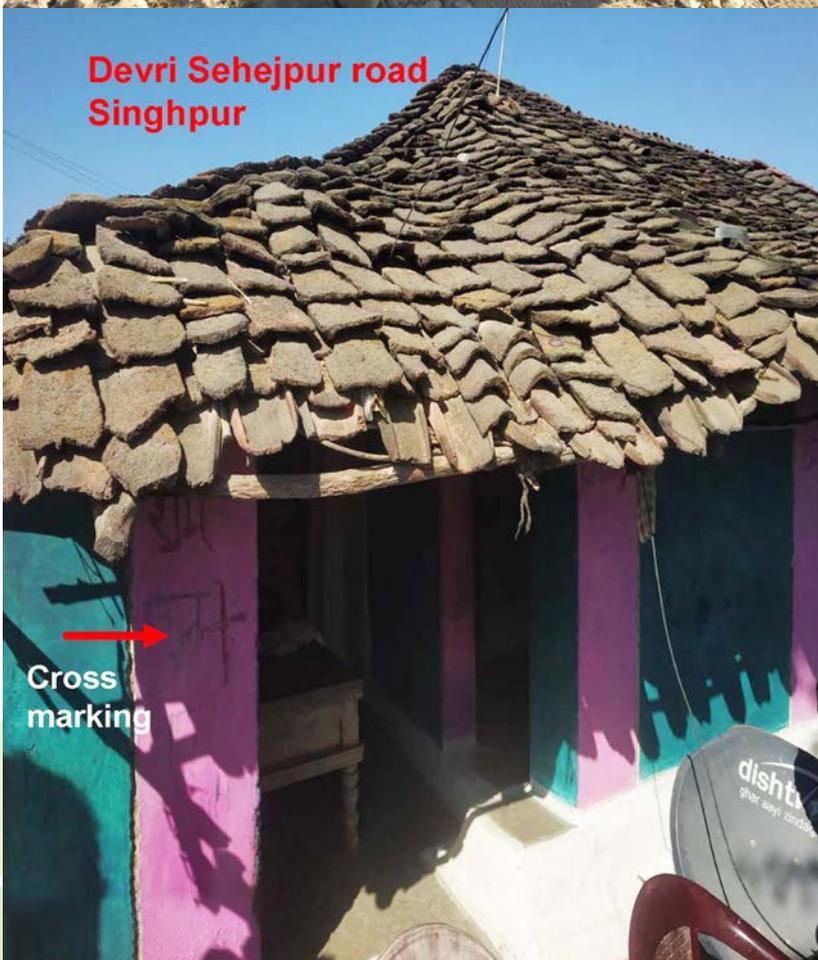
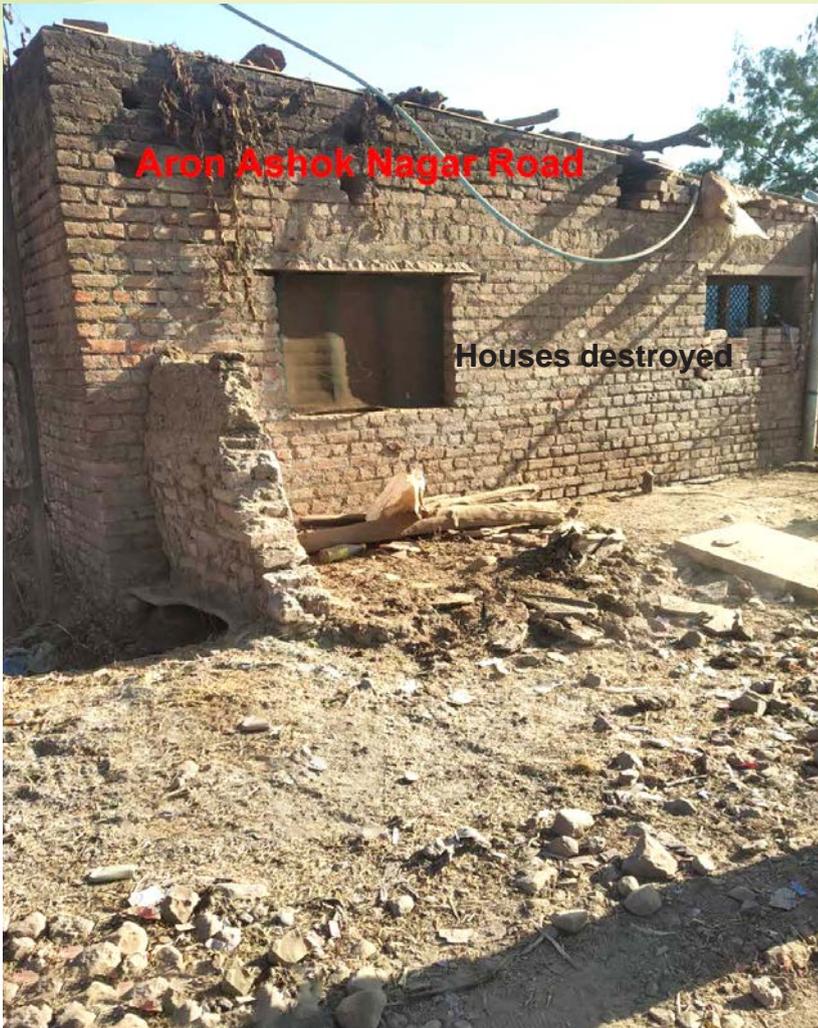


## Issues of Land grabbing, destruction of property, eviction, and damage to livelihoods:

- The Environment and Social progress report of MPRDC says no land was acquired. The engineers we met also told us that no land was 'officially' acquired for this project. We found the project acquired land from people willingly or by force and by threatening. Contractor even physically assaulted locals. Villagers in Dagrai suffered injuries due to beatings from contractors while preventing acquisition of their agricultural land. We also heard complaints from several villagers about destruction of their agriculture land in Singhpur.
- In some of the case we found land was acquired from poor farmers for widening the existing roads, however, no road widening happened only the shoulder was widened. This land acquisition was insensitive and unnecessary.
- We found agriculture land close to the road is also damaged by debris being dumped in an extremely insensitive and casual approach of contractors and engineers in several villages we visited including Singhpur. Rocks and waste materials were found on the road shoulder and disposed in people's fields.
- Left over cement was disposed in agricultural land which led to damage of crop and soil of farmers in Singhpur.
- Contractors took soil from agricultural fields without any permission.
- In one of the cases in Hapakhedi Panwari, land was acquired from a farmer and a pit has been dug out on false promise of construction of a well for the villagers. The promise was not fulfilled.
- Diversions to build bridges have taken huge part of people's land without permission as found in Bharoli village.
- We found incidences of water pump, toilet, drainage destroyed at several places

**Bharoli Village**





- People's houses were broken to expand the road without any compensation or due process. We found several such cases in Dagrai, Mohrikalan and Singhpur.
- People were also asked to evict from their homes without any notice or due process. After living there for generations, the home owners were told they were living there illegally and had to vacate. No compensation was given.
- Crosses were put on people's home by contractors telling them that government (Public Works Department (PWD) has the right of way) and the house was an encroachment on government land and hence would be destroyed till the cross marking for the new road.
- Trees uprooted without informing the owners during the road construction and haven't been re-planted.

## Issues of water logging and drainage:

- No systematic assessment with community involvement was done. The new roads are constructed higher which blocks the natural flow of water. Villagers from Dagrai with houses in the lower areas fear flooding of their homes during raining seasons.
- Project only has provision for building drains in build-up roads but not in other places there were fear of flooding in many villages.
- In Mohri Kalan village the road construction closed the existing drainage resulting in flooding of dirty sewage water in the village. This would get even worse in monsoons.
- In Bharoli, the villagers were concerned about a similar issue as the village has previously faced recurrent floods.
- In Hapakhedi panwadi village, the new road obstructed the outlet of the drainage. Hence, proper assessment of drainage system was a major concern in this project.

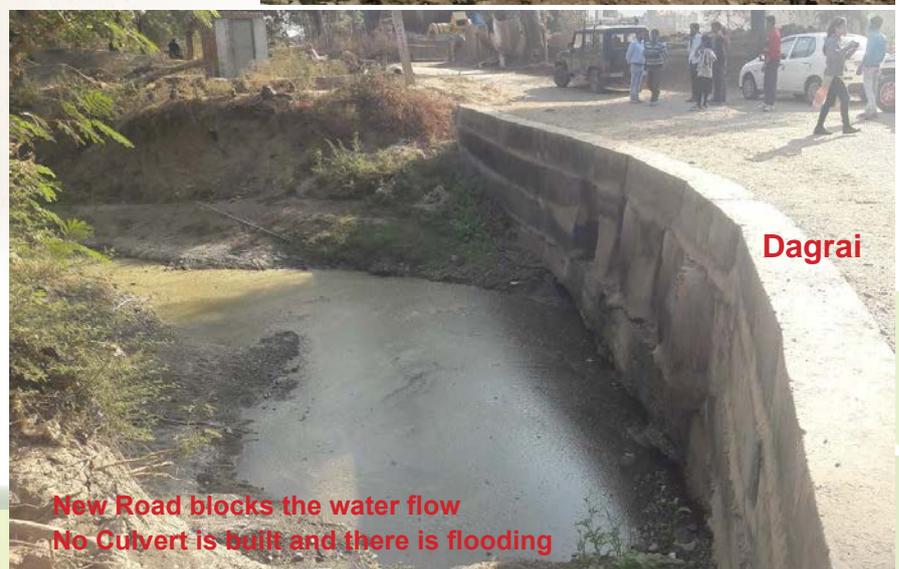


Mohrikalan



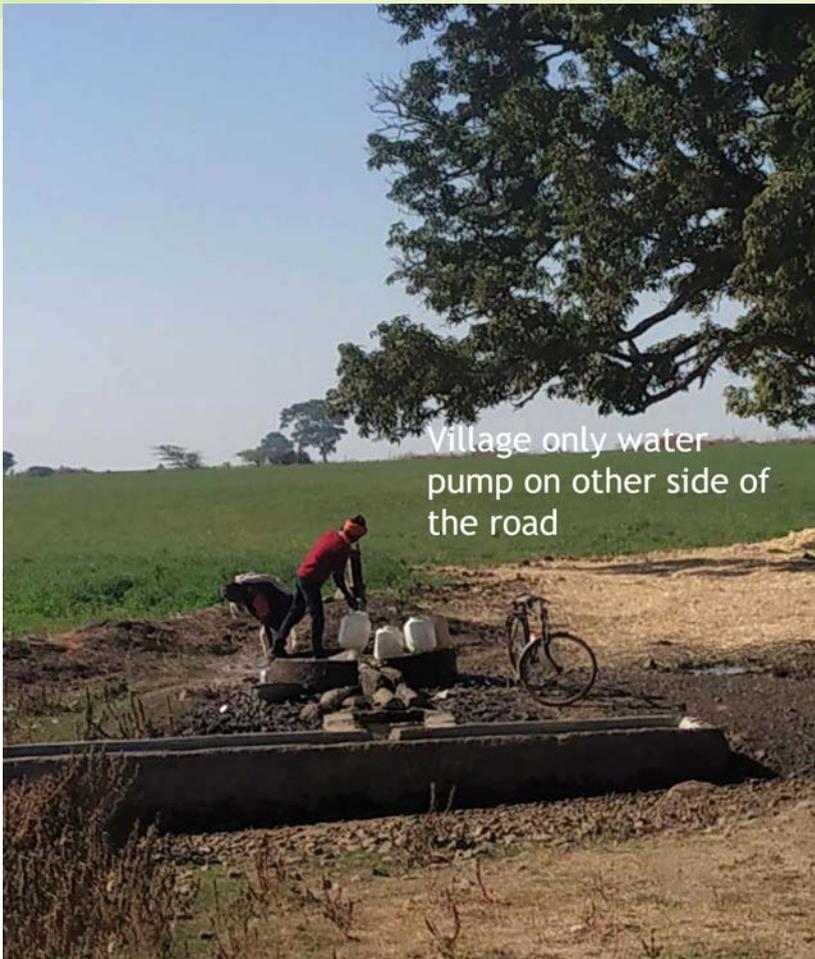
Flooding in the village

Drain Block by Road construction



Dagrai

New Road blocks the water flow  
No Culvert is built and there is flooding



Village only water pump on other side of the road



## Water, Dust, trees and other essential rights:

- In Singhpur village women were unable to access the only water pump as the pump was on the other side of the road while the road was being constructed, resulted in total water crisis.
- Construction caused a lot of dust – there was no protection used to minimize the pollution. It was difficult for people living near the road and many fields were also destroyed because of this.
- Workers are also not seen using any protective gear while working in such situation.
- Bundelkhand areas is a drought prone area with severe water shortage. People could not understand the need for concrete roads in such area. Also, since the cement of these roads were not cured enough with water coverage, the road is already showing signs of damage.

## Grievance Mechanism: best kept secret

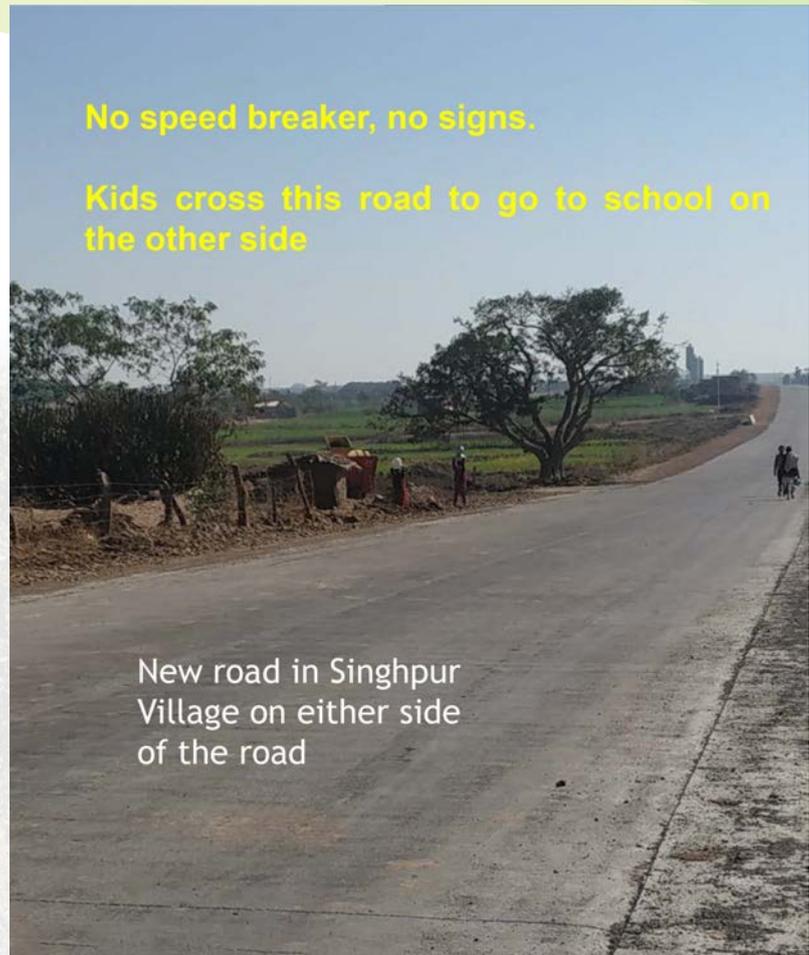
1. No one knows about them.
2. No information board about the project anywhere. Sign boards are put as “finishing touches” only after the roads are finished.

## Safety issues:

- These roads pass through villages and with new improved roads there is an increase in motorized high-speed traffic. There are no speed breakers, zebra crossings, signs etc. to slow traffic near the village areas.
- It is dangerous for kids as houses and villages are very close to the road. Accidents were reported in few villages which were due to absence of speed breakers or signs.
- The project has no provision for speed breakers, zebra markings, lights, bus stops etc. as shared by the MPRDC and its engineers.
- In some of the villages, like Devri Sehejpur existing roads were converted to concrete roads through the villages. The school and the drinking water source are on the other side of the road from the village which makes it dangerous for women and children.
- We found girls riding on bicycles on the road along with high speed traffic
- Lighting is an issue from women's safety – there is no provision to provide adequate lighting from the road to the village and around the bus stop (formal and informal)

## Transport:

- Women mainly travel using public transport or non-motorized modes.
- Private transport on the road is too expensive.
- Need for affordable public transport was repeatedly expressed.
- Villagers talked about expensive transport system as it is all privatized like, buses or other vehicles, school buses, which discourages them to use the road and they are not helpful to them move out for market or any other work.





## Recommendation:

There is no sustainable development without gender equality. Therefore, it is important to incorporate gender analysis in all aspects of NDB and other development projects – design, planning, and executive. All development projects, including infrastructure such as roads, need to do an in-depth analysis and assessment of women's needs and physical usage of infrastructures. It is equally critical to understand the gendered differences in the impact and to especially have processes to mitigate negative impacts and risks. As Dr Dewan rightly says If gender is not fully integrated in such projects then the danger is that the project might further perpetuate gender inequalities and gaps<sup>1</sup>. All infrastructure projects should also go beyond just 'do no harm' but adopt a 'do some good' approach towards promoting gender equality by proactively addressing some historical social norms and harmful practices.

## Our recommendations are:

- NDB needs to have gender experts in their team and make sure social and environment safeguards are implemented comprehensively.
- NDB needs to understand women's need and road usage patterns.
- NDB needs to effectively carry out its own due diligence of monitoring through progress/monitoring report review, field visit and post-evaluation, and provide support to strengthen the client's systems, as it is mandated to do by the ESF policy.
- The entire project team including all contractors, subcontractors, engineers, etc. need to be trained in all environment and social safeguards as they relate to this project.
- ESF costing should be part of the project planning.

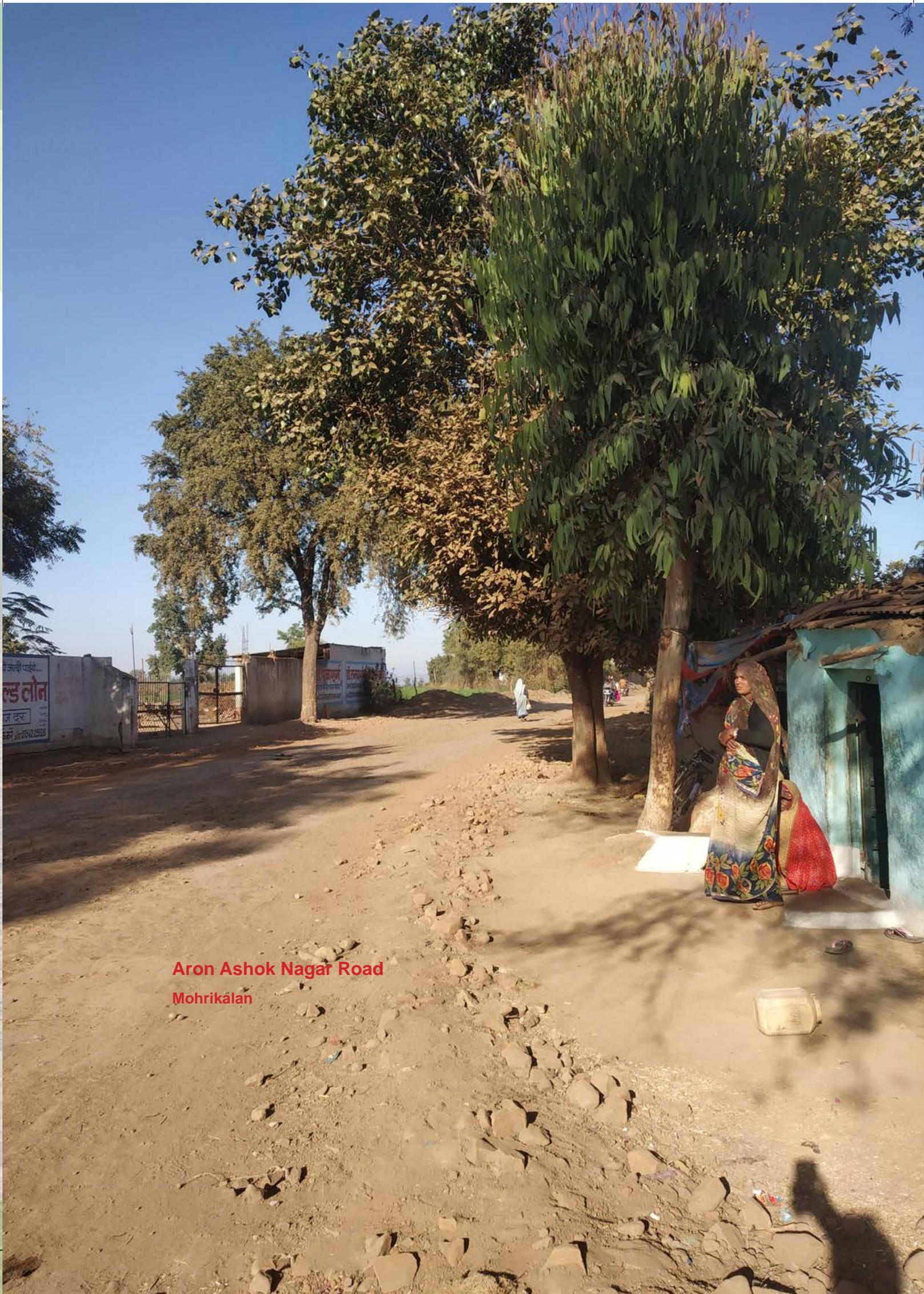
<sup>1</sup>Dewan Ritu, 2012, *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana: Visibilising Gender in Rural Road Connectivity*, UN Women,



- NDB should aim to have a transparent supply chain which includes all sand mines, stone quarries, factories etc. should be clearly disclosed and monitored for labour and environment violations.
- It is important large part of villagers are involved in such consultations. Women participation is a must at such meetings. Include women in your team of experts when visiting villages. Sign in sheets should be done to record who attend such meetings and photographs should be taken of such meetings. All notes from these meetings should be documented and made public
- Proper information about the project should be given to the villagers and to women upholding the Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) principle.
- All information pertaining to the project should be disseminated in local languages in a women friendly manner.
- Village inputs should be taken to understand the environment and social risks and how these can be mitigated in partnership with the villagers.
- The team should do a transect walk with the villagers to map all environment and social risk issues for the project and develop solutions collectively with full participation from the villagers.
- Involve women in transect walk and in plantation. Ensure the project allows continuous creation of assets for women.
- There needs to be information boards put in each village before the road construction starts to inform people of the project and who to contact if there are any issues or people need information.
- These information boards should be put in each village on the road and not just in the beginning or end of the road and should be in a language that is women friendly.



- Roads passing through villages need to have proper signs, speed breakers and zebra crossing to allow people's safety.
- Women need to be hired at all levels of the project. Efforts should be made to deal with all social norms, stigmas or other obstacles that prevent women from working in this project.
- All workers should be given proper labour contracts, ID and registered with labour boards to ensure all social security and other benefits are provided to them.
- Proper attendance and wage records should be maintained.
- Workers should be provided dignified housing with basic facilities.
- The pressure to deliver project at times misses the nuances of women's lives.
- Accessibility should function in tandem with affordability.
- Women's collectives and SHGs should be involved in procurement of any service or goods to increase women's livelihoods.
- The project should be linked to village Gram Sabhas for effective monitoring
- Various schemes can converge with National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes, and National Rural Livelihood Mission to enhance women's economic opportunities.
- Road side plantations could be another opportunity for women's livelihoods.



**Aron Ashok Nagar Road**  
**Mohrikalan**



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