China’s Achievements and Experience in Rural Road Transport Development

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1. The Achievements of Rural Road Development in China

- By the official classification, China’s rural road network includes three levels: county roads, township roads, and village roads, which covers all the technical levels including Expressway, Class 1, Class 2, Class 3 and Class 4 road.

- Rural roads serve the rural areas, satisfying rural travel demand, connecting urban and rural areas, and becoming a crucial part of the highway network system.

- Rural roads serve nearly 600 million people living in rural areas, and the development of rural transport serves as a crucial role in solving the problems of accessing to public transport.
In 2014, 2016 and 2017, President Xi Jinping made several important instructions on the development of rural roads. He has called on government at all levels to ensure ‘4-B Rural Road’——Better Construction, Better Management, Better Maintenance and Better Operation. Xi’s call for 4-B Rural Road which aims to promote the high-quality development of rural roads at national level and set a clear goal for the further development of rural roads.
1. The Achievements of Rural Road Development in China

The overall mileage of rural roads has exceeded 4.04 million kilometers, accounting for 83.4% of the total highway mileage, and connecting 99.64% of towns and townships and 99.47% of incorporated villages.
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In recent five years, China has invested 325.7 billion RMB (about 48.6 billion USD) to promote the rural road construction in underdeveloped areas.

The total length of new-build or re-build rural roads in those underdeveloped areas was about 783,000 km. 282,000 km-long rural roads had been enhanced with safety facilities, and more than 46,000 km rural roads have been built specially for resources, tourism and industries.
1. The Achievements of Rural Road Development in China

The rural highway transportation network has taken shape: It is centered around the county capital with town nodes and village network nodes. 99.1% of towns and 96.5% of villages in China are commute buses accessible.

80% of the rural areas now provide seamless urban-rural transport services. Connectivity between the urban and rural China is significantly improved.
A three-tier (county, town, village) logistic freight network is being built. The freight network has become denser and denser. 65% of the rural areas are now covered in the freight network.
Establish and perfect system of law, regulation and policy

In the past few decades, it has been established a continuous improvement of the legal system and policy system for rural roads to better give support to the development of rural roads in China.

- In 1998, China issued and implemented the *Highway Law*, which is the fundamental law of national highway management.

- In 2011, the Chinese government implemented the “*Regulations on Highway Safety Protection*”, which put forward requirements for the protection of village roads (about 50% of all rural road mileages).

- The Ministry of Transport of China, the highest highway administration, issued a series of regulations to complete the rural highway legislative system, including “*Measures for the Administration of Rural Road Construction*”, “*Measures for the Management of Rural Roads Maintenance*” and “the ‘Four-B Rural Roads’ Supervision and Evaluation Measures”.

- We are revising the *Highway Law* and carrying out the legislative work of the *Rural Road Regulations* to align with national strategies of *rural revitalization and poverty alleviation*. 
2. Experience and Practice

Implement Responsibility

In recent years, the Chinese government highly emphasizes rural road development. Detailed requirements are laid out in each year’s “Report on the Work of the Government”. 28 provinces have incorporated the “four-B rural roads” Supervision and Evaluation Measures in the government performance metrics. 15 provinces proposed to establish a “Highway Supervisor” system. A rural highway management system of “government guidance, administrative assistance, industry lead, and citizen participation” has taken shape.

Construction diagram of road chief system in Yongan city of Fujian province
Demonstration Effect

In China, a county government plays the pivotal role in rural highway development. It is only possible to accelerate the development of rural roads through active engagement of county governments. Therefore, in 2017, the Implementation Guide on the Establishment of Demonstration County for the “Four-B Rural Roads” was provided to local governments, and organized and completed the establishment of 117 National Demonstration Counties. It stimulates the enthusiasm of local governments.
2. Experience and Practice

Intensify the investment in rural road construction

During the 13th five-year plan, the central government increased the subsidy standard for rural road development funded by the vehicle purchase tax revenue. On average, the subsidy standard was 20% higher than the “12th Five-Year Plan” period. Insofar during the 13th five-year plan, a sum of 354.3 billion RMB (about 53 billion USD), investment from vehicle purchase tax revenue has been used in rural highway development – an annual increase of 18% – to strongly support the work of eliminating rural poverty.
2. Experience and Practice

Fully mobilize the enthusiasm of rural residents

Rural residents are direct users and beneficiaries of rural roads. Only by giving full play to their role can it ensure the long-term benefits of rural roads.

✓ In the planning, it adopts a democratic decision-making approach and respect the desire of rural residents;
✓ In the process of construction, it encourages more local people to participate in the construction to increase their income;
✓ In the process of maintenance, it adopts a people-centered maintenance, create public welfare jobs to solve the problem of poverty alleviation for the local poor people;
✓ In the process of management, it calls for the establishment of village rules on road protection;

To build roads that rural residents are willing to build, to ensure their right of supervision, and to attract them participating in the construction and maintenance of rural roads, so that they can truly benefit from the development of rural roads.
2. Experience and Practice

6. Good vision for development

The advanced development vision determines the direction of rural road development.

- 【Project Management Vision】 Visionary stakeholders make high-quality projects;
- 【Highway Construction Vision】 High-quality construction is the best maintenance;
- 【Highway Maintenance Vision】 Scientific decision-making throughout the highway life cycle;
- 【Regional Network Management Vision】 Harmonize the relationship between highway and the environment.
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3. Next Focus

1. Rural roads contribute to poverty alleviation

The Ministry of Transport, P.R.C proposed two indicators in rural highway development: Asphalt and concrete pavements by the end of 2019 and commute bus accessible by the end of 2020 for eligible village highways. Completing the two indicators will significantly contribute to lifting China's poor areas out of poverty.

2. Continue to promote high-quality development of rural roads to support China’s Rural Revitalization strategy

- It will accelerate the upgrading of rural road network: build a smooth and high-quality road network system.
- It will accelerate road construction for tourism, resources and industry:

3. Continue Providing Equitable Public Services of Urban-Rural Road Transportation

We target at providing equitable public services of urban-rural highway transportation by 2035. Make sure that rural residents can enjoy equally good highway public services as their urban counterpart.
Thank You!