

Chapter – 2: Public Works & Public Works (Roads) Department in West Bengal at a glance

The necessity of developing the road system in West Bengal was keenly felt and gradually large number of district board roads were taken over by the State PWD for improvement and maintenance. Road construction under plan program was taken up in the year 1952 and for this purpose Road Development Directorate was created under the administrative set up of Development & Planning Department. In the early Five year Plan Periods the road constructed under plan program by the Roads Development Directorate was handed over to the P.W. Directorate for maintenance work. Subsequently with increased volume of road construction, Roads Development Directorate was separated from administrative set up of Development & Planning Department and renamed as P. W. (Roads) Directorate under administrative set up of P. W. (Roads) Department. Till today large number of State Highways and District Roads are being maintained by P.W. Directorate as well as P. W. (Roads) Directorate.

In 1950 Central Government identified some of the important and busy stretches of Inter-State road network as National Highways to be maintained by State P.W. Directorate under the fund provision of Ministry of Transport, presently renamed as Ministry of Road Transport and Highway under Government of India. Special Road Organization Wing was formed within P. W. (Roads) Directorate in early Sixties to look after the National Highway sectors along with other roads in the State. Coal Road Construction Circle was one of the important circles within Special Road Organization Wing for looking after National Highway No. 2 well known as Grand Trunk Road. In Seventies the Special Road Organization Wing was renamed as National Highway Wing specially to look after the National Highway Sector only and in Eighties all the National Highway within the State was handed over to the National Highway Wing for maintenance and further improvement.

Initial construction activities for the dream project of Durgapur Expressway was taken up by the Development Corporation but was stood over for the time being. In 1985-86 the project again picked up its position in the priority sector and was sanctioned as World Bank Project. A separate wing named as Durgapur Expressway Wing was created. After completion of the project the DEW Wing had been entrusted to look after another NH Project named as Belghoria Expressway.

In 1995 and 1998 two Project Implementation Units were formed within P. W. (Roads) Directorate to look after the projects of Four-Laning of National Highway No. 2 from Barrakar to Ranigunj with World Bank loan assistance and implementation of West Bengal State Road Project respectively.

Road and Building Research Institute was set up under P. W. (Roads) Directorate about fifty years back for in-service training to the departmental engineers, testing of quality of work and conducting research works in building and road sectors.

In 2009, the Durgapur Expressway Wing of P. W. (Roads) Directorate was renamed as the wing of Special Project of P. W. (Roads) Directorate and it has been entrusted to implement and monitor the work of centrally sponsored projects / schemes related to infrastructural development of road, in the State, including

Annual Administrative Report 2009-2010

roads of inter-state connectivity and any other special projects / schemes under CRF, ISC, PPP, SCA, BOT etc., as could be sanctioned by concerned project sanctioning authority under the sponsorship of the Government of India from time to time.

Now World Bank National Highway Wing of P. W. (Roads) Directorate has also been entrusted to look after the work of PMGSY to give a momentum to the schemes, which is primarily vested with P & R Department.

At present, the Public Works and Public Works (Roads) Department in West Bengal are presently charged with the planning, survey, design, construction and maintenance of Roads, Bridges and Buildings throughout the state as well as having various responsibilities for emergency and relief activities.

The principal aim of the P.W. & P.W. (Roads) Department with suitable co-ordination of the Civil, Electrical, Mechanical and Architectural Wings, is to augment the economical activities of the whole state, create wealth through improvement in the transportation system and alleviate poverty through construction of various bridges, roads and public buildings along with extending support for improvement of transportation services, with the allotted sum the P.W. & the P. W. (Roads) Department construct new bridges in un-bridged portions for improvement of communication system, up-grade the present road transportation system, construct road over-bridges in place of Railway level crossing and also maintain and construct all public buildings. Apart from those the P.W. Department has to undertake some extended responsibilities in social area also. There are Electrical & Architectural Wing under the P.W. Department, there is a Mechanical Wing under the P. W. (Roads) Department. The P.W. (Construction Board) primarily construct and maintain building of other departments with funds provided by those departments. Over all, this department can undertake any responsibility for the progress of the state through construction of roads, bridges and buildings.