

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS (26.07.2022)

1. Centre vs states: Who's fiscally more profligate? (fortuneindia.com) 26 July 2022

Centre and RBI are doubling down on states for their alleged fiscal mismanagement while it is the Centre which is fiscally more profligate and needs to put its house in order

The past few days have seen a flurry of news reports stating of the Centre and RBI are warning state governments against their off-budget borrowing and borrowing against future revenue, giving an impression that the latter are fiscally profligate and irresponsible. The RBI went to the extent of telling banks to stop funding states using future revenue.

But do official statistics bear this out? Not really. In fact, since 2005, the Centre's record is far worse than states when it comes to fiscal management.

It should be kept in mind that both the Centre and states are bound by the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act of 2003, which puts limits to debt and fiscal deficit with some leeway for deviations under certain conditions.

After the 2018 amendment in the law, the "fiscal management principles" say about these limits: "The Central Government shall (a) take appropriate measures to limit the fiscal deficit up to 3% of gross domestic product by the 31st March, 2021; (b) endeavour to ensure that (i) the general Government debt does not exceed 60%; (ii) the Central Government debt does not exceed 40% of gross domestic product by the end of financial year 2024-2025..."

How do the Centre and states measure up to these limits?

Debt burdens of Centre and states

While the FRBM limit for the Centre is 40% of the GDP, it has consistently clocked above the limit since FY05 – the data provided by the Economic Survey of 2021-22 shows. Of late, it has mounted further. In FY19, it was 45.7% which climbed up to 49.1% in FY20 and 59.3% in FY21. For FY22, the Centre has claimed recently that the ratio would come down to 56.3% – as against 59.9% projected in the revised estimates (RE) of the budget in February 2022.

How do states fare in comparison? Their share of debt-to-GDP should be 20% (as the upper limit for the Centre+ states is 60%). The Economic Survey of 2021-22 shows, it has been above 20% since FY14 (not mapped for earlier fiscals), which went up to 25.3%, 26.3%, 31.1% and 31.2% for the corresponding years of FY19, FY20, FY21 and FY22 (BE).

But there is a good way of knowing who has been more profligate: the percentage of deviations.

Going by the percentage of deviations in the past four fiscals, the annual average deviation works out to 12.6 percentage points for the Centre, as against 8.5 percentage points for states.

That is, states have performed better than the Centre consistently.

Fiscal deficits of Centre and states

The FRMB Act puts the fiscal deficit limit at 3% of the GDP for both the Centre and states.

The 2022 budget document shows, the Centre's fiscal deficit was 9.2% in FY21 (actual) and 6.9% in FY22 (RE) – far above 3%. The RBI's report on state finances shows, states' fiscal deficits were 4.7% and 3.7% for the corresponding years. Here too, the deviations are far greater for the Centre and is in keeping with long-term trends.

For the entire 11 fiscals (pre-pandemic and pandemic) of FY12-FY22, the annual average fiscal deficit for the Centre was 4.9% and for states 2.8%.

Both debt-to-GDP and fiscal deficit numbers demonstrate that states are more fiscally prudent and responsible vis-à-vis the Centre – both before the pandemic and after the pandemic. Hence, the Centre and RBI should worry less about states.

Despite such historic trends, the Centre has imposed stiffer conditions on states.

In the 2021 budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman set the fiscal deficit target for states at 3% of the GSDP (individual states' GDP), to be achieved by FY24. But for the Centre, she set the target for the Centre at 4.5% (of GDP) to be achieved by 2025-26. Further, she set the limit for states for borrowing at 4% of the GSDP for FY22. There was no such target for the Centre.

For borrowing up to 4% of the GSDP (additional 1%), the Finance Ministry had already put four reform conditions:

- Implementation of One Nation One Ration Card System;
- Ease of doing business reform;
- Urban Local body/ utility reforms; and
- Power Sector reforms

In an unprecedented move, amidst the pandemic disruptions, it allowed states to borrow additional 1% of the GSDP in October 2020 subject to four reforms – (i) 'one nation one ration' system (ii) improvement in ease of doing business (iii) power sector reforms and (iv) urban local body reforms. As Govind Rao, member of the 14th Finance Commission, has pointed out, this happened for the first time "in the history of independent India".

True, in 2022 budget, the Finance Minister also announced allocating Rs 1 lakh crore interest-free loans to states for a period of 50 years “to assist the states in catalysing overall investments in the economy”. This is “over and above the normal borrowings allowed to the states”. This is a wise since states have a better record of capital expenditure and are fiscally more responsible than the Centre.

As for accusing state governments of off-budget financing, it may be pointed out that they are following the precedence set by the Centre for many years.

For example, a 2018 CAG report (number 20) had commented that the Centre was “increasingly resorted to off-budget financing” for revenue spending. It found this in the case of food, fertiliser and irrigation spendings funded through off-budget borrowings by the FCI and NABARD and through special banking arrangements (SBA). The report found several other fiscal mismanagements: (i) understatement of public account liability by Rs 7.63 lakh crore in FY17, thereby reducing the total liability from 50.5% of the GDP (actual) to 45.5% (window-dressed) and (ii) refunds of Rs 1.72 lakh crore in FY17 finding no corresponding disclosure.

For FY17, the off-budget finances from SBA, FCI and NABARD add up to Rs 1,29,446 crore. In that fiscal, revenue deficit (actual) stood at 2.1% of the GDP and fiscal deficit (actual) at 3.5% of GDP, as per the 2018 budget. But adding up the off-budget numbers would take the “actual” revenue and fiscal deficit to 2.9% and 4.3% of the GDP, respectively.

The hidden food and fertilisers would be finally adjusted in the 2021 budget. The government spent Rs 1.3 lakh crore on fertiliser subsidy, against the budgeted Rs 71,309 crore (1.9 times more) and Rs 4.2 lakh crore on food subsidy, against the budgeted Rs 1.2 lakh crore (3.5 times more) in FY21.

Even for “strategic disinvestments” (privatisation) in the previous years, the Central government asked PSUs to pick up the tabs, which they did even by borrowing from market. For example, it made strategic disinvestments in five CPSEs – HPCL, REC, HSCC, NPCC and DCIL – the tabs for which were picked up by other CPSEs like ONGC, PFC, NBCC, WAPCOS and public sector consortium of ports, respectively.

The CAG said, in its 2020 report: “Such disinvestments only resulted in transfer of resources already with the public sector to the Government and did not lead to any change in the stake of the Public Sector/Government in the disinvested PSUs.” That is, such receipts – which get reflected in revenue deficits – hide the real fiscal status of the Centre.

Resources and capital expenditures

The big brotherly approach of the Centre is also inappropriate for many other reasons.

For instance, states have consistently out-performed Centre in capital expenditure. The Economic Survey and RBI reports and budget documents show that during the 11 years of FY12-FY22, the share of capital expenditure – to boost growth – of the Centre and states in reverse order: 37:63. That is, the Centre spends less, states more.

These statistics reveal, the Centre's capital expenditure, an annual average, is 1.8% of the GDP during these 11 fiscals. In contrast, states' capital expenditure has been 3.1% of the GDP, on average.

However, during the same period, a comparison of tax revenues shows an opposite trend.

While the Centre's tax revenue was, on an annual average, 10.3% of the GDP, the state government's "own tax" was just 6.4% of the GDP.

The share of tax revenue of the Centre and states, thus, work out to be 61.6:38.4.

Both the data sets show that while the Centre spends less on capex its tax revenue sources are far more than state governments.

The Centre generates more tax because it enjoys certain exclusive tax rights, like corporate tax, income tax from non-corporate entities; exclusive indirect taxes like Customs; Cess and Surcharge, plus it collects other indirect taxes like Excise (as do states). Having given up most of their indirect tax rights while opting for the GST, they are disadvantaged.

Why does the Centre behave big brotherly?

There are two obvious reasons. One, it seeks to win a perception war against states about managing the economy. Two, it seeks to centralise more fiscal powers by tightening controls on states in accessing financial resources.

Given that India is a "Union of States", a federal structure, and some of the states are far bigger in population and geography than many developed economies, states would need more fiscal autonomy to propel India's growth and development – not less as the Centre and RBI's recent directives suggest. <https://www.fortuneindia.com/opinion/centre-vs-states-whos-fiscally-more-profligate/109074>

2. Need for transparency in disclosing fiscal liabilities under the FRBM ([countercurrents.org](https://www.countercurrents.org)) E A S Sarma | 26 July, 2022

To
Smt Nirmala Sitharaman
Union Finance Minister
Dear Smt Sitharaman,

As one closely associated [as the then Chairman of the committee on Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) legislation in the year 2000] with the idea of evolving a statutory framework for the Centre and the States to ensure transparency in terms of the disclosure of fiscal liabilities to their respective legislatures, I appreciate the Ministry of Finance's efforts to impose fiscal disclosure norms both for the Centre and in the States.

In that connection, while answering a Parliament Question on 25-7-2022, you have made the following statement.

“Instances of borrowings by certain State Public Sector companies, Special Purpose vehicles (SPVs) and other equivalent instruments, where principal and/or interest are to be serviced out of the State Budgets, had come to the notice of the Ministry of Finance. Considering the effect of bypassing the NBC (Net Borrowing Ceiling) by of the States by such borrowings, it was decided and communicated to the States in March 2022 that borrowings by State Public Sector companies/corporations, Special purpose vehicles (SPVs) and other equivalent instruments, where principal and/or interest are to be serviced out of the State Budgets and/or by assignment of taxes/cess or any other State’s revenue, shall be considered as Borrowings made by the State itself for the purpose of issuing the consent under Article 293(3) of the Constitution of India”

It is perhaps your Ministry’s intention to consider such off-budget borrowings as a part of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management norms of the States to be monitored by your Ministry. There is no doubt that the States should manage their liabilities, whether disclosed in the Budget or otherwise, in a prudent and a sustainable manner. The Centre cannot afford to gloss over any fiscal imprudence on the part of the States, as it would indirectly impact its own liabilities.

The need for the same kind of fiscal prudence applies to the Centre as much as to the States.

To what extent has the Centre taken steps to make a transparent disclosure of its own off-budget liabilities?

CAG Reports on FRBM:

The CAG has made the following observation in their Report No. 20/2018

“Government has increasingly resorted to off-budget financing for revenue as well as capital spending. In terms of revenue spending, off budget financing was used for covering deferring fertilizer arrears/bills through special banking arrangements; food subsidy bills/arrears of FCI through borrowings and for implementation of irrigation scheme (AIBP) through borrowings by NABARD under the Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF). In terms of capital expenditure, off-budget financing of railway projects through borrowings of the IRFC and financing of power projects through the PFC are outside the budgetary control. Such off-budget financing is not part of the calculation of the fiscal indicators despite fiscal implications”

This not only reflects lack of disclosure; it also puts major sources of funding of

Government’s crucial infrastructure projects beyond the control of the Parliament.

Apparently, your Ministry has not cared to recognise the wisdom implicit in the CAG report, as evident from an observation made subsequently by the CAG in their Report No. 6/2021.

“Government undertook funding of revenue and capital expenditure using extra budgetary resources in both the years. Expenditure met from extra budgetary resources laid out a conceptual framework for what constitutes extra- budgetary borrowings and of which entities, was lacking. This hampered a comprehensive measurement and disclosure of such borrowings and their impact on fiscal indicators are not part of calculations of the fiscal indicators but have fiscal implications. A clearly laid out conceptual framework for what constitutes extra- budgetary borrowings and of which entities, was lacking. This hampered a comprehensive measurement and disclosure of such borrowings and their impact on fiscal indicators”

Centre’s other off-budget fiscal transactions

In this connection, I would also like to point out that it is your Ministry, in consultation with the Niti Ayog, that has set in motion a huge scheme of “Monetisation of CPSE Assets”, with the sole purpose of raising “additional fiscal resources” for the Centre. Does it not also amount to off-budget raising of resources through the CPSEs for bridging the Centre’s fiscal deficit?

Had the CPSEs really wanted to raise resources to be invested on their own capacity expansion projects, they need not monetise their assets to private companies, whose credit ratings may be lower than the CPSEs’. It is a fallacious argument put forward by your Ministry that it could raise “additional resources” through asset monetisation, as private companies can at best access the same pool of savings in the economy as the government can on much better terms. The only difference is that, instead of allowing the necessary managerial freedom to the CPSEs, by this, your Ministry would be forcing them to alienate their assets.

It is ironic that your ministry should force the CPSEs to monetise their assets on the one hand to raise resources and also force them to divert their own internal surpluses to fill the Centre’s coffers through inordinately high dividend payments.

Considering that fiscal prudence is the need of the hour, should not your Ministry practice what it preaches to the States?

- E A S Sarma Former Secretary to Govt of India

<https://countercurrents.org/2022/07/need-for-transparency-in-disclosing-fiscal-liabilities-under-the-frbm/>

3. 'Useless items' occupy one-third space in military’s key ordnance depots (etvbharat.com) 26 July, 2022

About ‘one-third’ of the total storing space in the Indian military’s three leading Central Ordnance Depots (COD) are stacked with items that cannot be used or have been rendered useless by the Indian military, a performance audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has pointed out in a report that was recently laid down in the Lok Sabha.

The national auditor had included the three CODs at Agra, Dehu Road and Kirkee (both near Pune in Maharashtra) in the scope of its audit which included depot activities like automation, inventory management, internal control etc. in the five-year

period from 2014-15 to 2018-2019 including provisioning activities at the three CODs for 2019-20.

What is perplexing is that these 'unusable' items occupy valuable space in the depots while critical and vital stores required by the Indian armed forces and paramilitary are not available. The main aim of the CODs is to make available all kinds of stores required to raise and maintain efficient and effective fighting Army units at the right time, in the right quantity, at the right place and at the right cost.

The CAG said in its report: "Audit analysis revealed that 31% of authorised inventory in the three depots comprised non-moving items which included 'obsolete', 'obsolescent' and 'surplus' items." "In COD Dehu Road, 27% and in COD Agra, 57% inventory held was 'non-moving' that cannot be put to use, CAFVD (Central Armoured Fighting Vehicle Depot) Kirkee was holding 15% of authorised as non-moving.

The value of 22.44% of non-moving inventory (where rates were available) in the three central depots worked out to Rs 272.05 crore." 'Non-moving' items are those which have neither been demanded nor issued for more than five years. 'Obsolete' equipment or stores are those for which approval has been given for its withdrawal from the services while 'surplus' items are those serviceable and repairable stores that cannot be utilized against present or anticipated requirements over a period as decided from time to time by Army Headquarters or which are liable to deteriorate by the time they could be issued in the normal course of events.

The CAG report adds: "As a result, on one hand, major resources such as storage space and manpower of these depots were engaged in maintaining a large quantum of ineffective inventory, on the other hand, depots were facing shortage of storage accommodation and serviceable stores were lying in the open."

On Monday, ETV Bharat reported how an audit analysis of the demand satisfaction level with reference to the demands received at the selected CODs/ODs revealed that the depots were unable to issue the stores demanded by the units and the average actual inability percentage for the period 2014-15 to 2018-19 ranged between 48.80 per cent and 77.05 per cent.

As per existing provisions, all demands from the users' units are to be honoured within 22 days of receipt of the indent. Stores which are not available for issue from stocks in that depot are maintained as "dues-out" by the depot. As of March 2019, the number of users' demands that were outstanding after having crossed the 22-day timeline stood at a staggering 6,49,045. <https://www.etvbharat.com/english/national/bharat/transgenders-are-motivating-their-community-for-corona-vaccination-in-durg-transgender-kanchan-sendre-contribution-on-beating-corona/na20220727130003136136797>

4. 'Ordnance depots failing to meet up to 77% of military requests' (etvbharat.com) 25 July, 2022

In a report on the mode of functioning of the inventory management process of Central Ordnance Depots (COD) and Ordnance Depots (OD), the Comptroller and Auditor

General (CAG) has blasted CODs and ODs for the inability to adequately meet demands and requirements of the military end-users.

In its report “Inventory Management in Ordnance Services” recently submitted in the Lok Sabha, the national auditor has said: “Audit analysis of the demand satisfaction level with reference to the demands received at the selected CODs/ODs revealed that the depots were unable to issue the stores demanded by the units and the average actual inability percentage for the period 2014-15 to 2018-19 ranged between 48.80 per cent and 77.05 per cent.”

It is pertinent to point out that while the average inability percentage reported by depots ranged between 11%-35%, the CAG’s figures range 48.80% to 77.05%. “The actual inability percentage was, therefore, much higher than the inability percentage reported by the depots,” the CAG said in its report. As per existing provisions, all demands from the users’ units are to be honoured within 22 days of receipt of the indent. Stores that are not available for issue from stocks in that depot are maintained as “dues-out” by the depot.

As of March 2019, the number of users’ demands that were outstanding after having crossed the 22-day timeline stood at a staggering 6,49,045. According to the CAG findings, the demands outstanding up to six months ranged between 14%-62% whereas the same beyond six months was 38%-86%, indicating inability of the depots in sourcing the required spares.

On its part, the defence ministry stated in February 2021 that in order to arrest high “dues-out” with forward ordnance echelons, initiatives like procurement at regional depot level, identification of additional sources of supply, the ‘Make in India’ initiative, etc were being taken up. While acknowledging the ministry’s action, the CAG pointed out that considering the high percentage of user’s unmet demands (dues-out), the ministry should take effective and sustained steps to reduce the quantum of unmet demands.

The Army Ordnance Corps (AOC) is responsible for providing material and logistics support to the Indian military during war and peace. The supply of the stores to the armed forces is carried out through a network of depots and store-holding units. At the field level, there are CODs located at different stations to deal with specified items of stores being provisioned, procured, stocked and managed. The performance audit covered the five years from 2014-15 to 2018-19 and comprised only Class ‘A’ stores or weapon systems and complete equipment such as tanks, radars, guns, vehicles and helicopters. <https://www.etvbharat.com/english/national/bharat/ordnance-depots-failing-to-meet-up-to-77-percent-of-military-requests/na20220725182056527527116>

5. Old Pension Scheme: इन राज्यों पर है कैग की नजर, जानिए क्या है कारण? (hindi.thevocalnews.com) 27 July, 2022

सरकारी कर्मचारियों के लिए बहुत बड़ी खुशखबरी है। कुछ राज्यों की सरकार ने पुरानी पेंशन योजना Old Pension Scheme (OPS) को लागू करने के आदेश दे दिये हैं। इसके लिए नई पेंशन योजना (NPS) को खत्म कर दिया गया है। आपको बता दें कि ओल्ड पेंशन स्कीम (Old Pension Scheme) का मुद्दा

पिछले कुछ महीनों से गर्माया हुआ है। देश में कुछ राज्य अपने कर्मचारियों को पेंशन देने के लिए इस सिस्टम को फॉलो कर रहे हैं। ऐसे राज्यों पर अब कैग की नजर है। भारत का संवैधानिक ऑडिटर नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (CAG) पुरानी पेंशन स्कीम से राज्यों की वित्तीय स्थिति पर पड़ने वाले बोझ का पता लगा रहा है।

Old Pension Scheme पर लिया बड़ा फैसला

राजस्थान सरकार ने कर्मचारियों को रिटायरमेंट पर अब वेतन का 50 फीसदी पेंशन के रूप में देने का प्रावधान कानूनी रूप से लागू कर दिया है। इसके तहत सरकार ने नियमों के बदलाव की अधिसूचना जारी कर दी है। बता दें कि मुख्यमंत्री अशोक गहलोत पुरानी पेंशन बहाल करने की घोषणा की थी, जिसके बाद 1 अप्रैल से एनपीएस (NPS) के लिए कर्मचारियों के वेतन से कटौती बंद कर दी गई।

इसके तहत 1 जनवरी 2004 और उसके बाद सरकारी नौकरी में आए कर्मचारियों को पुरानी पेंशन Old Pension Scheme लेने का पात्र बनाया गया है। साथ ही जो कर्मचारी 31 मार्च 2022 से पहले सेवानिवृत्त हो गए हैं उन्हें इस नियम के तहत पेंशन के लाभ इस अप्रैल से दिए जाएंगे।

सरकारी कर्मचारियों की बल्ले बल्ले

बता दें कि प्रदेश में 1 अप्रैल 2004 के बाद सरकारी नौकरी में आने वाले कर्मचारियों को नई पेंशन स्कीम में लिया गया था। अब राजस्थान सरकार ने 1 अप्रैल से नई पेंशन स्कीम में कर्मचारियों के वेतन से हर महीने बेसिक की 10 फीसदी कटौती बंद कर दी है। गौरतलब है कि न्यू पेंशन स्कीम के तहत कर्मचारियों-अफसरों के वेतन से कटने वाला लगभग 39000 करोड़ पैसा पीएफआरडीए में जमा है। राज्य सरकार पुरानी पेंशन Old Pension Scheme का नियमों में प्रावधान करके केंद्र सरकार की एजेंसी पीएफआरडीए में जमा पैसा वापस मांगेगी।

राज्यों की वित्तीय स्थिति के लिए सही नहीं पुरानी पेंशन स्कीम

सीएजी की एक डिवीजन लंबी अवधि के और अल्पकालिक प्रभावों का पता लगाने के लिए पुरानी पेंशन योजना पर वापस लौटने से जुड़े विभिन्न पहलुओं को देख रहा है। अर्थशास्त्रियों ने चेतावनी दी है कि एनपीएस से पुरानी पेंशन योजना में वापस जाना राज्यों के वित्त के लिए विनाशकारी परिणाम ला सकता है। <https://hindi.thevocalnews.com/business/old-pension-scheme-cag-is-eyeing-these-states-know-what-is-the-reason/106576/>

6. गंगा की ऐसी कैसी सफाई कि बीजेपी सांसद ही बखिया उधेड़ रहे! (satyahindi.com) 27 July, 2022

बीजेपी नेता और प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने जब 2014 में वाराणसी से लोकसभा सीट पर चुनाव लड़ने को लेकर कहा था कि 'मुझे गंगा मैया ने बुलाया है' तो गंगा की सफाई और स्वच्छता को लेकर बड़ी उम्मीदें जगी थीं। लेकिन क्या ऐसा हुआ? मोदी सरकार ने 'नमामि गंगे' परियोजना शुरू भी की। लेकिन अब बीजेपी के ही सांसद ने तो कम से कम गंगा की सफाई और स्वच्छता की बखिया उधेड़ दी है।

बीजेपी सांसद वरुण गांधी ने गंगा में गंदे पानी के कारण मछलियों के मरने का वीडियो साझा करते हुए 'नमामि गंगे' परियोजना पर सवाल उठाए हैं। उन्होंने पूछा है कि नमामि गंगे पर 20,000 करोड़ का बजट बना। 11,000 करोड़ खर्च के बावजूद प्रदूषण क्यों?

क्या अपनी ही पार्टी के सांसद के सवाल का मोदी सरकार जवाब देगी? वैसे यह कहना मुश्किल लगता है कि सरकार जवाब देगी।

लेकिन वरुण गांधी ने जो वीडियो साझा किया है उसमें पानी गंदा दिखता है और बहुत सारी मछलियाँ मरी हुई दिखती हैं। उस वीडियो में एक शख्स बोलते सुना जा सकता है कि 'जो बदबू कर रहा है वह ट्रीटेड (संशोधित) सीवरेज है रामनगर का। सीधे गंगा जी में जा रहा है। कहते हैं सब कि ट्रीटेड सीवरेज है। इस वीडियो को साझा करते हुए वरुण गांधी ने भी गंगा के लिए 'माँ' शब्द का इस्तेमाल किया है। उन्होंने कहा, "गंगा हमारे लिए सिर्फ नदी नहीं, 'मां' है। करोड़ों देशवासियों के जीवन, धर्म और अस्तित्व का आधार है मां गंगा..."। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने भी इसी गंगा नदी के लिए कहा था कि 'मुझे गंगा माँ ने बुलाया है'।

तो सवाल है कि इस गंगा 'माँ' की हालत पहले से कितनी सुधरी है? इस सवाल का जवाब ढूँढने से पहले यह जान लेते हैं कि मोदी सरकार ने गंगा की स्वच्छता के लिए क्या किया है।

सरकार ने गंगा नदी के प्रदूषण को खत्म करने और नदी को पुनर्जीवित करने के लिए 'नमामि गंगे' नाम से एक गंगा संरक्षण मिशन को शुरू किया। यह इसलिए शुरू किया गया था कि गोमुख से लेकर हरिद्वार के सफर के दौरान गंगा 405 किलोमीटर का सफर तय करती है और इसके किनारे बसे 15 शहरों और 132 गांवों के कारण इनसे निकलने वाले कूड़ा-करकट से लेकर सीवरेज तक ने गंगा को प्रदूषित कर दिया है। इसके तहत 2017 से उत्तराखंड में गंगा की निर्मलता के लिए कोशिशें शुरू हुईं।

केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल ने गंगा नदी की सफाई के लिए बजट को चार गुना करते हुए 2019-2020 तक नदी की सफाई पर 20,000 करोड़ रुपए खर्च करने की कार्य योजना को मंजूरी दी थी। नमामि गंगे की 231 योजनाओं में गंगोत्री से शुरू होकर उत्तरप्रदेश, झारखंड, उत्तराखंड, बिहार और बंगाल में विभिन्न जगहों पर पानी के स्वच्छता का काम किया जाना है।

लेकिन इन कार्यों पर सवाल पहले से ही उठते रहे हैं। पहली बार जब नरेंद्र मोदी सरकार द्वारा 2014 के बजट भाषण में 'नमामि गंगे मिशन' की घोषणा की गई थी, तो यह दावा किया गया था कि 2019 तक गंगा को साफ़ कर दिया जाएगा।

हालाँकि, बाद में जल संसाधन मंत्री नितिन गडकरी ने साफ़ किया कि 2019 तक नदी की 80 प्रतिशत सफाई हो जाएगी, लेकिन पूरी प्रक्रिया 2020 तक पूरी हो जाएगी। 2019 तक 80 प्रतिशत लक्ष्य हासिल किया गया या नहीं, यह बहस का विषय है।

2019 में एक रिपोर्ट में कहा गया था कि स्वच्छ गंगा निधि (सीजीएफ) के तहत इकट्ठे किए गए कुल धन का तब केवल 18% खर्च किया गया था। 2019 की 'द वायर' की एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार नेशनल मिशन फॉर क्लीन गंगा पर कॉम्पट्रोलर एंड ऑडिटर जनरल (सीएजी) की रिपोर्ट ने आगाह किया था कि सीजीएफ

के तहत मिलने वाली राशि का बहुत कम हिस्सा ही खर्च किया गया। तब वरिष्ठ बीजेपी नेता मुरली मनोहर जोशी की अध्यक्षता वाली संसदीय आकलन समिति ने गंगा सफ़ाई की प्रगति पर गंभीर निराशा जताई थी और सिफ़ारिश की थी कि सरकार काम में तेज़ी लाए।

केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड यानी सीपीसीबी की 2017-2018 की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया था कि 2014 और 2018 के बीच गंगा के पानी की गुणवत्ता में सुधार नहीं हुआ। 'उत्तर प्रदेश में 2014-18 के दौरान जल की गुणवत्ता मध्यम स्तर पर प्रदूषित थी। बिहार के पटना शहर में यह 2015-16 के दौरान भारी प्रदूषित थी, जबकि अन्य सभी जगहों पर मामूली रूप से प्रदूषित पायी गयी थी।

2019 में ही एक और चिंता वाली ख़बर आई थी। तब इंग्लैंड में यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ़ यॉर्क के वैज्ञानिकों के एक दल ने दुनिया के 72 देशों की 91 नदियों से 711 जगहों से पाने के नमूने लेकर उसमें सबसे अधिक इस्तेमाल किये जाने वाले 14 एंटीबायोटिक्स की जाँच की थी। नतीजे चौंकाने वाले थे, लगभग 65 प्रतिशत नमूनों में एक या अनेक एंटीबायोटिक्स मिले। इसमें गंगा नदी भी शामिल थी। उसमें यह चेताया गया था कि नदियों के पानी में घुले ये एंटीबायोटिक्स जानलेवा साबित हो सकते हैं।

तो क्या गंगा की ऐसी स्थिति बदलने के लिए पर्यावरण संरक्षण में जुटे लोगों ने कुछ प्रयास नहीं किया? प्रयास किये लेकिन वे सफल नहीं हुए। इसका सबसे बड़ा उदाहरण तो एक्टिविस्ट डॉ. जीडी अग्रवाल थे।

उन्होंने गंगा की स्थिति सुधारने को सरकार पर दबाव बनाने के लिए अनिश्चितकालीन भूख हड़ताल की थी। 2018 में आखिरकार उनका निधन हो गया था।

हालाँकि, सरकार लगातार दावे करती रही कि गंगा की सफ़ाई काफ़ी हद तक हो गई है। 'स्वच्छ गंगा' कार्यकर्ता जी.डी. अग्रवाल यह मानने को तैयार नहीं थे और उनका कहना था कि गंगा और ज़्यादा प्रदूषित हुई। स्वामी ज्ञान स्वरूप सानंद के नाम से जाने जाने वाले अग्रवाल कभी आईआईटी कानपुर में प्रोफ़ेसर रहे थे। वह केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड के सदस्य-सचिव भी रहे थे।

डॉ. अग्रवाल को कितनी संजीदगी से लिया जाता था इसकी एक मिसाल तो यही है कि नरेंद्र मोदी जब 2012 में गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री थे तो गंगा को बचाने के उनके प्रयासों की सराहना की थी। उनकी भूख हड़ताल के बाद उनके स्वास्थ्य के प्रति चिंता व्यक्त करते हुए ट्वीट किया था कि केंद्र को गंगा को बचाने के लिए ठोस उपाय करने चाहिए।

यही मोदी 2018 में प्रधानमंत्री थे। डॉक्टर अग्रवाल ने माँग की थी कि गंगा श्रद्धालु परिषद बनाई जाए जो गंगा नदी के प्रबंधन का कामकाज स्वतंत्र रूप से करे। उन्होंने राज्य सरकार के अलावा केंद्र सरकार को भी चिट्ठियाँ लिखीं। अनशन शुरू होने के पहले उन्होंने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को एक खत लिख कर अनशन की जानकारी दी थी। उन्होंने मोदी को छह खत लिखे।

पर्यावरणविद् और एक्टिविस्ट डॉ. अग्रवाल की कुल कोशिश गंगा को बचाने की थी। यह वही गंगा है, जिसे बचाने का भरोसा प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने देश को दिया था। उनके मुताबिक, इसी गंगा को बचाने के लिए उन्होंने वाराणसी से चुनाव लड़ा था तभी तो उन्होंने कहा था कि 'मुझे गंगा मैया ने बुलाया

है। <https://www.satyahindi.com/variety/bjp-mp-varun-gandhi-on-narendra-modi-govt-clean-ganga-river-namami-gange-128859.html>

STATES NEWS ITEMS

7. CAG finds irregularities in Chhatisgarh local bodies (downtoearth.org.in) 27 July, 2022

Delayed elections, irregular meetings and lack of committees plague the urban local bodies (ULBs) in Chhatisgarh, an audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has found. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 was also not effectively implemented, it said.

The Act was introduced in 1992 to give more teeth to urban local governments.

The Chhatisgarh government had overriding powers over ULBs, which is against the spirit of the Act, the report said. Many such bodies were also virtually defunct as polls were not held before the expiry of the stipulated period.

There were no prescribed meetings of corporations and councils in 11 ULBs out of the 27 checked by CAG.

The audit assessed the extent of the Act's implementation at the local body level up to March 2020. The report was published July 26 on the CAG website.

It also looked into the creation of a robust institutional framework supported by the transfer of functions, funds and functionaries.

Some of the overriding powers of the state government are: Power to frame rules and cancel and suspend a resolution or decision taken by the bodies. The government also has the ability to dissolve ULBs.

The CAG report said:

We observed that the task of delimitation (putting a limit on date of holding local body polls) had not been entrusted to the state election commission. Elections of 15 ULBs were also held after a delay of one year.

Meetings of corporations and councils were not being held regularly, the report said, adding that regular meetings are imperative for the successful functioning of ULBs.

The assessment was carried out from 2015-16 to 2019-20. Test-check data was collected from 27 ULBs in Chhatisgarh — five Nagar Nigams, 11 Nagar Palika Parishads and 11 Nagar Panchayats.

There are 169 ULBs in the state.

A Nagar Nigam is a municipal corporation, a Nagar Panchayat is a settlement in transition from rural to urban and a Nagar Palika Parishad is a municipal council.

There had been no prescribed meetings for several ULBs, the report found. “Advisory committees were not constituted in 10 bodies,” it said.

The audit found that district planning committees were constituted; however, their meetings were not held regularly. Matters of common interest were also not prepared in any of the 12 districts that were test checked.

The CAG report also reported delays in the constitution of state finance commissions (first to third). Consequently, there was a delay in the submission of its recommendation reports and acceptance of recommendations.

The recommendations also included devolution of funds. “Delay in the devolution has adversely affected the financial position of the ULBs,” the report said.

“It was also seen that elections were not held in three bodies. Hence, in the absence of elected local government, development of these units may be hampered,” the CAG report stated.

Besides, the mandate of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act to empower the ULBs was also getting violated.

“Committees, wards and mohalla committees, municipal accounts committees and metropolitan planning committees were not constituted for some of the bodies,” the report pointed out.

The audit also noticed wide variations in the per capita money spent on water supply and public health, sanitation and solid waste management among different ULBs.

CAG found ULBs to be generally effective in terms of achieving the coverage of sanitation and household level coverage of solid waste management rules. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/governance/cag-finds-irregularities-in-chhatisgarh-local-bodies-83979>

8. Chhattisgarh govt overriding powers on ULBs not in spirit with constitutional change: CAG ([theprint.in](https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/governance/cag-finds-irregularities-in-chhatisgarh-local-bodies-83979)) 26 July, 2022

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), in a report tabled in the state Assembly on Tuesday, has observed the Chhattisgarh government had overriding powers over urban local bodies which was against the spirit of the 74th constitutional amendment.

The CAG maintained the advent of Smart Cities has eroded the space of urban local bodies (ULBs).

The report on performance audit on implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) in Chhattisgarh for the year ended March 31, 2020, which was tabled in the Assembly, also pointed that except for the Korba Municipal Corporation, ward and mohalla committees were not constituted in any of the 27 test-checked ULBs.

“Barring the constitution of the committee for the Metropolitan Planning, the State Acts/Rules have complied with all requirements as envisaged in the 74th CAA regarding inclusion of codal provisions in the State Acts/Rules. Audit observed that the legal provisions were not backed up by decisive action which goes against the spirit of the 74th CAA. It was also observed that the State Government had overriding powers over ULBs which was against the spirit of the Constitutional Amendment,” it said.

The 74th CAA sought to empower ULBs to perform functions and implement schemes in relation to 18 subjects specified in the 12th Schedule.

Audit observed that out of 18 functions, ULBs were solely responsible for eight. These bodies had no role in one function, had dual role in six functions, were mere implementing agencies in two functions, and in respect of regulation of land-use, the ULBs had an overlapping jurisdiction with other departments, it said.

Without complete devolution of functions, the local self-governments cannot be strengthened in the state. The advent of Smart Cities has further eroded the space of ULBs, the report said.

Raipur and Bilaspur, selected to be developed as Smart Cities in Chhattisgarh, were provided financial resources of Rs 1,355 crore during the period 2016-20. With the formation of Smart Cities, the scope and extent of work of ULBs have been further reduced. The devolution of functions in the state has not been completed even after 20 years of its inception, it said.

The ULBs neither have the powers to assess the staff requirement nor to recruit the required permanent staff except on contractual basis. The state government appoints Group A, B and C staff and the powers to regulate their conditions of services, discipline, as well as the conduct are also with the state government, the CAG report said.

Except for the Korba Municipal Corporation, ward and mohalla committees were not constituted in any of the 27 test-checked ULBs, it said.

“This defeated the objective of facilitating community participation in local governance as well as prioritization and monitoring of development works. Meetings of District Planning Committees were not held regularly and consolidated District Development Plans for the District as a whole by considering local needs and matters of common interest were not prepared,” it said.

The CAG reported said delay in constitution of state finance commissions (first to third) and consequent delay in submission of their recommendation reports and implementation/devolution of funds have adversely affected the financial position of the ULBs.

Devolution of funds is being done as per the Second State Finance Commission even when the constitution of the fifth panel was due, it added. <https://theprint.in/india/chhattisgarh-govt-overriding-powers-on-ulbs-not-in-spirit-with-constitutional-change-cag/1056552/>

9. C'garh still holds overriding powers of ULBs, objects CAG ([dailypioneer.com](https://www.dailypioneer.com)) 27 July 2022

The Chhattisgarh government has overriding powers over Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) against the spirit of the Constitutional amendment, according to an audit report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) tabled in the Assembly on Tuesday.

The devolution of functions in the state has not been completed even after 20 years of the formation of Chhattisgarh, it states.

The report states that though Chhattisgarh has implemented the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, it is yet to delegate the powers to the three-tier urban bodies.

The five-chapter report states that from Census 2011, there has been an increase in urban population. ULBs face multiple challenges of public health issues, poverty and poor waste management in 169 civic bodies.

With the Smart Cities project in Raipur and Bilaspur, it has further eroded the space of civic bodies, it said.

It has no powers to assess the staff requirement nor can recruit required permanent staff except on contractual basis. All the appointments are made by the state government, the report states.

Of the 27 bodies, only the Korba Municipal Corporation has constituted Ward and Mohalla Committees, thus defeating the aim of community participation in local governance. The District Planning Committee meetings are also not regular.

The state is releasing funds based on the Second Finance Commission recommendations though the constitution of the Fifth Commission is due, it said.

The ULBs is get only 17 percent of their share of their own revenue (Rs 2,572.47 crore). <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2022/state-editions/c---garh-still-holds-overriding-powers-of-ulbs--objects-cag.html>

10. CAG pinpoints flaws in Chhattisgarh local government ([newsriveting.com](https://www.newsriveting.com)) Updated: 26 Jul 2022

Raipur: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, Chhattisgarh has underlined the dodges in the effective implementation of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) introduced to give more teeth to urban local governments.

“Barring the constitution of the committee for the Metropolitan Planning, the State Acts/Rules have complied with all requirements as envisaged in the 74th CAA regarding inclusion of codal provisions in the State Acts/Rules. Audit observed that the legal provisions were not backed up by decisive action which goes against the spirit

of the 74th CAA. It was also observed that the State (Chhattisgarh) Government had overriding powers over ULBs (Urban Local Bodies) which was against the spirit of the Constitutional Amendment,” the report of the C&AG of India on performance audit on implementation of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act in Chhattisgarh said.

The report for the year ended March 31, 2020 was tabled in the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly today. The 74th CAA, introduced by the then Congress government headed by P V Narasimha Rao in 1992, sought to empower ULBs to perform functions and implement schemes in relation to 18 subjects specified in the 12th Schedule. Audit observed that out of 18 functions, ULBs were solely responsible for eight functions, had no role in one function, had dual role in six functions, were mere implementing agencies in two functions, and in respect of Regulation of land-use, the ULBs had an overlapping jurisdiction with other Departments.

Without complete devolution of the functions, the local self-Governments cannot be strengthened in the State, the report observed.

The advent of Smart Cities has further eroded the space of ULBs. Raipur and Bilaspur, selected to be developed as smart cities in Chhattisgarh were provided with financial resources of Rs 1355 crore during the period 2016-20. With the formation of Smart Cities, the scope and extent of work of ULBs have been further reduced. The devolution of functions in the State has not been completed even after 20 years of its inception, the CAG report said.

The ULBs neither have the powers to assess the staff requirement nor to recruit the required permanent staff except on contractual basis. The State Government appoints Group A, B and C staff and the powers to regulate their conditions of services, discipline, as well as the conduct are also with the State Government.

Except for Nagar Nigam, Korba, Ward and Mohalla Committees were not constituted in any of the 27 test-checked ULBs, the report said, adding that it defeated the objective of facilitating community participation in local governance as well as prioritization and monitoring of development works. Meetings of District Planning Committees were not held regularly and consolidated District Development Plans for the District as a whole by considering local needs and matters of common interest were not prepared.

The CAG reported said delay in constitution of State Finance Commissions (first to third) and consequent delay in submission of their recommendation reports as well as further delay in acceptance of recommendations and implementation/devolution of funds have adversely affected the financial position of the ULBs. Devolution of funds is being done as per Second State Finance Commission, even when the constitution of Fifth State Finance Commission was due. <https://newsriveting.com/cag-pinpoints-flaws-in-chhattisgarh-local-government/>

11. छत्तीसगढ़ सरकार यूएलबी पर जिस तरह शक्तियों का इस्तेमाल रही है, वह संविधान संशोधन के खिलाफ: कैग (navbharattimes.indiatimes.com) Updated: 27 Jul 2022

भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (कैग) ने मंगलवार को छत्तीसगढ़ विधानसभा में पेश एक रिपोर्ट में कहा है कि राज्य सरकार शहरी स्थानीय निकायों (यूएलबी) को लेकर अपनी शक्तियों को जिस तरह इस्तेमाल रही है, वह 74वें संविधान संशोधन की भावना के खिलाफ है।

सीएजी ने कहा कि स्मार्ट शहरों के बनने से शहरी स्थानीय निकायों की जगह खत्म हो गई।

रिपोर्ट में यह भी बताया गया है कि कोरबा नगर निगम को छोड़कर, 27 में से किसी भी निगम में वार्ड और मोहल्ला समितियों का गठन नहीं किया गया है।

सीएजी रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है, "महानगर योजना के लिए समिति के गठन को छोड़कर, राज्य अधिनियमों/नियमों ने 74वें सीए में परिकल्पित सभी आवश्यकताओं का अनुपालन किया गया है। लेखा परीक्षा में पाया गया है कि कानूनी प्रावधानों के अनुसार निर्णायक कार्रवाई नहीं की गई, जो कि 74वें संविधान संशोधन की भावना के विरुद्ध है। यह भी देखा गया है कि राज्य सरकार शहरी स्थानीय निकायों को लेकर जिस तरह अपनी शक्तियों का इस्तेमाल रही है, वह 74वें संविधान संशोधन की भावना के खिलाफ है।" <https://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/state/chhattisgarh/raipur/cag-against-constitutional-amendment-the-way-chhattisgarh-government-has-been-exercising-powers-on-ulbs/articleshow/93145992.cms>

12. Chhattisgarh Assembly: छत्तीसगढ़ सरकार यूएलबी पर जिस तरह शक्तियों का इस्तेमाल रही है, वह संविधान संशोधन के खिलाफ-कैग (abplive.com) July 27, 2022

भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (कैग) ने मंगलवार को छत्तीसगढ़ विधानसभा (Chhattisgarh Assembly) में पेश एक रिपोर्ट में कहा है कि राज्य सरकार शहरी स्थानीय निकायों (यूएलबी) को लेकर अपनी शक्तियों को जिस तरह इस्तेमाल रही है, वह 74वें संविधान संशोधन की भावना के खिलाफ है।

भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (सीएजी) की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि स्मार्ट शहरों के बनने से शहरी स्थानीय निकायों की जगह खत्म हो गई।

कोरबा को छोड़कर, किसी निगम में वार्ड और मोहल्ला समितियों का गठन नहीं

रिपोर्ट में यह भी बताया गया है कि कोरबा नगर निगम को छोड़कर, 27 में से किसी भी निगम में वार्ड और मोहल्ला समितियों का गठन नहीं किया गया है।

सीएजी रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है, "महानगर योजना के लिए समिति के गठन को छोड़कर, राज्य अधिनियमों/नियमों ने 74वें सीएए में परिकल्पित सभी आवश्यकताओं का अनुपालन किया गया है।

लेखा परीक्षा में मिली ये विशेष जानकारी

लेखा परीक्षा में पाया गया है कि कानूनी प्रावधानों के अनुसार निर्णायक कार्रवाई नहीं की गई, जो कि 74वें संविधान संशोधन की भावना के विरुद्ध है। यह भी देखा गया है कि राज्य सरकार शहरी स्थानीय निकायों को लेकर जिस तरह अपनी शक्तियों का इस्तेमाल रही है, वह 74वें संविधान संशोधन की भावना के खिलाफ है। <https://www.abplive.com/states/chhattisgarh/chhattisgarh-assembly-chhattisgarh-government-exercising-powers-on-ulbs-is-against-constitutional-amendment-says-in-cag-report-2177650>

13. छत्तीसगढ़ सरकार शहरी स्थानीय निकायों पर जिस तरह शक्तियों का इस्तेमाल कर रही है, वह संविधान संशोधन के खिलाफ: कैग (ibc24.in) July 27, 2022

Chhattisgarh CAG Urban Body: रायपुर, 26 जुलाई । भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (कैग) ने मंगलवार को छत्तीसगढ़ विधानसभा में पेश एक रिपोर्ट में कहा है कि राज्य सरकार शहरी स्थानीय निकायों (यूएलबी) को लेकर अपनी शक्तियों का जिस तरह इस्तेमाल कर रही है, वह 74वें संविधान संशोधन की भावना के खिलाफ है। सीएजी ने कहा कि स्मार्ट शहरों के बनने से शहरी स्थानीय निकायों की जगह खत्म हो गई।

रिपोर्ट में यह भी बताया गया है कि कोरबा नगर निगम को छोड़कर, 27 में से किसी भी निगम में वार्ड और मोहल्ला समितियों का गठन नहीं किया गया है। सीएजी रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है, "महानगर योजना के लिए समिति के गठन को छोड़कर, राज्य अधिनियमों/नियमों ने 74वें सीएए में परिकल्पित सभी आवश्यकताओं का अनुपालन किया गया है।

Chhattisgarh CAG Urban Body: लेखा परीक्षा में पाया गया है कि कानूनी प्रावधानों के अनुसार निर्णायक कार्रवाई नहीं की गई, जो कि 74वें संविधान संशोधन की भावना के विरुद्ध है। यह भी देखा गया है कि राज्य सरकार शहरी स्थानीय निकायों को लेकर जिस तरह अपनी शक्तियों का इस्तेमाल रही है, वह 74वें संविधान संशोधन की भावना के खिलाफ है।" <https://www.ibc24.in/chhattisgarh/chhattisgarh-govt-exercising-powers-over-ulbs-is-against-constitutional-amendment-cag-1019104.html>

14. What CAG's Nitpicking over Kerala Worker Cess Says about the Problems with Purpose-Specific taxes (thewire.in) July 27, 2022

On July 20, 2022, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)'s report on Kerala's finances for the fiscal year 2020-21 was tabled in the state assembly.

Amongst several other observations, this report has noted how funds being kept outside the 'Consolidated Fund' of the state. The context here is the manner in which

Kerala treats cess receipts under the Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act, 1996 (BOCW Cess Act).

The observations raise some pertinent questions around accounting principles and the national auditor's role in enforcing accountability. However, when examined against the letter and spirit of the BOCW Cess Act, these comments give off an air of mere nitpicking.

Indeed, even as it engages in such technical nitpicking, a careful reading of the report makes it clear that the CAG has failed to ensure compliance by Kerala BOCW Board with regard to timely submission of its annual accounts for audit certification.

Raising its concern over non-remittance of levies into consolidated fund of the state, the CAG of India states:

"The provisions of Rule 5 of the Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Rules (1998) provided that the cess collected (at a rate of minimum one percent of cost of construction) is to be transferred to the Kerala BOCW Board under the accounting procedure of the state. Audit observed that no rules have been framed by the State Government of Kerala for accounting of Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess. Neither a Sub-Head has been opened for transfer of cess amount to Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board by various Departments/ Agencies etc. The Cess amount collected is not routed through the Consolidated Fund of the State as required under Article 266(1) of the Constitution of India and is instead being credited directly to Special Treasury Savings Bank account of the Board/ Accounts in Nationalized banks maintained by the Board." (emphasis added) (p. 121-122)

What would be at stake if Kerala state government frames accounting procedures that would route BOCW cess amount through the consolidated fund of the state? In my opinion, the audit observation that indirectly offers advice for treatment of BOCW cess receipts as revenue receipts of the state, commits a cardinal sin of mis-reading both Article 270 of the Constitution of India granting the state the powers to impose cess (i.e. an earmarked tax) and mis-reading the specific cess act, namely BOCW Cess Act.

Explaining cesses or earmarked taxes in a recently published academic paper, Ashrita Prasad Kotha and Pradnya Talekar said:

"Earmarking is the act of setting aside revenues for specific public purposes unlike general fund financing where budgetary proceeds may be used for any public purposes. Earmarking is prevalent in other countries too, such as the United States of America and Australia. In the Indian context, the term 'cess' is used to describe a levy for 'specific purposes' as described under Article 270 of the Indian Constitution. It is thus, an instance of an earmarked tax constitutionally permitted to be levied in India".

Thus, what follows from such an understanding of a 'cess' as a specific fiscal levy is that there is a clear expectation that when it comes to the money collected, the state government merely acts as a trustee or custodian. It cannot appropriate the proceeds

as if it were state's revenue receipts, creating a general purpose fiscal resource pool that can be used by the finance minister to decide where to allocate it to.

If the BOCW cess would become part of the consolidated fund of the Kerala state government, how would CAG ensure that the cess receipts do not get merged with the general purpose fiscal pool and get spent on purposes not supported under the specific purpose cess legislation? Another corollary question that CAG auditors must answer is, how will the national auditor protect the Kerala BOCW Board, if there were a short-transfer of cess receipts to the board by the state government?

In the recent CAG report on Gujarat (State Finances) for the year ending 31st March 2021, we come across the following observation:

"In terms of BOCW Cess Act, the State Government levied and collected cess amounting to Rs 3,466.87 crore during the period 2006-07 to 2020-21 and transferred Rs 2,129.69 crore to Gujarat BOCW Board as grants-in-aid, leaving a balance of Rs 1,337.18 crore which had not been transferred as of 31 March 2021. Further, of Rs 452.92 crore collected during 2020-21 as BOCW cess, only Rs 115.84 crore was transferred to the Board, leaving a balance of Rs 337.08 crore which was not transferred to the Board in violation of BOCW Cess Rules, 1998" (p. 68).

It is pertinent to add that Rule 5(3) of BOCW Cess Rules, 1998 states in clearly worded, unambiguous words that "the cess so collected is to be transferred to BOCW Board within 30 days of its collection!" If a construction worker picks up CAG of India's Audit report on Gujarat (state finances) for previous fiscal years, I am sure, she may come across a similar audit observation in previous audit reports also.

We also need to understand the specific historicity of the enactment of cess legislations to understand that 'specific purpose' is *raison de etre* of the cess instrument. If the 'specific purpose' is obliterated, the very ground on which the cess legislation was imposed disappears. Such reading of Article 270 of the Constitution providing State the powers to impose 'specific purpose' cess would make us feel that cess receipts must not flow into Consolidated fund of the State Government under Article 266(1), since doing so would alter the very idea of earmarking the fiscal resources.

At the most, the CAG may have a ground for asking the state government to account cess receipts under a separate accounting head created under Public Account of the State, as per Article 266(2) of the Constitution and making sure that the cess so received becomes available to the Board within 30 days, as per Rule 5(3) of the BOCW Cess Rules, 1998.

God forbid, if Kerala takes the route of accounting the cess receipts as part of Consolidated Fund of the State Government as revenue receipts and then the state government indulges in short-transfers of cess receipts to the Board similar to what we have seen in the case of Gujarat, all that the CAG would do is to voice his displeasure by pointing out such short-transfers in audit paragraphs year after year after year, without ensuring any course correction.

The cess legislations – in the present case Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act – may also outline the structure of fund management authority and other parameters on financial accountability.

So, the next logical question that CAG of India shall ask is: "What does the relevant cess legislation prescribe on the fund management authority and legislative control over the same?"

The Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of service) Act, 1996 has the following compliance requirement when it comes to the accounting and auditing of the cess fund/ BOCW board accounts:

"Section 27: Accounts and Audit

(i) The Board shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts in such form as may be prescribed in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India

(ii) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India or any other person appointed by him in connection with the auditing of the accounts of the Board under this Act shall have the same rights and privileges and the authority in connection with such audits as the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has in connection with the auditing of the Government accounts, and in particular shall have the right to demand the production of books, accounts, connected vouchers and other documents and papers and to inspect any offices of the Board under this Act.

(iii) The accounts of the Board shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India annually and any expenditure incurred in connection with such audit shall be payable by the Board to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (Emphasis added)

(iv) The Board shall furnish to the state government before such date as may be prescribed its audited copy of accounts together with auditor's report.

(v) The state government shall cause the annual report and auditor's report to be laid, as soon as may be after they are received, before the state legislature."

Ironically, the same audit report tells citizens that on July 14, 2021, Kerala Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board had submitted its annual accounts for the fiscal year 2019-20. Thus, the annual accounts for the fiscal 2019-20 got submitted to CAG for certification and auditing with delay amounting to 12 months and 14 days (see page 189 of the report).

The latest separate audit report (SAR) on Kerala Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board which has entered public domain pertains to the fiscal year 2016-17 and it was tabled in assembly on June 13, 2019.

Citizens, as well as MLAs and civil society organisations working in Kerala, do not have any idea about the CAG's audit remarks on any of the annual accounts of the Kerala BOCW Board since 2016-17, as all the SARs for subsequent fiscal years have not yet entered public domain.

It is imperative, for the cause of public finance and accountability, for the CAG to take steps to ensure Kerala BOCW Board's compliance of the provisions of Section 27 (iii) of the BOCW Cess Act, 1996 and correct its misreading of Article 270 of the Constitution. <https://thewire.in/government/what-cags-nitpicking-over-kerala-worker-cess-says-about-the-problems-with-purpose-specific-taxes>

15. 'Will be in big trouble': Kerala FM urges Centre not to reduce borrowing limit ([hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)) July 26, 2022

Kerala finance minister K N Balagopal has requested Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman not to consider liabilities of the state entities while determining the net borrowing capacity of the state.

In a letter written to Sitharaman on June 22, which was released to the media on Tuesday, Balagopal contended that liabilities of the state instrumentalities, like statutory bodies and companies, will not come under the ambit of the state debt. He said some of the actions of the Union government in the last five years including the move to fix the states' borrowing ceiling crippled the financial position of the state.

He said combining the debt of statutory bodies and companies with that of the state government was contrary to the provisions of the constitution and will imperil the borrowing powers of the state and jeopardise its developmental plans. He said the state's revenue was dropped by ₹23,000 crore due to various measures of the union government.

"Financial health of the state has been affected by reduction in the revenue deficit grant to the tune of ₹7,000 core this year and loss due to stoppage of GST compensation was around ₹12,000 crore. Besides this, in the name of off-budget borrowing it made a reduction of ₹4,000 crore in the net borrowing limit of the state," he said in the letter.

If the situation continued like this, the socio-economic security system that the state built over the last several decades will be in jeopardy, he said. Unless the Centre recognised the reality confronting the state, particularly in the aftermath of Covid pandemic, the state will be in big trouble, he added.

The Union government earlier rejected the state's contention that ₹14,000 crore borrowing under the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) and Kerala Social Security Pension Limited (KSSPL) were not direct debt for the state. It informed the state that these will be considered as off-budget borrowings and will be reduced from the overall borrowing limit of the state.

The state's cumulative debt crossed ₹3.32 lakh crore, the government informed the Assembly in March. The total debt liability increased more than two-fold in last few years, it said blaming the pandemic and new tax regime for this. Experts said if the situation continued like this salaries, pension and social security pensions may take a hit in the second half of the financial year.

Last week the Enforcement Directorate (ED) sent a notice to former finance minister Thomas Issac in connection with the alleged violations in the financial dealing of

Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) but he refused to appear before the central agency citing his prior engagements.

KIIFB is the agency of the state government for large infrastructure projects and last year it raised ₹2,150 crore through masala bonds as part of its plan to mobilise ₹50,000 crore to fund various projects in the state. "The Union government is envious of developmental projects carried out by KIIFB. So it wants to damage it," said Issac. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has questioned some of the dealing of KIIFB multiple times. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/will-be-in-big-trouble-kerala-fm-urges-centre-not-to-reduce-borrowing-limit-101658832979639.html>

16. KIIFB gets nod for establishing consultancy agency (english.mathrubhumi.com) July 27, 2022

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala state cabinet has approved the proposal of the Kerala Infrastructure Improvement Fund Board (KIIFB) to start consultancy services. The service agency, named KIIFCON, will be the consultant of the projects funded by KIIFB. It will also take up other projects.

The move comes amid the Comptroller and Auditor General's report on the Board becoming a talking point in the state. CAG had said that the borrowings of KIIFB must be included in the state's balance sheet as the Board does not have its own income. As a result, the union finance ministry had cut down the borrowing limit of the state from this financial year onwards. <https://english.mathrubhumi.com/news/money/kiifb-gets-cabinet-nod-for-establishing-consultancy-agency-kiifcon-1.7732538>

17. 'Calicut varsity incurred losses by depositing funds in bank' (thehindu.com) July 27, 2022

Interest rates given were less than that of treasury accounts, says AG's report

A report by the Accountant General's (AG) office has pulled up the University of Calicut for incurring losses to the tune of over ₹5 crore by depositing money from its own fund in fixed deposits of the State Bank of India (SBI), instead of government treasury accounts.

The report said that 47 fixed deposit accounts of the university were found in the SBI. The interest rates given, however, were less than that of the government treasury accounts. These deposits matured during 2019-20 and 2020-21. The losses incurred are estimated to be ₹5.32 crore.

According to Section 45(2) in Chapter 7 of the Calicut University Act, 1975, all money in the university fund should be lodged in the government treasury or with the approval of the government, in the SBI or its subsidiaries up to such limits as may be fixed by the government. Through a circular issued on January 6, 2012, the government had directed public sector undertakings and autonomous institutions to deposit their own funds or profits with banks only if they fetch more interest than in treasury fixed deposits. Otherwise such funds should be deposited only in treasuries.

The government had also made it clear that the chief executive officers of these institutions shall be personally held responsible for the losses on account of parking funds in deposits offering lower interest rates. It was noticed that the SBI had credited a lower amount than the offered rate of interest too. This led to short crediting of ₹78.4 lakh than the agreed amount.

Varsity's reply

The university replied that it was the liquidity of deposits in SBI, compared with that of the government treasury, which forced the university to lodge the funds there as the withdrawal of money would be easy. It was also claimed that high-yielding deposits in treasury accounts might not be useful during periods of treasury ban. It would create a crisis in the disbursement of salary and pension if there was a delay in the grant-in-aid from the non-plan grant of the government. It was also said that the problem of lower-yielding deposits at SBI has been brought before the Syndicate, which decided to invest 75% of the university's own fund in treasury and the rest in SBI. This decision had been implemented since April 9, 2021, the university added.

The AG, however, found the reply to be untenable as the practice of having fixed deposits at a lower interest rate compared with the government treasury account still continued in the university. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/calicut-varsity-incurred-losses-by-depositing-funds-in-bank/article65685490.ece>

18. Pinarayi returns with Onam kit as Kerala govt grapples with money woes ([newindianexpress.com](https://www.newindianexpress.com)) July 27, 2022

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Braving financial constraints, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday announced Onam kit comprising 14 items to all ration card holders. The cash-strapped government has allocated Rs 425 crore for the scheme. Addressing a press conference, Pinarayi said each kit will have 13 essential food and grocery items and a cloth bag. He recalled how the government provided kits 13 times during the Covid period spending Rs 5,500 crore from the exchequer.

The 'kit politics', which political observers feel was a major factor that had helped the LDF return to power last year, is suddenly back as the government is on the defensive in a host of political issues.

Pinarayi was scathing on his criticism of the Union government which, he said, was hampering the state's development.

"When the state government is trying to ensure development and people's welfare through constructive interventions, the Centre is imposing restrictions on the net borrowing ceiling on the state...The Indian economy is not rid of the adverse impact of the pandemic. This phase requires more measures by the government to boost the economy, especially capital expenditure. Covid hit Kerala when it was on the path of fiscal consolidation. The pandemic period also saw a rise in the fiscal and revenue deficits of central and state governments," he said.

The CM alleged that the Centre was trying to defeat Kerala's policy to allocate a fixed percentage of revenue income for capital expenditure and to implement development

projects through the KIIFB. He claimed that KIIFB's loans are repaid from its own revenue. "To term it a liability of the state government is contrary to Article 293 of the Constitution as pointed out by legal experts. The centre is wrong in deeming KIIFB borrowings as state government's borrowing. KIIFB borrowings are based on government guarantees, and they are not direct liability of the government. The state has asked the Centre to withdraw from slashing the net borrowing ceiling (NBC) of the state," he said.

On July 22, Finance Minister K N Balagopal wrote a detailed letter to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman requesting to exclude borrowings by state government entities while determining the NBC. He questioned the competence of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to classify borrowings of state government agencies as off-budget borrowings (OBBs).

CM: Centre not imposing limits on its borrowings

An oft-repeated argument is that the CAG has classified borrowings by state government's agencies as off-budgetary, the minister said. It was the basis for use of Article 293(3) by the Ministry of Expenditure to slash the state's NBC. "While the state government has consistently maintained that such classification is erroneous, suffice it to say, the powers of the CAG extend only to matters related to accounting and auditing of public money and not to the interpretation of the provisions that regulate the financial powers of the Union and the States under the Constitution. This power solely falls within the domain of judiciary, said CM.

He criticised the Union government for not imposing any such limits on its own borrowings by taking into account those of the agencies set up by it. Balagopal said the scope of Article 293(3) and (4) are limited to the State as defined under Article 1 (1) of the Constitution and that cannot be extended to include the debt of government agencies.

PINARAYI'S VOW ON NEW GST HOLLOW

CM's announcement on not implementing new GST on select food items comes a week after the new rate has been enforced in state.

'Need to implement SilverLine speedily'

SilverLine semi-high speed rail project needs to be speedily implemented, and people who support the state's development should intervene in correcting the Centre's stand on the project, the CM has said. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2022/jul/27/pinarayi-returns-with-onam-kit-as-kerala-govt-grapples-with-money-woes-2480988.html>

19. Power tariff revisions and the state of DISCOMs (thehindu.com) UPDATED: JULY 27, 2022

Why are power distribution companies swimming in losses? Why are States reluctant to hike power prices?

TAMIL NADU: The story so far: On July 13, the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) filed a general retail power tariff revision petition

with the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission proposing to hike power tariffs by 10% to 35%. If the proposal comes into effect, expected in September, the hike will be after a gap of eight years. While announcing the government's decision to increase the tariff, Electricity Minister V. Senthilbalaji maintained that the proposed power tariff hike will not affect one crore domestic consumers and people living in hutments out of a total of around 2.39 crore.

Why has the tariff revision petition been filed by the power utility?

A number of factors, which include mounting losses, outstanding loans and the consequent increase in interest burden, has compelled the Tangedco to file the petition. Even after joining the Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) — a scheme meant for improving the health of state-owned electricity distribution companies (DISCOM)—in January 2017, Tamil Nadu could not bring down the gap between the Average Cost of Supply (ACS) and the Average Revenue Realised (ARR) to nil by 2018-19, as stipulated in the scheme. On the contrary, the gap rose to ₹1.07 per unit in 2019-20 against ₹0.6 per unit in 2015-16, according to a report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General on the implementation of the UDAY scheme by the Tangedco which was tabled on the floor of the State Assembly in May 2022. The Minister told the media that the cumulative financial losses went up from ₹18,954 crore in 2011-12 to ₹ 1,13,266 crore in 2020-21. What is more important than all these factors is the commitment provided by the Tamil Nadu government to fully absorb Tangedco's losses, due to which the State government has made an allocation of ₹13,108 crore this year in the form of budgetary support.

The Centre tightened its focus on the State by having withheld, through the Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC), the release of ₹3,435 crore under the Special Liquidity (Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan) loan scheme, apart from not releasing the grant of ₹10,793 crore under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS). The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a guideline to commercial banks that if lending is to be provided to any State-owned power utility including DISCOMs, the entity should have filed a tariff revision petition by November 30 every year.

What about other power DISCOMS in the country?

The Tamil Nadu case is an example of what is happening in the distribution sector in the country. According to Niti Aayog's report of August 2021, most power DISCOMs incur losses every year — the total loss was estimated to be ₹90,000 crore in the financial year 2021. Due to these accumulated losses, DISCOMs were unable to pay for generators on time — as of March 2021, an amount of ₹67,917 crore was overdue.

To help these DISCOMs, the Centre in May 2020, announced a Liquidity Infusion Scheme (Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan), under which loans of ₹1,35,497 crore have been sanctioned. As of December 31, 2021, a total of ₹1.03 lakh crore has been disbursed.

Where do other States stand on power tariffs?

Despite the Centre's prescription for annual or periodical revision of retail power tariff, States have found the exercise painful, as the parties in power in the States link the process to their prospects at the time of Assembly or Lok Sabha elections.

In Andhra Pradesh, the power tariff hike for domestic consumers approved in March, took place after a gap of two decades. Kerala, where the increase came into effect in late June, had it after three years. In March 2022, the Bihar Electricity Regulatory Commission issued an order, rejecting the proposal for a 9.9% hike. In Punjab, no changes in the tariff were made and on the contrary, since the beginning of this month, domestic consumers in the State have been given free electricity up to 300 units each month.

In Tamil Nadu, all domestic consumers are entitled to 100 units of free electricity bi-monthly since May 2016 when the AIADMK retained power. The existing DMK regime has decided not to disturb this arrangement. In Gujarat, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has promised free electricity if it is voted to power in the Assembly election to be held later this year. The general approach of many parties is to use electricity as a tool for their political agenda and make promises to allure people despite knowing that such assurances, if implemented, are not sustainable in the long run.

Do States provide subsidies to sectors like agriculture?

Yes. A common feature of the power distribution policies of the States is to provide free or heavily subsidised supply to agriculture. The connections for the farm sector are unmetered. Tamil Nadu, which has been implementing free power supply for the sector since the mid-1980s, had long resisted the installation of meters even for fresh connections. But it has been allowing the installation of meters for agricultural pump sets. A senior official claims that the meters are there only to do an assessment of consumption and not for billing. Segregation of feeders has been suggested as an option to arrive at the accurate consumption of the farm sector so that the disproportionate quantum of consumption is not attributed to agriculturists in the absence of meters. Gujarat is cited as a success story in this regard. In Manipur, according to the Niti Aayog's report, prepaid metering was supplemented with improved power supply, resulting in improved billing and collection efficiency as well as lower commercial losses.

The Madhya Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission, in its tariff order of March 2022, came out with an incentive package in the area of demand side management. It stipulated that an incentive equal to 5% of energy charges should be given on installation and pushed for the use of energy saving devices such as ISI energy efficient motors for pump sets and programmable on-off/ dimmer switch with automation for street lights.

According to Niti Aayog's report of August 2021, most power DISCOMs incur losses every year — the total loss was estimated to be ₹90,000 crore in the financial year 2021.

Despite the Centre's prescription for annual or periodical revision of retail power tariff, parties in power in the States link the process to their prospects at the time of Assembly or Lok Sabha polls.

Gujarat is cited as a success story as far as segregation of feeders to arrive at the accurate consumption of the farm sector is concerned.

THE GIST

On July 13, the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) filed a general retail power tariff revision petition with the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission proposing to hike power tariffs by 10% to 35%. Mounting losses, outstanding loans and the consequent increase in interest burden, have compelled the Tangedco to file the petition.

According to Niti Aayog's report of August 2021, most power DISCOMs in the country incur losses every year — the total loss was estimated to be ₹90,000 crore in the financial year 2021.

Despite the Centre's prescription for annual or periodical revision of retail power tariff, States have not complied. The general approach is to use electricity as a tool for political agenda and make promises to allure people despite knowing that such assurances, if implemented, are not sustainable in the long run. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/explained-power-tariff-revisions-and-the-state-of-discoms/article65685181.ece>

20. Human rights violation is rampant in Vellore Central Prison, PAC chairman says (timesofindia.indiatimes.com) July 26, 2022

CHENNAI: The public accounts committee (PAC) of the Tamil Nadu legislative assembly inspected the Vellore Central Prison for Men and flagged human right violations. The committee, headed by its chairperson K Selvaperunthagai, pointed out that prisoners have also been segregated and lodged on caste lines.

“There is a need for reformation of the department as there is a prison inside the prison,” Selvaperunthagai said after inspecting the central prison along with the members of the committee and MLAs M H Jawahirullah, T Velmurugan, M Sinthanai Selvan and Y Prakash on Tuesday.

The inspection was the fallout of a complaint received from the relatives of the inmates during their visit to Ranipet on Monday.

“We have found that the prisoners are segregated on caste lines. Some of them were lodged in an isolation cell,” he said and noted that the committee would submit a detailed report to the assembly.

The committee has also found that there was a shortage of male nurses to treat the inmates in the hospital on the premises of the prison.

Citing a CAG report, he said the food provided to the inmates were not of good quality. The prison should be a place to help the inmates to overcome their past and help them to rehabilitate. However, it was failing in many aspects.

“There are specific complaints against a warden. The inmates said that he entered their cell during late hours and beats them badly in the name of checking the cell,” he said.

The prisoners have also raised the issues like mosquito menace, he said and added that they had asked the prison authorities to take measures to avoid it.

It may be recalled that the Madras high court-appointed amicus curiae R Vaigai’s report on the condition of the inmates of the prisoners in the state. In the report to the court, she stated that the prisoners were treated “worse than animals”. It also shed lights on the inhuman conditions prevailing behind the walls of the prisons. It further described the toilets as “hell on earth”. Following this, the court directed the authorities to take corrective measures and ensure the rights of the inmates.

Nonetheless, the situations remained the same in several central prisons and the inmates are continuing to suffer in silence. “The food given today was consumable,” said a prison department source quoting a prisoner. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/human-rights-violation-is-rampant-in-vellore-central-prison-pac-chairman-says/articleshow/93135299.cms>

21. Goa Housing Board paid penal interest of Rs 70.69 lakhs due to lack of tax planning & non-compliance ([goemkarponn.com](https://www.goemkarponn.com)) July 26, 2022

PANAJI: Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has said that Goa Housing Board did not comply with the provisions of Income Tax Act, 1961 regarding payment of advance tax and filing of return, resulting in levy of penal interest of 70.69 lakh under the Act.

“Goa Housing Board did not comply with the provisions of Income Tax Act, 1961 regarding payment of advance tax and filing of return, resulting in levy of penal interest of ` 70.69 lakh under the Act, which was avoidable,” CAG report states

CAG said that Due to lack of tax planning and non-compliance of provisions of Income tax Act, the Goa Housing Board had to pay penal interest, amounting to ` 70.69 lakh, which was avoidable.

“The Board admitted (October 2019) that payment of penal interest was avoidable with proper assessment of taxable income. It stated that advance tax could not be paid as its financial position was precarious. It, however, noted the audit observation for future compliance. The reply is not tenable as timely payment of advance tax and filing of return are statutory requirements to be complied by following the appropriate management practices,” it said

It said that Similar rate of interest is chargeable under Section 234 B if an assessee failed to pay advance tax or where the advance tax paid by the assessee is less than

90 per cent of the assessed tax. Interest is also chargeable at the rate of one per cent per month under Section 234 C, if an assessee fails to pay advance tax or pays advance tax lesser than the specified percentage rates, on or before the specified due date.

Goa Housing Board, an autonomous body constituted under Goa, Daman & Diu Housing Board Act, 1968 to provide quality and cost effective housing options to citizens of Goa, did not have a system to assess the liability of advance tax payable on income earned by it.

“It did not pay advance tax on the due dates as required under Section 211 of Income Tax Act for the last four years (2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19) and defaulted in timely filing of returns of income for two years (2015-16 and 2018-19). Consequently, the Board had to pay penal interest totaling ` 70.69 lakh under Sections 234 A, 234 B and 234 C during the last four year period 2015-19,” the report states. <https://goemkarponn.com/goa-housing-board-paid-penal-interest-of-rs-70-69-lakhs-due-to-lack-of-tax-planning-non-compliance/>

22. Fishermen hit by cancellation of tax free diesel quota, seek CM Eknath Shinde’s intervention (freepressjournal.in) July 27, 2022

Based on the audit done by the accountant general, the fisheries department objected to the approval of diesel quota and tax refund for boats with a capacity of 120 horsepower six cylinders.

After the 61-day ban, fishing activities in the state are all set to resume on 1, August. However, the fishing community is in trouble due to the decision taken by the fisheries department to cancel the subsidized diesel quota for mechanised fishing boats with an engine capacity of more than 120 horsepower.

Based on the audit done by the accountant general, the fisheries department objected to the approval of diesel quota and tax refund for boats with a capacity of 120 horsepower six cylinders. As a result, more than 80 percent of boats operating on the western coast and nearly 25 percent of boats owned by fishermen in the coastal belt of Uttan near Bhayandar will have no other option but to purchase fuel at the existing market rates.

Stung by the orders, the Akhil Maharashtra Machimar Kriti Samiti (AMMKS) led by Devendra Damodar Tandel has sought the intervention of chief minister- Eknath Shinde, to roll back the cancellation order and revive the fuel quota before the resumption of the upcoming fishing season. “Already reeling under losses due to low catch and natural calamities, purchasing fuel at market prices is bound to add more burden to the logistical expenses of fishermen. This will further push them to the brink. Moreover, these boats are the basic support system for fisheries cooperative societies who disburse the diesel at tax-free cost,” said former municipal corporator and fishing community leader- Bernard D’mello.

Following a request by members of the AMMKS, former state fisheries minister Aslam Shaikh directed the officials of the fisheries department to remove the limit of 120 horsepower for diesel quota and refunds. However, the Thackeray led-Maha Vikas

Aghadi (MVA) was toppled and the Shinde-led government came into power and the directions remained on the backburner. The BJP-supported Shinde government in the state is without a cabinet even after 25 days. <https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/fishermen-hit-by-cancellation-of-tax-free-diesel-quota-fishing-community-seeks-cm-eknath-shindes-intervention>

23. Bengal lagging in many economic parameters: BJP ([indianexpress.com](https://www.indianexpress.com)) July 27, 2022

Eminent economist and BJP MLA Ashok Lahiri on Tuesday criticised the TMC government in the state for “lagging behind” states such as Maharashtra in several economic parameters.

Addressing a news conference, Lahiri said as per the CAG report of 2019-20, the state government is way behind in terms of GPD growth, revenue generation and capital expenditure.

“Despite having lower population than Maharashtra, the state is lagging behind in terms of GDP growth and other parameters. Instead we are witnessing scams in education sector unfolding leading to the arrest of a minister. This is unfortunate,” said Lahiri. <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/kolkata/bengal-lagging-in-many-economic-parameters-bjp-8053648/>

24. जिन्होंने सारी बात बताई, अब उन्हीं पर उंगली उठाई ([dainiktribuneonline.com](https://www.dainiktribuneonline.com)) Jul 27, 2022

हरियाणा के तकनीकी शिक्षा विभाग में अनुसूचित जाति के विद्यार्थियों की कोचिंग के नाम पर करीब 16 करोड़ रुपये का घोटाला हुआ है। अजब संयोग है कि कोचिंग के लिए जिस कंपनी के साथ एमओयू साइन किया गया, उसका नाम ही ‘मास्टर माइंड्स’ है। इससे भी अधिक रोचक और हैरानी वाला एक पहलू यह है कि घोटाले के पीछे के ‘असली मास्टर माइंड्स’ का स्टेट विजिलेंस ब्यूरो की रिपोर्ट में अब कोई जिक्र नहीं है। यही नहीं, कोचिंग सेंटर के नाम पर हुई धांधली का खुलासा करने और सेंटर्स के खिलाफ रिपोर्ट देने वाले कई प्राचार्यों को ही विजिलेंस ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में लपेट लिया है।

रिपोर्ट में बड़े अफसरों का नाम नहीं होने से आशंका पनप रही है कि घोटाले को ‘दबाने’ की कोशिश हो रही है। चार वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों के नाम दूसरी ही रिपोर्ट में ‘गायब’ हो गए थे। करीब नौ साल इस घोटाले की जांच करने के बाद विजिलेंस ब्यूरो ने एकाध नहीं, बल्कि तीन जांच रिपोर्ट दी हैं। अब अंतिम जांच रिपोर्ट में घोटाले के ‘मास्टर माइंड’ के बजाय निचले अधिकारियों व कर्मचारियों पर गाज़ गिरी है।

यह मामला पूर्व की हड़्डा सरकार के समय का है। स्टेट विजिलेंस ब्यूरो को जांच भी हड़्डा सरकार के समय ही अक्टूबर, 2013 में सौंपी गई थी। जिन अधिकारियों व कर्मचारियों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई की सिफारिश भी की गई है, उनमें से भी अधिकांश के बचकर निकलने की गुंजाइश है। कुछ तो सेवानिवृत्त हो चुके हैं और जो सेवा में हैं भी, वे मौजूद तथ्यों के आधार पर कार्रवाई से बच सकते हैं। विजिलेंस ब्यूरो द्वारा पहली रिपोर्ट 7 अक्टूबर, 2016 को दी गई थी। बताते हैं कि इसमें बड़े अधिकारियों के नाम थे। 14 जून, 2019 को

दूसरी रिपोर्ट में इनके नाम हट गए। अब तीसरी रिपोर्ट में भी कई ऐसे नाम बाहर हो गए हैं, जो दोनों ही रिपोर्ट में शामिल थे। रोचक पहलू यह भी है कि ऐसे भी अधिकारियों को अब चार्जशीट करने की तैयारी है, जिन्हें विजिलेंस ने एक बार भी तलब नहीं किया। जो अधिकारी सेवानिवृत्त हो चुके हैं, उन पर कार्रवाई हो पाना संभव नहीं क्योंकि नियमानुसार पेंशन लेते चार साल से अधिक समय गया तो, प्रेक्टिकली उसका कुछ नहीं बिगड़ सकता।

दरअसल, 2007 में तकनीकी शिक्षा विभाग के अधिकारियों ने अनुसूचित जाति के छात्रों को एआईईईई तथा डिप्लोमा एंट्रेंस टेस्ट की कोचिंग की योजना बनाई। दिसंबर में विभाग निदेशक ने आवेदन मांगे। आवेदनकर्ता फर्मों ने कमेटी के सामने 21 जनवरी, 2008 को दावे पेश किए। कमेटी में तत्कालीन एडिशनल डायरेक्टर (परीक्षा), संयुक्त निदेशक (विकास), संयुक्त निदेशक (इंजीनियरिंग) तथा विभाग के वित्त अधिकारी को शामिल किया गया।

विभाग के तत्कालीन प्रधान सचिव ने कमेटी को निर्देश दिए कि फर्मों की कोटेशन के साथ-साथ संबंधित फर्म के पिछले रिकार्ड को भी ध्यान में रखा जाए। 14 मार्च, 2008 को विभाग ने मास्टर माइंड्स क्लासेज (एमएमसी), चंडीगढ़ के साथ विद्यार्थियों की कोचिंग के लिए एमओयू साइन कर लिया। ऑडिट में कैंग ने एमएमसी, चंडीगढ़ को गलत तरीके से टेंडर अलॉटमेंट का खुलासा किया। साथ ही, कहा कि जिस फर्म को ठेका दिया गया, वह टेंडर शर्तों को पूरा नहीं करती थी। यही नहीं, टेंडर अलॉटमेंट में कानूनी राय तक नहीं ली गयी। एमएमसी, चंडीगढ़ ने अप्रैल-2008 से मार्च-2011 तक पांच कोर्स चलाए। विभाग ने फर्म को 15 करोड़ 88 लाख रुपये का भुगतान भी कर दिया। बड़ी चालाकी से फर्म को पैसा मुख्यालय से देने के बजाय अंबाला व नीलोखेड़ी के पॉलिटैक्निक तथा अंबाला के महिला पॉलिटैक्निक के प्राचार्यों से करवाया गया।

बिना जांच हो गया भुगतान, और भी कई खामियां

कैंग रिपोर्ट में यह भी कहा गया है कि फर्म के बिलों की जांच न तो मुख्यालय स्तर पर हुई और न ही संबंधित कॉलेजों के प्राचार्यों ने उन्हें जांचा। कैंग में मामला पकड़ में आने के बाद विभाग ने सितंबर-2012 में अपने स्पष्टीकरण में कहा कि पेमेंट विभाग के महानिदेशक की मंजूरी के बाद की गई। कैंग ने इस दलील को ठुकरा दिया। यही नहीं, 2011 में विभाग के अफसरों ने कोचिंग क्लासेस संबंधी कमियां बताई थीं। कई जगह सेंटर बंद मिले थे तो कई सेंटर पर बच्चे कम थे। विद्यार्थियों को स्टडी मैटेरियल भी नहीं दिया गया। कैंग ने कहा कि जब फील्ड में कमियां थीं तो पेमेंट किस आधार पर की गई। यही नहीं, फर्म को अपने प्रतिष्ठानों में कोचिंग सेंटर चलाने थे, लेकिन अधिकांश जगहों पर सरकारी स्कूलों में ही क्लासेस चलाए गए। शिक्षा विभाग को किराया तक नहीं दिया। कैंग ने यह भी स्पष्ट किया कि स्कूलों में सेंटर चलाने के आदेश भी तकनीकी शिक्षा विभाग के मुख्यालय से ही दिए गए।

लोकायुक्त की रिपोर्ट भी थी खिलाफ

मामला लोकायुक्त के पास भी पहुंचा। लोकायुक्त की रिपोर्ट में भी माना गया कि अनुसूचित जाति के छात्रों की कोचिंग के नाम पर करोड़ों रुपये का मिसयूज हुआ है। कई वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों के नाम भी लोकायुक्त को भेजी शिकायत में दर्ज कराए गए थे। बहरहाल, विजिलेंस की रिपोर्ट में टेंडर देने वाले, बिलों की स्वीकृति

करने वाले अधिकांश अधिकारियों के नाम नहीं हैं। अलबत्ता उनके नाम जरूर हैं, जिनकी ओर से मौका मुआयना करके विभाग को रिपोर्ट सौंपी गई थी। <https://www.dainiktribuneonline.com/news/haryana/those-who-told-the-whole-thing-now-pointed-fingers-at-them-110895>

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

25. Defence ministry approves arms procurement proposals worth Rs 28,732 cr ([business-standard.com](https://www.business-standard.com)) Jul 26, 2022

The defence ministry on Tuesday approved the procurement of military equipment and weapons worth Rs 28,000 crore, including swarm drones and close-quarter battle carbines, to bolster the overall combat prowess of the armed forces along the northern and western borders.

The procurement proposals were cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

"The Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for capital acquisition proposals of the armed forces amounting to Rs 28,732 crore were accorded by the DAC," the defence ministry said in a statement.

The approval to the new procurement proposals came amid India's lingering border row with China in eastern Ladakh.

The ministry said the approval to procure four lakh close-quarter battle carbines was granted to combat the "current complex paradigm of conventional and hybrid warfare" and terrorism at the borders.

"To combat the current complex paradigm of conventional and hybrid warfare and counter-terrorism at the borders, AoN for induction of approx. 4 lakh of close quarter battle carbines for the services have also been accorded by the DAC," it said.

The ministry said the decision is set to provide a major impetus to the small arms manufacturing industry in the country and enhance "Atmanirbharta" (self-reliance) in small arms.

"Considering the demand for enhanced protection against the threat of enemy snipers to our troops deployed along the Line of Control, and in close combat operations in counter-terrorism scenario, the DAC accorded AoN for bulletproof jackets with Indian Standard BIS VI level of protection," it said.

On the procurement of the armed swarm drones, the ministry said these are being acquired as drone technology has proved to be a force multiplier in military operations.

"In the recent conflicts across the world, drone technology proved to be a force multiplier in military operations. Accordingly, to augment the Indian Army's capability in modern warfare, AoN for procurement of autonomous surveillance and armed drone swarms has been accorded by the DAC under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category," it said.

The DAC has also approved the Navy's proposal to procure an upgraded 1,250-KW capacity marine gas turbine generator for power generation application onboard the Kolkata class of ships through the Indian industry.

"This will give a major boost to the indigenous manufacturing of gas turbine generators," the ministry said.

It also cleared a proposal to procure 14 fast patrol vessels for the Indian Coast Guard.

"In order to enhance the security in the coastal region of our Country, DAC also approved the proposal of procurement of 14 Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs) for the Indian Coast Guard under the Buy (Indian-IDDM) with 60 per cent indigenous content," the ministry said. https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/defence-ministry-approves-arms-procurement-proposals-worth-rs-28-732-cr-122072601068_1.html

26. IMF slashes India's FY23 GDP growth forecast by 80 bps to 7.4% ([business-standard.com](https://www.business-standard.com)) Jul 26, 2022

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday slashed India's growth forecast for 2022-23 (FY23) by 80 basis points to 7.4 per cent, citing less favourable external conditions and rapid policy tightening by the central bank.

In its update to the April World Economic Outlook, the IMF said that though a global recession in 2022 was ruled out with a growth estimate of 3.2 per cent, the balance of risks was squarely to the downside, driven by a wide range of factors that could adversely affect the global economic performance.

"The risk of recession is particularly prominent in 2023, when in several economies growth is expected to bottom out, household savings accumulated during the pandemic will have declined, and even small shocks could cause economies to stall. For example, according to the latest forecasts, the United States will have real GDP growth of only 0.6 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2023 on a year-over-year basis, which will make it increasingly challenging to avoid a recession," it said.

Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, chief economist of the IMF, said that in a plausible alternative scenario where risks materialise and inflation rises further, global growth could decline to about 2.6 per cent in 2022. "The risks to the outlook are overwhelmingly tilted to the downside. The war in Ukraine could lead to a sudden stop of European gas imports from Russia; inflation could be harder to bring down than anticipated either if labour markets are tighter than expected or inflation expectations unanchor; tighter global financial conditions could induce debt distress in emerging market and developing economies; renewed Covid-19 outbreaks and lockdowns as well as a further escalation of the property sector crisis might further suppress Chinese growth; and geopolitical fragmentation could impede global trade and cooperation," he added.

The downward revision of India's growth forecast by the IMF came days after the Asian Development Bank pared down its growth projection for India to 7.2 per cent for FY23,

from 7.5 per cent, citing higher-than-anticipated inflation since April and subsequent monetary tightening by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

India's inflation remained above the RBI's upper tolerance limit for a sixth straight month in June. On June 8, the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the RBI raised the repo rate by 50 basis points following an off-cycle rate hike of 40 basis points in May, making it a 90 bps rate hike in just over a month. Analysts expect another rate hike in the MPC meeting on August 5.

The IMF said that in China, further lockdowns and the deepening real estate crisis had led the growth forecast to be revised down by 1.1 percentage points to 3.3 per cent for 2022, with major global spillovers.

“Downgrades for China and the United States, as well as for India, are driving the downward revisions to global growth during 2022–23, which reflect the materialization of downside risks highlighted in the April 2022 World Economic Outlook,” it added.

The multilateral lender said global trade growth in 2022 and 2023 would likely slow to 4.1 per cent in 2022 from 10.1 per cent in 2021, reflecting the decline in global demand and supply chain problems. “The dollar’s appreciation in 2022 — by about 5 per cent in nominal effective terms as of June compared with December 2021 — is also likely to have slowed world trade growth, considering the dollar’s dominant role in trade invoicing as well as negative financial balance sheet effects on demand and imports in countries with dollar-denominated liabilities,” it added.

As advanced economy central banks raise interest rates to fight inflation, the IMF said widespread capital flight from emerging markets and developing economies could amplify this risk.

On policy priorities for economies, the IMF said that at this juncture, focus should be to bring inflation under control, as price stability was a precondition for durable growth in economic well-being and financial stability. “Economies in which underlying inflation and inflation expectations have risen persistently and significantly above target levels need to take decisive action to tighten monetary policy, with central banks shrinking their balance sheets and raising real interest rates. In the near term, such policies reduce inflation at the cost of lower real activity, higher unemployment, and lower wages,” it added. https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/imf-slashes-india-s-fy23-gdp-growth-forecast-by-80-bps-to-7-4-122072601026_1.html

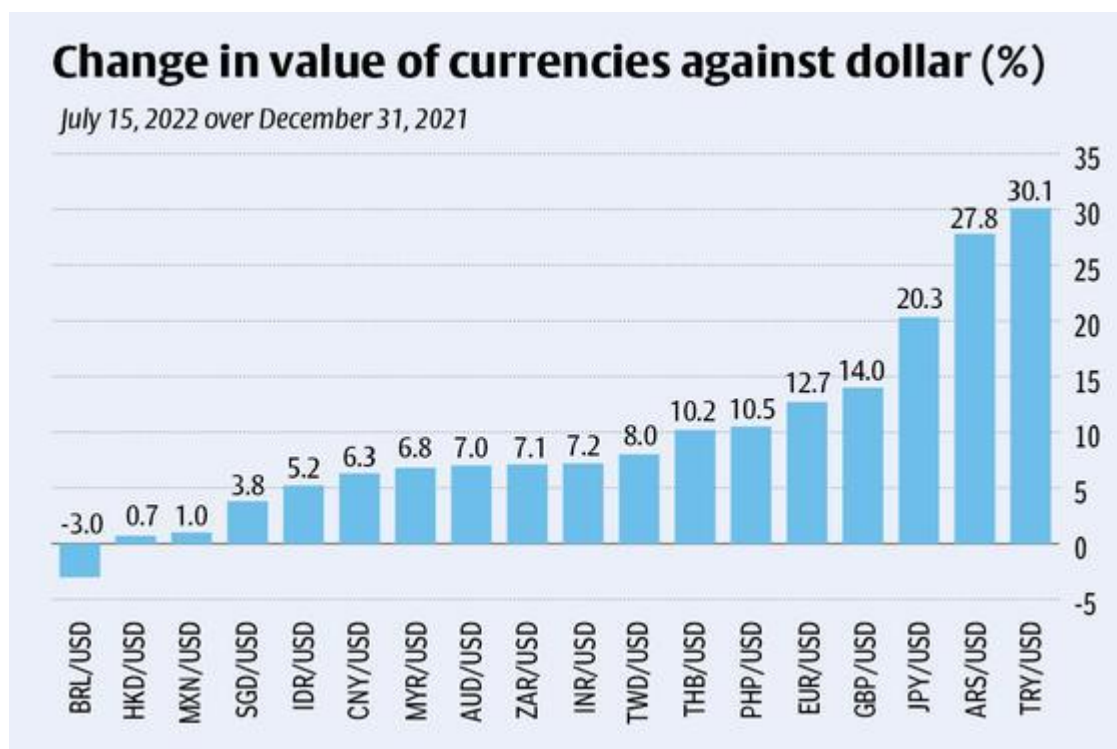
27. Avoid aggressive management of rupee ([thehindubusinessline.com](https://www.thehindubusinessline.com)) Jul 26, 2022

Forex intervention by RBI has actually contained rupee depreciation. But the benefits of heavy intervention are not very clear

The rupee has crossed the 80 mark against the US dollar. It has been sliding in the last five months, ever since the war broke out in Ukraine and the US Fed, in parallel, began aggressive action in response to emerging inflation trends. Each month the rupee crossed a new mark — 75 in January, 76 in March, 77 in May, 78 in June and

79 in July. And the rupee touched 80 in July itself, rather than August. How is one to read this trend?

The important thing is the rupee is not alone in this spiral; almost all currencies are witnessing similar trends. In fact, if one were to look at a point to point change — July 15, 2022 over December 31, 2021 — in value of currencies across the world, the rupee has not really done that badly. It has gone down by around 7.2 per cent, which is just about the median level compared with other currencies (see Chart).



The currencies of China, Malaysia, South Africa and Australia have done better but still fallen by around 6 per cent, while those of Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brazil and Mexico have dropped less than 6 per cent.

However, the rupee had appreciated in effect against the euro, pound and yen and did better than the currencies of Taiwan and Thailand. Therefore, the current spate of depreciation is more of a global phenomenon. The rupee is somewhere in the middle, which is comforting.

But this should not divert attention from the fact that the rupee has also been hit by weakening fundamentals, such as a widening trade deficit which will expand further as growth picks up. India is definitely one of the faster growing economies. However, this also means that demand for imports, both oil and non-oil, will increase which will reinforce the trade deficit.

Exports, on the other hand, tend to be guided more by global growth conditions and if there is a slowdown here, there would be an adverse impact. It has been observed historically that exports tend to be influenced more by global growth than exchange rate changes. This is why the trade deficit is expected to widen leading to also a larger current account deficit which is expected to cross the 3 per cent mark this year.

RBI's initiatives

The obvious question to ask is whether or not the RBI can do anything about it. In a system of free trade and general openness to convertibility, central banks will be constrained and cannot do much to restrict outflows. What can be done through policy has already been done by the RBI, in terms of allowing more NRI deposits, ECBs (external commercial borrowings) and FPIs (foreign portfolio investments). It is however debatable whether these measures will help bring about a turnaround in forex inflow; it can, at best, increase marginally.

For example, ECBs today are no longer attractive, with interest rates overseas increasing. Add to this the foreign currency risk, which is high in these volatile times, and domestic borrowing may be preferred for most companies. Taking forward cover, which is advisable, has a cost and the economics may not make it favourable to do so.

Similarly, allowing higher interest rates on NRI deposits is a good regulatory move. But with deposit rates increasing in the West, savers will see this as an option which may not be significantly more attractive. FPIs were not too interested in corporate paper to begin with, as seen by the relatively small proportion of the limits being utilised. Presently, it is just 18 per cent of the limit permitted. Hence, allowing them to go for short-term investments of less than one year maturity could work only at the margin. But the RBI has surely been proactive in this regard from the point of view of policy.

The phenomenon of currency depreciation is a global problem brought about by the sudden strengthening of the dollar. This may not prevail for long periods; at present, low unemployment and high interest rates signal the strength of the US economy. But as the Fed rate hikes feed into the system and slow down growth, the dollar should weaken and there would be some respite for other countries.

Therefore, trying to arrest the slide in the rupee may not be very meaningful. Using reserves to stem the fall may just mean using up resources with no medium term gain. At the same time, it is essential to ensure that there is no free fall which would be the case in the absence of selective intervention by the RBI.

Handle reserves carefully

The RBI has seen reserves come down by \$35 billion over March and are at around \$573 billion due to both regular intervention as well as revaluation effects on holdings of non-dollar assets.

Direct intervention through sale of dollars hence has limits. Imports in the first quarter were around \$190 billion, which at a monthly average of \$60-63 billion would amount to nine months of forex cover for imports, down from 13-14 months last year.

Therefore, while the reservoir looks adequate, management of the same is imperative so that they do not fall below threshold levels determined by the central bank. Therefore, direct intervention would have to be only the last resort.

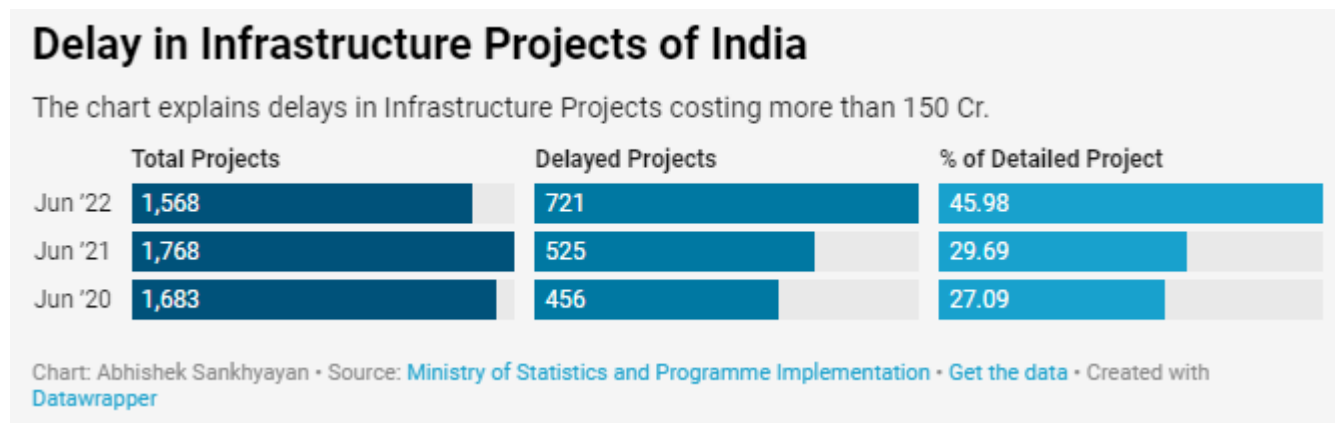
The RBI has already used the policy tools to widen the circumference for capital flows, and the benefits would evolve over a period of time. Under these conditions there may not be too much that can be done. Intervention in the forwards market can be used to align the movements to other currencies so that the rupee remains in the middle range of depreciation. As long as interest rates rise in the West and the easy money which came about due to the quantitative easing is reversed, currencies will keep declining. It may be best to avoid any aggressive interventions from hereon. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/avoid-aggressive-management-of-rupee/article65686738.ece>

28. देरी से चल रही हैं देश की सैकड़ों विकास योजनाएं, रेलवे के 4 में से 3 प्रोजेक्ट पेंडिंग (dnaindia.com) Updated: Jul 26, 2022

अंग्रेजी में एक कहावत है Time is Money और भारत में समय की पाबंदी को लेकर ढीला-ढाला रवैया जगजाहिर है. इसी ढुल-मुल व्यवस्था के कारण देश के इंफ्रा प्रोजेक्ट की लागत करीब 5 लाख करोड़ बढ़ चुकी है. ये आकलन सांख्यिकी एवं कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयन मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी रिपोर्ट में किया गया है. देखते हैं कि देश के अलग-अलग मंत्रालयों में कितने प्रोजेक्ट देरी से चल रहे हैं.

देश का करीब हर दूसरा प्रोजेक्ट देरी से

MoSPI (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation) के अनुसार देश में इस समय 150 करोड़ से ज्यादा के कुल 1,568 प्रोजेक्ट काम कर रहे हैं. जिनमें से 721 तय समय से पीछे चल रहे हैं यानि करीब-करीब हर दूसरा प्रोजेक्ट देरी से चल रहा है. चिंता की बात ये है कि देश में 1 जून 2020 तक इन Delayed Projects की संख्या 1 जून 2022 को बढ़कर 46 % हो चुकी है.

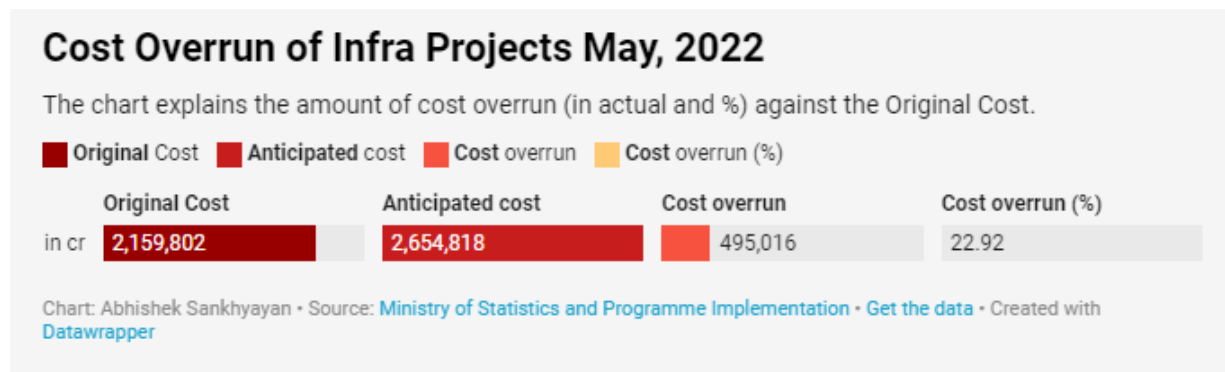


प्रोजेक्ट में देरी के कारण

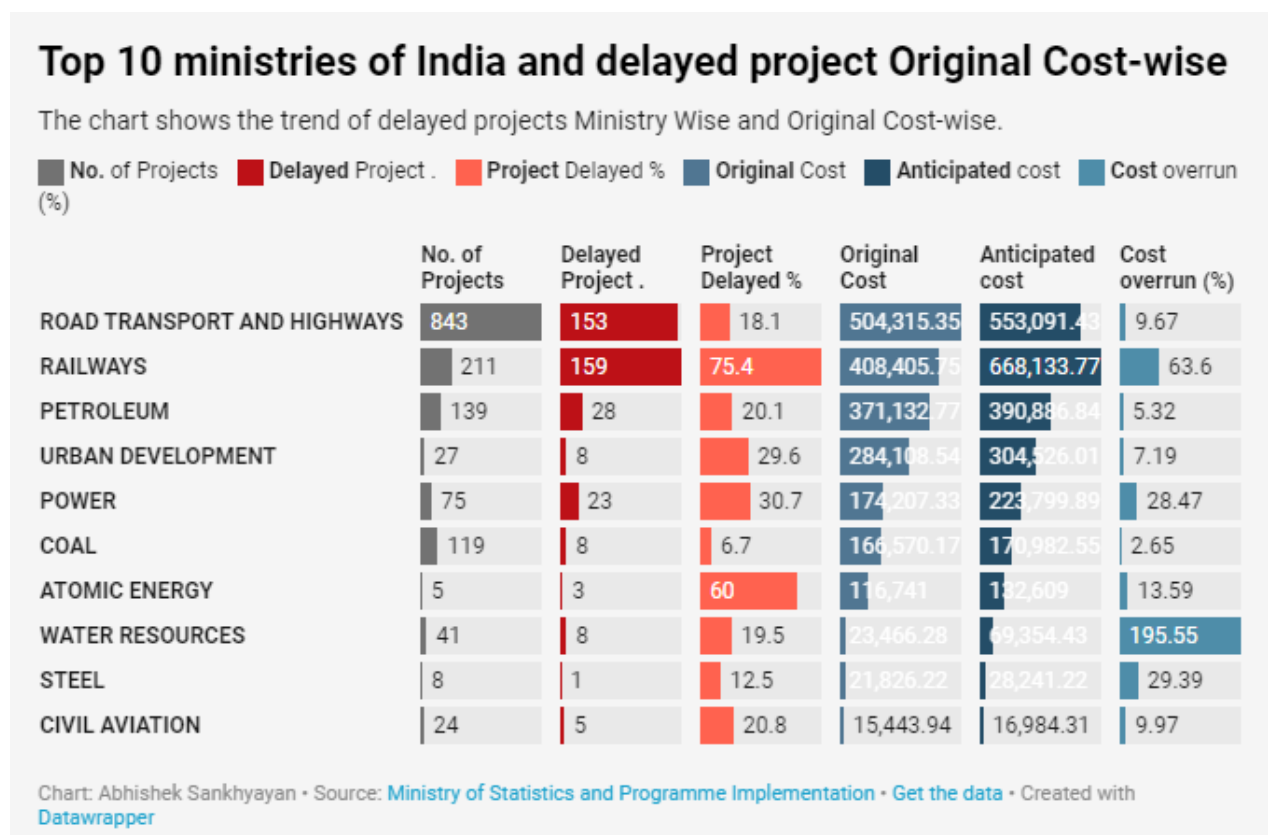
सरकार के मुताबिक प्रोजेक्ट के समय पर पूरा न होने के कई कारण हैं. ये कारण हर परियोजना के लिए अलग हैं. मंत्रालय के OCMS पोर्टल पर बताए गए आधिकारिक कारणों में कानून और व्यवस्था की समस्या, भूमि अधिग्रहण में देरी, पर्यावरण और वन मंजूरी में देरी, वित्त की कमी, पुनर्वास का अभाव, स्थानीय निकायों की अनुमतियां इत्यादि शामिल हैं.

5 लाख करोड़ बढ़ चुकी है इंफ्रा प्रोजेक्ट की लागत

जानते हैं कि देश के अलग-अलग मंत्रालयों में चल रहे इंफ्रा प्रोजेक्ट के समय पर पूरा न होने से कितनी लागत बढ़ गई है. समय पर काम पूरा न होने के कारण 21.5 लाख करोड़ रुपये के आरंभिक लागत वाले प्रोजेक्ट की लागत 4.95 करोड़ रुपये बढ़ चुकी है. ये कुल लागत का करीब 22 प्रतिशत है.



रेलवे के 4 में 3 प्रोजेक्ट लेट, 63 फीसदी बढ़ चुकी है लागत देश के अलग-अलग मंत्रालयों का आकलन करने पर पता चलता है कि देश के कुल प्रोजेक्ट के आधे से ज्यादा सड़क और परिवहन मंत्रालय ही बना रहा है. यहां पर देरी होने के कारण लागत बढ़ (Cost Overrun) गई है. सड़क और परिवहन मंत्रालय की लागत 9.67 प्रतिशत बढ़ गई है.



वहीं परियोजनाओं की लागत के आधार पर देश का दूसरा सबसे बड़ा मंत्रालय रेलवे है. यहां का हर चार में से तीन प्रोजेक्ट देरी से चल रहे हैं. देरी के कारण परियोजना की लागत 4.08 लाख करोड़ से

बढ़कर 6.68 लाख करोड़ हो गई है. <https://www.dnaindia.com/hindi/dna-special/news-more-700-projects-india-running-late-indian-railway-and-more-know-everyhing-4041503>