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THE TIMES OF INDIA

'Bitumen, not concrete, roads better for city'

TNN | Sep 6, 2018, 04.46 AM IST

Why are roads in the city in such a bad condition? Who is responsible for overseeing and maintaining the quality of roads? The construction agency and Nagpur Municipal Corporation are responsible for the poor state of roads. But, they are not the only ones to be blamed. They do not have sufficient manpower to ensure quality control. In such a situation, the NMC should ensure display of board that will ensure information dissemination. For quality you need manpower. The quality control team has to be headed by one who directly reports to the chief engineer to guard against nexus or pressure being exerted. Such a type practice is being followed in Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and has reaped dividends.

In Nagpur city, roads are owned by multiple agencies like NMC, NIT, PWD and NHAI. It affects proper maintenance. Do you feel only one agency should maintain city roads?

Only one agency should maintain the roads. Whosoever is the owner of the road should maintain the road in serviceable condition without accusing other party of failure.

Are corruption and faulty designs the reasons for poor quality of existing roads?

I can't say about corruption but certainly poor quality is one of the reasons. Effective drains are very important for longevity of road. The NMC workers need to be trained for proactive maintenance of roads. Basically, NMC should use latest maintenance software like PMS (pavement management system) for road maintenance. Pune has already installed such a system and are reaping the benefit of it. Moreover, PMS is a pre-qualification for World Bank to fund any of the infrastructure project in a city. Design is not faulty.

What should be done to make city roads pothole free?

Periodic maintenance, strict supervision, ensuring quality of the materials being used and timely repairs. There can be yearly maintenance contract given to any agency just like you have yearly maintenance contract for AC, fridge, computer, printer etc and, yes, drainage is very important. There is a concept of smart drainage. Where the drain tells its flooding, enabling timely action beforehand.

Can holding contractors and engineers culpable for road mishaps improve the situation?

Yes, it will definitely improve the quality if someone is made answerable for the performance. In PMGSY the contractor has to give performance guarantee of five years. Hence the contractor is encouraged to do quality job.

Is switching to concrete roads from the conventional tar road the answer to free city motorists from pothole- ridden roads?

No, we should go for only bitumen roads. Concrete roads are very costly to construct — almost 5 times more than the bitumen roads. They do not permit any service lines to be installed beneath later on. It calls for very strict quality control or may get damaged. It increases the ambient heat. It retains the day's heat and releases in night. So your night becomes hot. It becomes slippery and causes accidents in rainy seasons. They require yearly maintenance. None of the foreign country prefers concrete roads over BT roads.

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