

Government Policy Report

December 2021 Edition



Policies Covered In The Edition



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North East Road Sector Development Scheme

Recently, the 10,500 km road in the north eastern region majorly in strategically located Arunachal Pradesh is built by the North Eastern Council under the North East Road Sector Development Scheme. The scheme was originally launched by the Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region during 2015-16 to take up the work of rehabilitation and up-gradation of important yet neglected inter-state roads in the region and is expected to complete by 2022. In the financial year 2016-17, the scheme was transferred to North Eastern Council for implementation purposes.



North East Road Sector Development Scheme

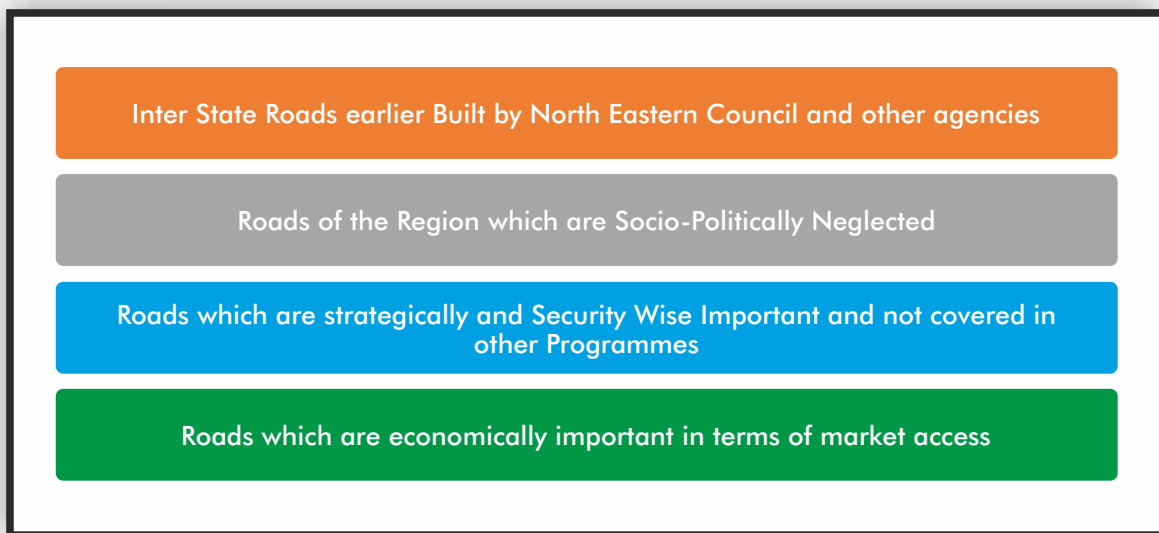
The northeast region of the country has its strategic importance but still not received due attention in comparison to the other parts of the country in past decades. This makes people of the north eastern region segregated from the rest of the country in the absence of proper connectivity, infrastructure, and employment opportunities. As a matter of fact, the road network in the North East region is far less than the national average density of the roads.

The seven sister states share an international border of approx. 5300 Km and need strong border fortification especially in Arunachal Pradesh along the Line of Actual Control between India and China. Due to poor infrastructure and road connectivity, the security of the region becomes a great concern and also poses challenges to control the insurgency. Thus, the government of India is providing a major impetus to the road connectivity in the region by this scheme which will eventually help to boost

industrialization and employment in the region.

The North Eastern Region Vision 2020 also acknowledged the critical importance of the maintenance, expansion, and up-gradation of the road network at all levels in the region which will include national Highways, inter-state roads, and rural roads including porter tracks. This will create a basic foundation for the development of trade and commerce in the region. For instance, Assam is the largest tea producer in the world but still, it doesn't have the infrastructure, road, and connectivity with the rest of the country as well as the globe to optimally monetize its potential.

The scheme will help in the overall up gradation of road infrastructure in the north eastern region and connect it with the rest of the country and world as well.



Categories of road under the scheme

In this way, the scheme is well versed to cover the holistic development, up-gradation, and rehabilitation of the northeast region roads by addressing the critically important issues with the gap-filling approach. The scheme is also externally aided by the Asian Development Bank. The administration and monitoring of the scheme are done by the empowered Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region through periodic reviews.

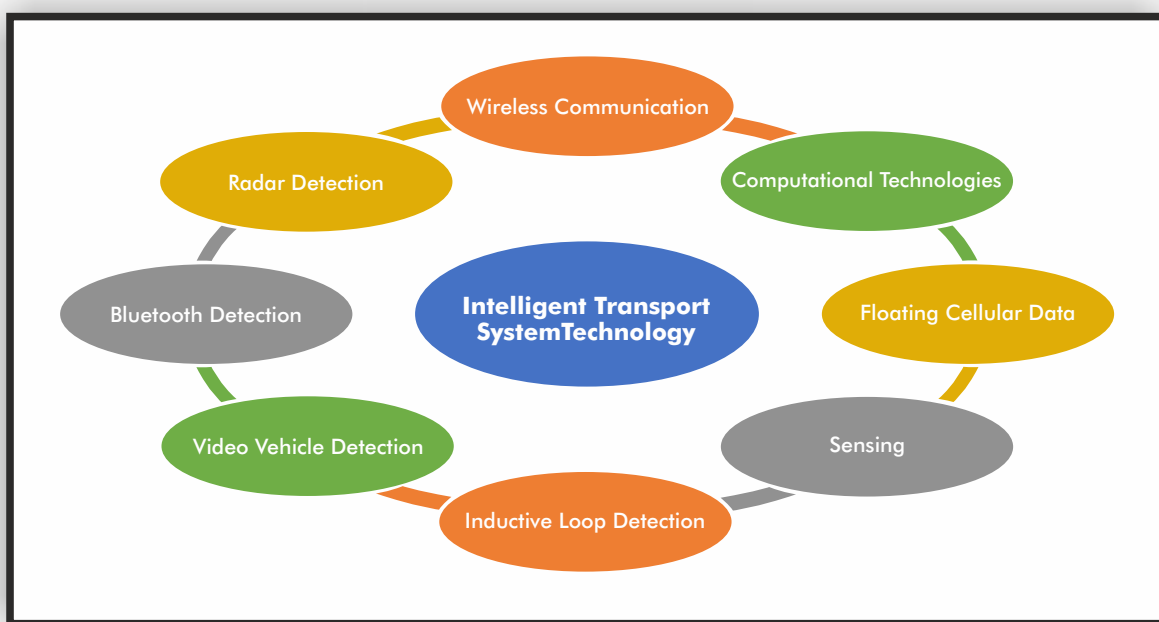
The government of India through the North East Road Sector Development scheme and other schemes like Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources trying to bridge the social, physical, and economic developmental gaps in the North-Eastern region at an unprecedented speed. In line with this vision, all 54 non-exempted Ministries and Departments of Central Government are also received directions to spend at least 10% of their respective Gross Budgetary allocation for the schemes of Central government in the North Eastern Region. This all together shows the commitment of the government to provide holistic development support to the region and the amalgamation of this beautiful and strategic region with the rest of the country.

First “Intelligent Transport System” Launched in India

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has launched India's first” Intelligent Transport System” (ITS) on Eastern Peripheral Expressway. This will help in decongesting the traffic on the highway and provide enhanced safety to passengers by alerting the drivers about the suspected dangers and can prevent accidents on the way.

Road safety is a major concern on Indian roads as around 5 Lakh accidents takes place around a year in the country and will result in the death of approx. 1.5 Lakh people on roads, which is a significant number in itself. To address this the road engineering system in India should be improved and the ITS is one such step in the right direction.

This is an absolute state-of-the-art technology that will address many traffic miseries and provide enriching experiences on Indian roads such as advanced information on traffic, enhancement in road safety, reduction in travel time, increase in the comfort of the drivers and passengers, etc. This will work on an integrated system that alerts the driver for potential accident suspects and is equally capable of detecting the accident and sending alerts to the ambulance that can reach the spot within 10-15 minutes. Many fatalities in road accidents will be saved through timely first aid and medical help through such intelligent systems and efficiently use the infrastructure development in the country by the commuters.



Techniques used by ITS

The intelligent system is a cutting-edge technology that will revolutionize the modern and efficient use of infrastructure in the country and reduce the traffic congestion on Indian roads. It will help in solving the majority of urban population problems related to mobility, safety, and commutation time along with enhanced comfort. It will prove to be a milestone in the history of Indian Infrastructure Development so far.

Based on the success of such Intelligent Traffic Systems in the different corners of the globe like Japan, Russia, a committee under the Ministry of Urban Development in 2016 to answer the decongestion on roads of Delhi recommended the use of “Intelligent Transport Systems” on the Delhi roads too. As per the experts, there are numerous advantages of this system.



Methods to tap ITS

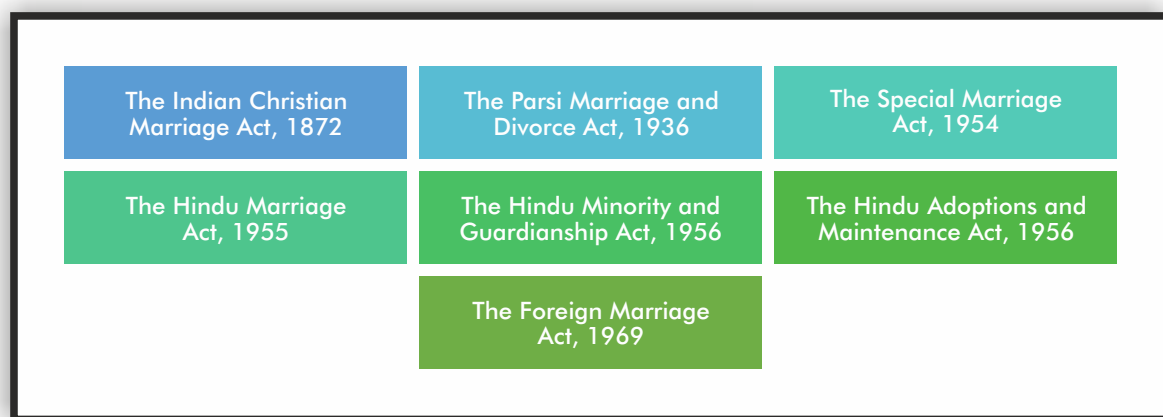
As per the comparative analysis of the National Crime Records Bureau on data of deaths in road accidents between 2017 and 2020 which clearly shows an upward trend and thus defines the severity of accidents on the roads in the country. This also represents the road safety scenario and the effectiveness of related measures on the roads. Thus, the Intelligent Transport System which works on precision measurement and advanced technology will prove to be the need of the hour to provide a safe driving experience to the commuters on Indian roads and highways.



Intelligent Transport System

Government Approves to Raise the Women's Age for Marriage to 21: A Move Towards Gender Equality

In December 2021, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has introduced the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in the Parliament to which the cabinet has already given its nod. The bill is designed to address the issues related to the upliftment and empowerment of women in Indian society. This will amend the existing Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 and raise the legal marriageable age of women at par with men i.e. 21 Years which was earlier 21 Years for men, and 18 Years for women.



Acts that will be amended

The bill seeks gender equality for women in letter and spirit. As per the government, this will create a holistic impact on the condition of women in India and increase female participation in the workforce while making them self-reliant, confident, and decision-makers. The bill is supposed to override all other existing laws irrespective of custom, usage, or practice concerning marriage. In this way, it will provide strength to the existing prohibition of the Child Marriage Act also. All this will be achieved through the amendments in the different personal laws existing in the country related to marriage in various communities.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 is based on the recommendation of a 4- member task force which was constituted in 2020. The panel has studied the correlation between the age of marriage and motherhood. They in turn studied the impacts of early marriages on the health of mothers and infants which is the key indicator for various national and international health and population

indicators such as Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), Child Sex Ratio (CSR), etc. In this way, the findings of the panel are supported by scientific parameters and will help in upgrading the population key indicators, lowering down the maternal and infant mortality rate while increasing the level of nutrition for both mothers and infants.

The recommendations of the panel are in no way related to population control as this is already showing the downward trend but this is co-related to the empowerment of women, gender equality, and health of Indian women. But the bill will not create the desired impact in isolation and need additional policy support to increase the access to education for girls and address the issues related to dropping out of girls from school and colleges due to social, psychological, or financial reasons in a more effective way. The measures should also be taken to address the mobility solution and last-mile connectivity to far-flung areas for increasing female participation in education as well as the workforce. The government should work simultaneously to create opportunities for education and livelihood for women to increase the efficacy of this prudent provision.

The law will address the issues related to early pregnancy in Indian women and keep a check on their health indicators. A study finding says that children born from an adolescent mother i.e., between the age of 10-19 years were 5% more prone to stunting than born from young adult mothers in the age group of 20-24 Years.

Thus, the proposed law will uphold the protection of the basic rights of women but the effectiveness and adoption of the same by society will only depend on the behavioural change in the parents of the Indian girls. The economic and social issues also play an important role in early marriages in Indian society and thus the government should address the economic and social needs of the disadvantaged groups in terms of girl education, skill up-gradation, employment opportunities, and career counseling along with the safety of girls in public places and during commutation.

The programs to create awareness towards sex, reproductive health, women's right, and early pregnancy among girls and their parents can play a game-changer to bring the desired effect of this law in the Indian society as in the majority of the cases, the decision regarding the marriage of a girl is made by their parents. Thus, the law will bring a revolutionary change in the upliftment of Indian women if executed and supported by strong and honest political will and enthusiastically adopted by individuals of the Indian society.



Resources

1. <https://mdoner.gov.in/dashboard/files/NERSDS.pdf>
2. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1779735>
3. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1778465>
4. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1783475>
5. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1780850>
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7. <https://www.firstpost.com/india/nitin-gadkari-inaugurates-intelligent-transport-system-on-eastern-peripheral-expressway-how-new-system-will-help-make-travelling-easier-and-safer-10233291.html>
8. <https://urbantransportnews.com/news/indias-first-intelligent-transport-system-launched-on-eastern-peripheral-expressway>
9. [https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/bills_parliament/2021/The%20Prohibition%20Of%20Child%20Marriage%20\(Amendment\)%20Bill,%202021.pdf](https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/bills_parliament/2021/The%20Prohibition%20Of%20Child%20Marriage%20(Amendment)%20Bill,%202021.pdf)
10. <https://www.india.com/news/india/govt-introduces-bill-to-raise-age-of-marriage-for-women-from-18-to-21-years-in-lok-sabha-5148743/>
11. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/union-cabinet-gives-nod-to-raise-womens-marriage-age-to-21/article37968276.ece>
12. <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2021/12/18/raising-legal-age-of-marriage-for-women/>

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