

NEWS ITEMS ON CAG/ AUDIT REPORTS

1. Telecom Bill to fast track allocation of spectrum in various sectors (*business-standard.com*) Dec 21 2023

19 sectors listed in Bill for allocation route, national frequency allocation plan to be revamped

The Department of Telecommunication (DoT) will now be able to better process requests for spectrum allotment from a long list of government agencies as the Telecom Bill has specified the sectoral uses for which such allocation is allowed, officials said on Thursday.

Apart from satellite communication, 18 other sectors have been listed in the First Schedule of the Bill where administrative allocation will be mandatorily made. In many of these areas, there was no clear process for allocating spectrum, which often led to a lengthy application and evaluation process and disputes.

The Bill has also specified the government may amend the First Schedule to 'perform government functions' or 'serve public interest' or in cases where auction of spectrum is not the preferred mode of assignment due to technical or economic reasons.

Officials said the Bill has provided a clear legal basis for spectrum allocation, which till now was allocated or auctioned by the government based on the interpretation of various laws and judgements. It has now been clearly laid out that spectrum will be auctioned, except for defined items in the First Schedule, ending the discretionary approach.

"We would now be able to clear requests from many users, and especially government ministries and agencies expeditiously," an official said.

Currently, spectrum has already been allocated by the government administratively in 4,700 instances. However, it has always been provided on an 'ad-hoc' basis.

NFAP review

To ease the process further, the government is expected to bring out a revamped National Frequency Allocation Plan as well, sources said. The NFAP is a central policy that defines the roadmap for future spectrum usage by all national authorities, including the telecom and space departments and information and broadcasting and defence ministries.

It provides a broad regulatory framework, identifying which frequency bands are available for cellular mobile service, Wi-Fi, sound and television broadcasting, radio navigation for aircraft and ships, defence and security communications, disaster relief and emergency communications, and satellite broadcasting, among others. It was last updated in October 2022, after a gap of 4 years.

The Telecom Bill has also mentioned the NFAP. "The Central Government, being the owner of the spectrum on behalf of the people shall assign the spectrum in accordance

with this Act, and may notify a National Frequency Allocation Plan from time to time," it reads.

The DoT had constituted a standing committee for spectrum management in June 2023. Among other mandates, it is set to review the NFAP, the Department had informed Parliament.

In an audit report published last year, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) recommended that DoT establish a permanent set-up comprising all stakeholders for periodical review of the pricing, planning and availability of spectrum, as well as its allotments and assignments, for efficient management and optimal utilisation of airwaves. It had also asked the department to put in place a system to get details of the actual spectrum utilised by government user departments and agencies.

The Standing Advisory Committee on Frequency Allocation within the DoT has been present since 1966 to make recommendations on issues related to frequency allocation, deliberations at international forums like the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT), and the formulation of NFAP. However, its role has been limited to giving sitting clearances for wireless installations, the report had pointed out.

Few sectors earmarked for administrative allocation of spectrum

- Law enforcement and crime prevention.
- Public broadcasting services.
- BSNL & MTNL
- Community Radio Stations.
- In-flight and maritime connectivity
- Conservation of natural resources and wildlife.
- Meteorological department and weather forecasting
- National security and defence

- Promoting scientific research, resource development, and exploration
- Radio backhaul for telecom services

https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/telecom-bill-to-fast-track-allocation-of-spectrum-in-various-sectors-123122101003_1.html

2. Indian Navy: Rafale Marine Deal Sees Progress as France Responds to India's Rs 50,000 Crore Tender (*outlookindia.com*) Dec 21, 2023

As the French government has written back to India regarding the Rs 50,000 crore tender to purchase 26 Rafale Marine fighter jets, the Indian Navy is now getting closer to revamping its naval arsenal like never before.

It has been reported that officials privy to the ambitious defense deal will now conduct a detailed study of the bid.

The deal is widely expected to strengthen the operational capabilities of India's aircraft carriers, INS Vikrant and INS Vikramaditya.

India-France Rafale jet deal

In a bid to augment the Indian Navy's aircraft carrier capabilities, India initiated an ambitious Rs 50,000 crore deal with France for the acquisition of 26 Rafale Marine aircraft. Negotiations for the deal are reportedly underway between both governments as a Letter of Request had recently reached the French government.

The decision to improvise the Indian Navy's fighter aircraft fleet marks significant progress in the history of India's defence repertoire.

The procurement, as per reports, includes 22 single-seated Rafale Marine aircraft and four twin-seater trainer versions.

Rafale to supplement MiG fighter jets

French combat aircraft manufacturer Dassault Aviation's Rafale Marine jets are expected to supplement the currently deployed MiG-29s.

The decision to include Rafale in Indian Navy came as a Comptroller and Auditor General report in 2016 had underlined the shortcomings of the MiG-29K and stated, "The MiG-29K, which is a carrier-borne multi-role aircraft and the mainstay of integral fleet air defence, is riddled with problems."

"[In] the best case scenario, a MiG-29 jet will be fully fit for operations less than 50 percent of the time it is required to be deployed," it had said. <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/indian-navy-rafale-marine-deal-sees-progress-as-france-responds-to-india-s-rs-50-000-crore-tender-news-337874>

3. अपने लिए राफ़ेल जेट हासिल करने के एक कदम करीब पहुंची भारतीय नौसेना, फ़्रांस ने भेजी डिटेल्ड बिड (thehindkeshari.in) Dec 21, 2023

26 लड़ाकू विमानों के लिए भारतीय नौसेना के अनुरोध का फ़्रांस ने आधिकारिक तौर पर डिटेल्ड बिड के साथ जवाब दे दिया है. भारत अब इस बिड का बारीकी से मूल्यांकन करेगी, और उसके बाद फ़्रांस के साथ कॉन्ट्रैक्ट को लेकर बातचीत शुरू करेगी. यह सौदा 5.5 अरब यूरो - लगभग ₹50,141 करोड़ - का हो सकता है. इससे पहले, भारतीय वायुसेना के लिए 36 राफ़ेल विमान खरीदे जा चुके हैं.

भारतीय नौसेना ने दोनों विमानवाहक पोतों पर मिग-29के जेट विमानों के पूरक के तौर पर राफ़ेल जेट हासिल करने की योजना बनाई है. मिग-29के अब विश्वसनीयता संबंधी दिक्कतों का सामना कर रहा है. इन्हीं दिक्कतों का ज़िक्र करते हुए नियंत्रक और महालेखा परीक्षक (CAG) की 2016 की एक रिपोर्ट में कहा गया था, "मिग-29के, जो पोत पर तैनात बहु-उद्देश्यीय विमान है और हमारे बेड़े की हवाई रक्षा का मुख्य आधार है, समस्याओं से घिरा हुआ है..."

रिपोर्ट में कहा गया था, "सबसे अच्छे हालात हों, तो भी तैनात किए जाने वाले अवसरों पर आधे से भी कम बार मिग-29 जेट परिचालन के लिए पूरी तरह फिट हो सकेगा..."

हालांकि भारतीय नौसेना ने मिग-29के की उपलब्धता को बेहतर किया है, लेकिन फिर भी नौसेना राफ़ेल चाहती है, क्योंकि चीन भी अपना तीसरा विमानवाहक पोत कमीशन करने की तैयारी कर रहा है. नौसेना प्रमुख एडमिरल आर. हरिकुमार ने अगस्त में कहा था, "मौजूदा समय में मिग-29 जेट

INS विक्रान्त के लड़ाकू बेड़े का हिस्सा हैं... अत्याधुनिक फ़्रांसीसी लड़ाकू जेट राफ़ेल-एम अब मिग-29 की जगह लेंगे..”

चीन पहले से हिन्द महासागर में जिबूती में अपना पहला विदेशी बेस संचालित कर रहा है, जहां उसने युद्धपोतों को खड़ा करना शुरू कर दिया है.

The Hindkeshari ने पिछले साल सैटेलाइट तस्वीरें हासिल की थीं, जिनसे संकेत मिले थे कि अफ़्रीका के किनारे पर जिबूती में चीन का नौसैनिक अड्डा पूरी तरह ऑपरेशनल है और हिन्द महासागर क्षेत्र में तैनात चीनी युद्धपोतों को उससे मदद मिलती है.

जिबूती में चीन का बेस उसका पहला विदेशी सैन्य बेस है, जिसे 59 करोड़ अमेरिकी डॉलर (लगभग ₹4912 करोड़) की लागत से बनाया गया है. यह बेस रणनीतिक तौर से अहम बाब-अल-मंडेब जलडमरूमध्य पर स्थित है, जो अदन की खाड़ी और लाल सागर को अलग करता है और अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार के सबसे महत्वपूर्ण चैनलों में से एक स्वेज़ नहर के प्रवेश द्वार पर निगरानी रखता है.

कोवर्ट शोर्स (Covert Shores) के नौसेना विश्लेषक एच.आई. सटन का कहना है, “चीन का जिबूती बेस ‘किलेबंद तरीके से बनाया गया है, जिसमें सुरक्षा की मध्ययुगीन लगने वाली कई परतें हैं, और यह आज के ज़माने के औपनिवेशिक किले जैसा दिखता है... इसे साफ़ तौर पर सीधे हमलों का सामना करने के लिए डिज़ाइन किया गया है...” <https://thehindkeshari.in/indian-navy-comes-one-step-closer-to-acquiring-rafale-jet-for-itself-france-sent-detailed-bid/>

STATES NEWS ITEMS

4. Dead got pension, fake beneficiaries got scholarship: CAG red flags in Jharkhand (*indianexpress.com*) Dec 22, 2023

The audit report, by the Principal Accountant General (Audit), Jharkhand, under the CAG, was tabled in the Jharkhand legislative Assembly on Thursday. It focused on DBT schemes, both Central and state funded, from the financial year 2017 to 2021 – a period that includes two years of the current JMM-Congress government's tenure that began in 2019 and two years under the previous BJP government.

A Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit report on scholarships, pensions and the functioning of the government web portal ‘e-Kalyan’ in Jharkhand revealed a series of irregularities, including the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of scholarship money to fake beneficiaries, the disbursement of pension to deceased persons, and scholarship payment to multiple beneficiaries through the same Aadhaar number.

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According to the report, the audit of scholarship schemes for Scheduled Castes, Schedule Tribes, Backward Classes, and minorities was done “in the backdrop of financial irregularity reported in the media under minority scholarship scheme”. In

2020, The Indian Express had reported on irregularities in the disbursement of minority scholarships.

The audits were conducted between November 2021 and May 2022.

The audit report said that samples were taken from six districts – Chatra, Hazaribag, East Singhbhum, Godda, Palamu and Ranchi – based on their amount of expenditure, number of beneficiaries, outliers identified through data dump analysis of ‘e-Kalyan’, and geographical representation, among others.

With respect to SC, ST, OBC students’ scholarships, the audit looked into 2,444 students of 96 pre- and post-matric schools/institutes. From the records of the 2,444 students examined by the audit, specific deviations were noticed in 822 (34 per cent). It also showed that more than Rs 5 lakh was disbursed to 81 “fake” beneficiaries.

“Analysis of e-Kalyan database for the period 2017-21 revealed that at state level, 12,983 students of BC category pursuing post matric courses in 1,097 post matric institutes were awarded scholarship amounting to Rs 10.23 crore during 2017-20 despite they received less than prescribed 45 per cent marks,” the report said.

The report also said that scholarships amounting to ₹95.75 crore were given to 53,848 beneficiaries to pursue different courses in various institutes even though the amount payable under prescribed rate was only Rs 72.54 crore.

The audit report also pointed to duplicacy of beneficiaries of minority scholarships as well as under scholarship for BCs. The report said that the data “was not integrated with each other, which resulted in inadmissible payment of scholarships of Rs 26.28 lakh to the beneficiaries under BC scholarship.”

The CAG report said that in the minority scholarship scheme, scholarships amounting to Rs 1.17 crore were awarded to 1,482 ghost or fake beneficiaries from 14 “test-checked schools or institutes” that were neither registered themselves on NSP nor ever obtained user credentials.

“Implementation of the minority scholarship scheme was dismal in the state as the audit noticed instances of disbursement of scholarships to fictitious/ghost beneficiaries in 18 (60 percent) out of 30 test-checked institutes. Fraudulent disbursement of scholarships was made from even those institutes which neither register themselves on NSP nor obtain user credentials,” the audit report said.

In case of pension schemes, the audit examined 2,400 central and state pension applications.

These are some of the irregularities found:

- Names of 84 beneficiaries either were not excluded, or were excluded after a delay up to 65 months (as of July 2021), due to delayed reporting of death, resulting in disbursement of pension amounting of Rs 8.50 lakh to deceased persons. “The concerned authority did not initiate any action for recovery of this amount,” the report said.

- Pension amounting to Rs 9.54 lakh was disbursed to 16 male beneficiaries under widow pension schemes such the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme and the Rajya Vidhwa Samman Protsahan Yojana.

- 55 beneficiaries under the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme and Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme were allowed Pension amounting to Rs 31.69 lakh though they did not fulfil the minimum age criteria.

Regarding the e-Kalyan portal, the report noted that there had been payment to non-applicants without matching Aadhaar number, non-capturing of mobile numbers of the beneficiaries, inadmissible payment of scholarship to beneficiaries, excess payment of scholarship to beneficiaries, and scholarship payment to multiple beneficiaries through same Aadhaar number among others. “(These) were indicative of failures of ‘e-Kalyan’ portal,” said the report.

Here are some examples:

- In Palamu district, beneficiary Kajal Kumari was awarded a scholarship for pursuing intermediate course from Namdhari Mahila College, Daltonganj, with one Aadhaar card. Again, in academic year 2018-19, the same beneficiary was awarded a scholarship for pursuing Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Hindi from SSMS Degree College, Tarhasi, Palamu, with a different Aadhaar number.

- Another student, Sonam Bharti, awarded scholarship for pursuing Master of Arts from Ganesh Lal Agrawal College, Daltonganj (Palamu) and again the same beneficiary was awarded scholarship for pursuing Bachelor of Education from Jyoti Prakash Mahila B.Ed College, Palamu. This shows issues in the software regarding the matching of Aadhaar number with students’ personal details.
<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/pension-beneficiaries-scholarship-cag-audit-jharkhand-9078679/>

5. CAG finds financial irregularities in DBT scholarship, pension schemes in Jharkhand (*moneycontrol.com, news18.com*) Dec 22, 2023

Fraudulent disbursement of scholarships to ghost or fake beneficiaries amounting to Rs 1.17 crore, instances of providing pensions to deceased persons and widow pensions to male beneficiaries were found during the audit, the report said.

Gross irregularities and illegal transfer of crores of rupees were detected in the performance audit of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in scholarship and pension schemes in Jharkhand, according to a CAG report tabled in the state assembly on December 21.

Fraudulent disbursement of scholarships to ghost or fake beneficiaries amounting to Rs 1.17 crore, instances of providing pensions to deceased persons and widow pensions to male beneficiaries were found during the audit, the report said.

"Considering the objectives and relative impact of DBT in social security and scholarship schemes, a performance audit of DBT in Jharkhand from 2017 and 2021 was conducted between November 2021 and May 2022. Huge financial irregularities

were found in the audit," Accountant General (Audit), Jharkhand, Anup Francis Dungdung said in a press conference here.

He said that the audit was conducted in six sample districts of Chatra, Hazaribag, East Singhbhum, Godda, Palamu and Ranchi.

"The audit was conducted in limited districts. Irregularities could be much higher if all districts are taken into consideration," he said.

Implementation of scholarship schemes for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward and minority communities, social security pension scheme and effectiveness of 'e-Kalyan Jharkhand', a scheme-specific information technology platform used for DBT transfer, were audited in the six sample districts.

"Instances of fraudulent disbursement of minority scholarships to fake or ghost beneficiaries were detected. It was noticed that in four of the six test-checked districts, 1,482 ghost or fake beneficiaries from 14 schools or institutes were awarded scholarships amounting to Rs 1.17 crore. These institutes were neither registered on the National Scholarship Portal nor had obtained user credentials for logging on to the portal," the report said.

In social security pensions, it was found that they were not approved within the prescribed time frame as there were delays in approvals up to 864 days in 39 per cent of the test-checked applications, the report stated.

It also mentioned that in Ghatshila of East Singhbhum district, names of 84 beneficiaries were either not excluded or excluded with a delay of up to 65 months, which resulted in the disbursal of pension amounting to Rs 8.5 lakh to the deceased persons.

Similarly, in four blocks of two districts — East Singhbhum and Godda — pension amounting to Rs 9.54 lakh was disbursed to 16 male beneficiaries under the widow pension scheme, it stated.

The CAG report suggested the Jharkhand government to keep an electronic database of all eligible beneficiaries in the state for universal and realistic budget preparations.

It said the government may initiate investigations to verify the financial irregularities and conduct social audits at prescribed intervals to ensure adequate monitoring of schemes. <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/cag-finds-financial-irregularities-in-dbt-scholarship-pension-schemes-in-jharkhand-11939761.html>

6. CAG report finds financial irregularities in Jharkhand (*deccanherald.com*) Dec 22, 2023

Ranchi: Gross irregularities and illegal transfer of crores of rupees were detected in the performance audit of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in scholarship and pension schemes in Jharkhand, according to a CAG report tabled in the state assembly on Thursday.

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The CAG report suggested the Jharkhand government to keep an electronic database of all eligible beneficiaries in the state for universal and realistic budget preparations.

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<https://www.deccanherald.com/india/jharkhand/cag-report-finds-financial-irregularities-in-jharkhand-2821121>

7. CAG finds irregularities in DBT scholarship, pension schemes in Jharkhand (*timesofindia.indiatimes.com*) Dec 22, 2023

RANCHI: The direct benefit transfer (DBT) in schemes pertaining to social security pension and scholarship in Jharkhand are riddled with leakages, duplicity and several irregularities, finds an audit report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). The audit report was tabled in the state assembly on Thursday.

DBT was rolled out by the Centre to ensure timely delivery of benefits to the people, remove leakages and enhance financial inclusion in the process of delivering welfare benefits.

CAG audited DBT schemes related to social security and scholarship schemes between 2017 and 2021 pertaining to department of ST, SC, minority and backward class welfare as well as women, child development and social security department of the state government.

The audit was conducted from November 2021 to May 2022 in six districts - Chatra, Hazaribag, East Singhbhum, Godda, Palamu and Ranchi, said principal accountant general, Anup Francis Dungdung.

"The scholarship schemes were selected due to vulnerability and in the backdrop of financial irregularity reported in media under minority scholarship scheme. The social security pension schemes were selected to identify the overlapping and wrong inclusion of beneficiaries, including delays in payments," he said. The audit has found that implementation of schemes were deficient with many irregularities. "For example, in Scholarship scheme (SC/ST/BC), we found that electronic database of eligible students weren't prepared for monitoring progress. We detected instances of disbursement of scholarship (Rs 5.20 lakh) to 81 ghost/fake beneficiaries (of 21 institutions of five districts); reimbursement of scholarship (Rs 22.79 lakh) to 365 ineligible students; excess reimbursement of scholarship (Rs 5.74 lakh); etc owing to non-compliance with the norms of scheme guidelines and deficiency in the e-Kalyan scheme (online application portal)," he said.

Similarly, implementation of scholarship scheme (minority) was also dismal. "We have highlighted instances of disbursement of scholarships to beneficiaries in 60% of the test-checked institutes as fictitious/ghost."

'Rs 1.17cr scholarships disbursed fraudulently'

He further said, "There have been fraudulent disbursement of scholarships to the tune of Rs 1.17 crore to such institutes which weren't even registered with the National scholarship Portal (NSP)."

As far as social security pension schemes are concerned, the audit report states that data base of eligible beneficiaries was not maintained at the district/state level. "Resultantly, the department remained unaware of the absolute number of eligible beneficiaries," it said.

"Social security pensions were not approved within the prescribed time frame, as there were delays in approvals, up to 864 days, in 39% of the test- checked applications," it

added. "Social audit of the scheme was also not conducted during 2017-21, which led to non-evaluation of the implementation of the scheme," read the report. Dungung said that to achieve better implementation of DBT, they have recommended an exercise to keep an electronic database of all eligible beneficiaries, for universal coverage and realistic budget preparations.

"The monitoring and control mechanisms for verification of the eligibility of applications and payments, require strengthening by checking/preventing irregularities/deviations. State government may initiate probe to verify the financial irregularities, regular conduct of social audits among others," he said. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ranchi/cag-finds-irregularities-in-dbt-scholarship-pension-schemes-in-jharkhand/articleshow/106201027.cms>

8. CAG Report: झारखंड में मृतकों और पुरुषों को दी गई विधवाओं की पेंशन; कैग की रिपोर्ट में अनियमितताओं का खुलासा (*amarujala.com*) 22 Dec 2023

रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, छह में से चार जिलों में 14 स्कूलों या संस्थानों के 1482 फर्जी लाभार्थियों को 1.17 करोड़ रुपये की छात्रवृत्ति बांटी गई। ये संस्थान न तो राष्ट्रीय छात्रवृत्ति पोर्टल पर पंजीकृत थे और न ही पोर्टल पर लॉग इन करने के लिए पात्रता रखते थे।

झारखंड में छात्रवृत्ति और पेंशन योजनाओं के प्रत्यक्ष लाभ हस्तांतरण (डीबीटी) में करोड़ों रुपये के हेर-फेर का मामला सामने आया है। झारखंड विधानसभा में गुरुवार को पेश की गई कैग की रिपोर्ट में इसका खुलासा किया गया है। इसमें बताया गया है कि यहां फर्जी लाभार्थियों को 1.17 करोड़ रुपये की छात्रवृत्ति बांटी गई। इसके अलावा, जो लोग मर चुके हैं उन्हें पेंशन और पुरुष लाभार्थियों को विधवा पेंशन देने के मामले भी सामने आए हैं। सामाजिक सुरक्षा और छात्रवृत्ति योजनाओं में डीबीटी के उद्देश्यों और प्रभाव का पता लगाने के लिए झारखंड में कैग ने 2017 से 2021 की अवधि का ऑडिट किया था।

प्रदेश के महालेखाकार (ऑडिट) अनुप फ्रांसिस डुंगडुंग ने पत्रकारों से कहा, ऑडिट में भारी वित्तीय अनियमितताएं पाई गईं। यह हाल तब है जब केवल छह नमूना जिलों (चतरा, हजारीबाग, पूर्वी सिंहभूम, गोड्डा, पलामू और रांची) का ऑडिट किया गया। उन्होंने कहा कि यदि इसे पूरे राज्य में किया गया तो और भी अनियमितताएं सामने आ सकती हैं।

रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, छह में से चार जिलों में 14 स्कूलों या संस्थानों के 1482 फर्जी लाभार्थियों को 1.17 करोड़ रुपये की छात्रवृत्ति बांटी गई। ये संस्थान न तो राष्ट्रीय छात्रवृत्ति पोर्टल पर पंजीकृत थे और न ही पोर्टल पर लॉग इन करने के लिए पात्रता रखते थे।

सामाजिक सुरक्षा पेंशन के मामले में पूर्वी सिंहभूम जिले के घाटशिला में 84 लाभार्थियों का नाम सूची में या तो शामिल ही नहीं किया गया तो 65 महीनों की देरी से किया गया। परिणामस्वरूप 8.5 लाख रुपये की पेंशन राशि मृतक लाभार्थियों को वितरित कर दी गई। इसी तरह, दो जिलों (पूर्वी सिंहभूम और गोड्डा) के चार ब्लॉकों में विधवा पेंशन योजना के तहत 16 पुरुष लाभार्थियों को 9.54 लाख रुपये की पेंशन वितरित की गई। <https://www.amarujala.com/jharkhand/cag-finds-financial-irregularities-in-dbt-scholarship-and-pension-schemes-in-jharkhand-2023-12-21>

9. झारखंड के अधिकारियों का कमाल, पुरुषों को विधवा तो युवाओं को दे दी वृद्धा पेंशन; कैग रिपोर्ट ने खोली पोल (livehindustan.com) 22 Dec 2023

झारखंड में डीबीटी के माध्यम से सामाजिक सुरक्षा पेंशन योजनाओं के वितरण में बड़े पैमाने पर भ्रष्टाचार हुआ है। डीबीटी के कार्यान्वयन में सामाजिक सुरक्षा पेंशन योजनाओं की उपलब्धियों के आकलन को लेकर की गई लेखा परीक्षा में सीएजी ने खुलासा किया है कि राज्य में पुरुषों को जहां विधवा पेंशन का लाभ दिया गया, वहीं कम उम्र के लोगों को वृद्धावस्था पेंशन बांटी गई। खुद को विकलांग बताने से इनकार करने वालों को भी विकलांगता पेंशन का भुगतान किया गया।

राष्ट्रीय सामाजिक सहायता कार्यक्रम के तहत मृत व्यक्तियों को भी पांच साल से अधिक समय तक पेंशन दी जाती रही। हद तो तब हो गयी जब जानकारी होने के बाद भी अधिकारियों ने वसूली के लिए कोई कार्रवाई नहीं की। सामाजिक सुरक्षा पेंशन योजनाओं के वितरण में की गयी गड़बड़ियों की जानकारी नमूना के तौर पर केवल छह जिलों की जांच में मिली है। झारखंड के महालेखाकार अनूप फ्रांसिस डुंगडुंग ने बताया कि लेखा परीक्षा 2017-21 तक की अवधि के लिए की गयी थी। इसमें छह जिलों के एक शहरी और एक ग्रामीण प्रखंड को शामिल किया गया था। महालेखाकार ने बताया कि गोड्डा के पोरैयाहाट, गोड्डा सदर पूर्वी सिंह भूम के पोटका और घाटशिला में 16 पुरुषों को विधवा पेंशन योजनाओं का लाभ दिया गया।

मृत्यु की सूचना में 65 माह तक देरी से पेंशन भुगतान

रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि मृत्यु की सूचना में देरी से 84 लाभार्थियों के नाम या तो बाहर नहीं किए गए या 65 माह तक की देरी की गयी। इससे मृतकों को भी पेंशन मिली। वहीं, 55 लाभार्थियों को न्यूनतम आयुमानदंड पूरा नहीं करने के बावजूद वृद्धावस्था पेंशन दी गई।

गैर पंजीकृत-काली सूची के संस्थानों में भी छात्रवृत्ति

महालेखाकार ने बताया कि धोखाधड़ी से छात्रवृत्ति का वितरण उन संस्थानों में भी किए गए जो न तो एनएसपी पर पंजीकृत थे, न ही पोर्टल पर लॉगऑन के लिए क्रेडेंशियल प्राप्त किए थे। चतरा और पूर्वी सिंह भूम के चार संस्थानों (पूर्वी सिंहभूम के मेहर प्राइवेट आईटीआई, जमशेदपुर आईटीआई, चतरा के आरएनएम महाविद्यालय, हंटरगंज एवं सत्यानंद भोक्ता इंटर महाविद्यालय, उनटा) के 180 छात्रों को छात्रवृत्ति प्रदान की गयी, जबकि, उन संस्थानों को 2018-21 के दौरान पात्रता मानदंड पूरा न करने के कारण काली सूची में डाल दिया गया था। वहीं, अल्पसंख्यक छात्रवृत्ति योजना का क्रियान्वयन भी बहुत ही निराशाजनक था।

कम आयु के 3.45 लाख लाभार्थी को पेंशन बांटी

सामाजिक सुरक्षा विभाग द्वारा दिए गए एनएसपी के डेटा डंप के विश्लेषण से ऑडिट लीड्स का पता चला है। केंद्रीय और राज्य पेंशन योजनाओं के तहत निर्धारित आयु से कम के अपात्र राज्य स्तर पर 3.45 लाख लाभार्थी को 361.39 करोड़ और नमूना जिले के 1.10 लाख लाभार्थी को 114.16 करोड़ की पेंशन दी। डेटाबेस में विकलांगता कॉलम में टिप्पणी नहीं करने के बाद भी विकलांगता पेंशन, विधवा कॉलम में नहीं दर्ज करने के बाद भी आवेदन की स्वीकृति में दो माह से अधिक लगाया गया। राज्य के 140 लाभार्थी एक से अधिक योजनाओं में पेंशन भुगतान पाया गया।

तीन लाख छात्रों को एक ही कक्षा में दो बार छात्रवृत्ति

प्री मैट्रिक छात्रवृत्ति योजना के लिए ई-कल्याण डेटाबेस से पता चला कि राज्य स्तर पर 2017-20 के वर्षों में 30,675 विद्यालयों में 2.96 लाख छात्रों के छात्रवृत्ति भुगतान में अनियमितता की गयी। एक ही विद्यालय में एक ही कक्षा के पुनरावर्तक छात्रों को 3.16 करोड़ की छात्रवृत्ति अनियमित रूप से दी गयी। 612 स्कूलों के 5081 छात्रों को लगातार दो वर्षों में दसवीं कक्षा के लिए छात्रवृत्ति दी गयी। 180 स्कूलों के 5081 में से 1798 छात्रों को अनियमित रूप से अगले सत्र में दसवीं की छात्रवृत्ति दी गयी। 1049 छात्रों को पोस्टमैट्रिक छात्रवृत्ति के अलावा अल्पसंख्यक छात्रवृत्ति भी दी गयी।

<https://www.livehindustan.com/jharkhand/story-jharkhand-officials-gave-widow-pension-to-men-old-age-to-youth-cag-report-9100448.html>

10. झारखंड में छात्रवृत्ति, पेंशन वितरण में वित्तीय अनियमितताएं, कैग रिपोर्ट ने खोली पोल (zeenews.india.com) Dec 22, 2023

Ranchi: नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (कैग) ने झारखंड में छात्रवृत्ति और पेंशन योजनाओं में प्रत्यक्ष लाभ अंतरण (डीबीटी) के ऑडिट में करोड़ों रुपये की भारी अनियमितताएं और अवैध हस्तांतरण का पता लगाया है. विधानसभा में बृहस्पतिवार को पेश कैग की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि ऑडिट के दौरान फर्जी लाभार्थियों को 1.17 करोड़ रुपये की छात्रवृत्ति का गलत तरीके से वितरण, मृत व्यक्तियों को पेंशन और पुरुष लाभार्थियों को विधवा पेंशन प्रदान करने के मामले सामने आए.

महालेखाकार (झारखंड) अनूप फ्रांसिस डुंगडुंग ने कहा, 'सामाजिक सुरक्षा और छात्रवृत्ति योजनाओं में डीबीटी के महत्व को ध्यान में रखते हुए नवंबर, 2021 और मई, 2022 के बीच प्रत्यक्ष लाभ अंतरण का प्रदर्शन ऑडिट किया गया. यह ऑडिट 2017 और 2021 की अवधि के लिए था. ऑडिट में भारी वित्तीय अनियमितताएं पाई गईं.'

उन्होंने कहा कि नमूने के तौर पर छह जिलों... चतरा, हजारीबाग, पूर्वी सिंहभूम, गोड्डा, पलामू और रांची...में ऑडिट किये गये. महालेखाकार ने कहा, 'ऑडिट सीमित जिलों में किया गया. यदि सभी जिलों को ध्यान में रखा जाए तो अनियमितताएं बहुत अधिक हो सकती हैं.' अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति, पिछड़े और अल्पसंख्यक समुदायों के लिए छात्रवृत्ति योजनाओं के क्रियान्वयन, सामाजिक सुरक्षा पेंशन योजना और डीबीटी अंतरण के लिए उपयोग किये जाने वाला योजना-विशिष्ट सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंच ई-कल्याण झारखंड की प्रभावशीलता का छह जिलों में ऑडिट किया गया.

रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है, 'ऑडिट में फर्जी लाभार्थियों को अल्पसंख्यक छात्रवृत्ति के गलत तरीके से वितरण के मामलों का पता चला. यह देखा गया कि जांच में शामिल छह जिलों में से चार में, 14 स्कूलों या संस्थानों के 1,482 फर्जी लाभार्थियों को 1.17 करोड़ रुपये की छात्रवृत्ति दी गई.'

कैग के अनुसार, ये संस्थान न तो राष्ट्रीय छात्रवृत्ति पोर्टल पर पंजीकृत थे और न ही पोर्टल पर लॉग इन करने के लिए उपयोगकर्ता प्रमाणिकता प्राप्त किए थे. रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, सामाजिक सुरक्षा से जुड़ी पेंशन योजना में यह पाया गया कि उन्हें निर्धारित समयसीमा के भीतर अनुमोदित नहीं किया गया था.

कैग ने झारखंड सरकार को सार्वभौमिक और बेहतर तरीके से बजट तैयार करने को लेकर राज्य के सभी पात्र लाभार्थियों का इलेक्ट्रॉनिक तरीके से आंकड़े रखने का सुझाव दिया. इसमें कहा गया है कि सरकार वित्तीय अनियमितताओं का पता लगाने के लिए जांच शुरू कर सकती है और योजनाओं की पर्याप्त निगरानी सुनिश्चित करने को निर्धारित अंतराल पर सामाजिक ऑडिट कर सकती है.

<https://zeenews.india.com/hindi/india/bihar-jharkhand/ranchi/financial-irregularities-in-scholarship-and-pension-distribution-in-jharkhand-cag-report-exposed/2022914>

11. AG REPORT: राज्य में अल्पसंख्यक स्कॉलरशिप स्कीम का कार्यान्वयन खराब, ई- कल्याण मॉनिटरिंग अप्रभावी (newswing.com) Dec 21, 2023

Ranchi: भारत के नियंत्रक- महालेखापरीक्षक (Comptroller and auditor general of India) का झारखंड में डीबीटी प्रतिवेदन 2023 गुरुवार को जारी किया गया. महालेखाकार कार्यालय, रांची में इसे जारी

किए जाने से पूर्व इसे राज्य विधानसभा के शीतकालीन सत्र में भी प्रस्तुत किया गया. इस संबंध में एकाउंटेंट जेनरल, झारखंड अनुप फ्रांसिस डुंगडुंग ने एजी कार्यालय में प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस में विस्तृत जानकारी दी. बताया कि लोगों को समय पर सरकार से मिलने वाले लाभों के लिए डीबीटी (प्रत्यक्ष लाभ अंतरण) का उपयोग किया जाता है. झारखंड में डीबीटी (2017-21) पर नवंबर 2021 से मई 2022 के दौरान 6 चयनित जिलों चतरा, हजारीबाग, पूर्वी सिंहभूम, गोड्डा, पलामू और रांची में सोशल सिक्योरिटी पेंशन स्कीम और स्कॉलरशिप स्कीम में डीबीटी के प्रभाव की पड़ताल की गई थी. झारखंड में ई- कल्याण जैसे विशिष्ट आइटी प्लेटफार्म के उपयोग का भी मूल्यांकन इन जिलों में हुआ. अनुप के मुताबिक राज्य में स्कॉलरशिप योजना के क्रियान्वयन में कमी देखी गई. स्टूडेंट को मिल रहे छात्रवृत्ति का लाभ के मामले में जिला कल्याण पदाधिकारियों द्वारा इलेक्ट्रॉनिक डेटाबेस स्टूडेंट्स का तैयार नहीं किया गया. राज्य में अल्पसंख्यक छात्रवृत्ति योजना का कार्यान्वयन भी बहुत निराशाजनक रहा. लेखा परीक्षा में नमूना जांच किए गए 60 प्रतिशत संस्थानों में फर्जी लाभार्थियों को लाभ दिए जाने का पता लगा. छात्रवृत्ति का लाभ (इससे संबंधित राशि 1.17 करोड़ रुपये) ऐसे संस्थानों को भी किया गया जिन्होंने-न्होंने खुद को राष्ट्रीय छात्रवृत्ति पोर्टल पर पंजीकृत नहीं किया था.

योग्य लाभार्थियों को सामाजिक सुरक्षा पेंशन के लाभ में समस्या अनुप फ्रांसिस डुंगडुंग ने बताया कि सार्वभौमिक आच्छादन के लिए योग्य लाभार्थियों का संपूर्ण आंकड़ा, जिला, राज्य स्तर पर पूर्ण रूप से तैयार नहीं किया गया. लाभार्थियों के बीच पेंशन के वितरण में विलंब के कारण आवेदकों को कठिनाईयों का सामना करना पड़ा. वर्ष 2017-21 के दौरान योजना का सामाजिक अंकेक्षण भी नहीं कराया गया.

अनुप ने जानकारी दी कि राज्य में ई- कल्याण एप्लिकेशन जनवरी 2015 से शुरू हो गया था. पर इसमें जून 2022 तक सुविधाएं शामिल नहीं की गई. एप्लिकेशन को आधार ई- केवाईसी के साथ एकीकृत नहीं किया गया था. यह बैंकों से भी नहीं जुड़ा था. एप्लिकेशन को राष्ट्रीय ई- छात्रवृत्ति पोर्टल (एन ई एस पी) पर जून 2022 तक ट्रांसफर नहीं किया गया था. परियोजना प्रबंधन इकाई नवंबर 2017 से क्रियाशील नहीं थी. इसके कारण ई- कल्याण की निगरानी व्यवस्था अप्रभावी रही.

यह रही अनुशंसा

एकाउंटेंट जेनरल ने डीबीटी के बेहतर उपयोग के लिए अपनी अनुशंसा भी दी हैं. इसमें एससी, एसटी, बीसी के छात्रवृत्ति के लिए सभी पात्र लाभार्थियों का इलेक्ट्रॉनिक डेटाबेस रखने को कहा है. आवेदनों की पात्रता के सत्यापन की भी जरूरत बतायी है. भुगतान के लिए निगरानी और नियंत्रण प्रणाली को मजबूत करने को भी कहा है. अल्पसंख्यकों के स्कॉलरशिप के मामले में भी राज्य सरकार से पूरे राज्य में वित्तीय अनियमितताओं की रोकथाम के लिए जांच शुरू करने की सलाह दी है. दोषी अधिकारियों के खिलाफ उचित कार्रवाई करने की भी अनुशंसा की है.

<https://newswing.com/implementation-of-minority-scholarship-scheme/680716/>

12. Although Revenue & Fiscal Deficits within Statutory GSDP Limits, Maha Govt Failed to Achieve Revenue Surplus Target, CAG (*hwnews.in*) 22 Dec 2023

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in its report on finance and appropriation accounts for 2022-23 has observed that the Maharashtra Government could not achieve the target of revenue surplus as per the provision of the Fiscal Responsibility & Budgetary Management Act, 2003. During the year 2022-23, the state reported a

revenue deficit of Rs 1,937 crore and a fiscal deficit of Rs 67,602 crore which represents 0.05% and 1.92% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) respectively. The Fiscal Deficit constituted 14 percent of total expenditure.

CAG report, which was tabled in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Wednesday, said the fiscal deficit of Rs 67,602 crore was 2% of the GSDP of Rs 35,27,084 crore. It was below the 4% target of the GSDP. The fiscal deficit was met by the additional public debt of Rs 49,907 crore. The fiscal deficit was brought down to 1.92% in 2022-23 from 2.01% in 2021-22.

The state government's public debt rose to Rs 5,32,942 crore in 2022-23 against Rs 4,83,035 crore in 2021-22, a rise of Rs 49,907 crore. CAG has observed that the debt of Rs 72,000 crore was mainly used for the discharge of debt obligations of Rs 43,764 crore and interest of Rs 41,689 crore instead of the creation of capital assets.

“It is desirable to fully utilize borrowed funds for the creation of capital assets and to use revenue receipts for the repayment of principal and interest. The State Government could not utilize the borrowed funds fully on capital assets in the year 2022-23,” said CAG. It further added that servicing of debt showed decreasing trends from 2018-19 to 2020-21 and increasing trend in 2022-23, however, the entire public debt receipts were utilized for Debt servicing.

Liabilities of the State Government increased by Rs 54,459 crore from Rs 6,06,295 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 6,60,754 crore during 2022-23. Public debt comprising internal debt of the State Government and loans and advances from the Central Government increased by Rs 49,907 crore i.e. from Rs 4,83,035 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 5,32,942 crore at the end of the current year.

Gross Revenue Expenditure of Rs 4,15,536 crore for 2022-23 fell short of budget estimates by Rs 83,205 crore due to less disbursement of Rs 50,078 crore under Scheme Expenditure and Rs 33,127 crore under Committed Expenditure.

Further, the uncommitted revenue expenditure available for implementation of various schemes has increased by Rs 94,304 crore (52 percent) from Rs 1,80,427 crore in 2018-19 to Rs 2,74,731 crore in 2022-23. The total revenue expenditure increased by 53 percent from Rs 2,67,022 crore in 2018-19 to Rs 4,07,615 crore in 2022-23 and committed revenue expenditure increased by 53 percent over the same period.

During 2022-23 Supplementary grants totaling Rs 26,214.03 crore proved to be unnecessary because of significant savings at the end of the year even against original allocations.

Total investments as share capital in Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) stood at Rs 2,07,442 crore at the end of 2022-23. Dividends received during the year were Rs 36.01 crore (0.02 percent of the investment).

Investments in PSUs increased by Rs 18,783.67 crore and income from dividends decreased by Rs 52.35 crore.

The increase in investments of Rs 18,783.67 crore during 2022-23 was in Statutory Corporations (Rs 14,099.36 crore), Government Companies (Rs 4,504.91 crore), Co-operative Banks/Societies, and Local Bodies (Rs 94.09 crore) and Rural Banks (Rs 85.31 crore).

CAG has rapped the state government over the lack of submission of Detailed Countersigned Contingent (DCC) bills containing vouchers in support of final expenditure within one month from the date of draw. The major defaulting departments that had not submitted DCC bills are Medical Education and Drugs Department (Rs 2,302.55 crore); Public Health Department (Rs 1,279.06 crore); Home Department (Rs 252.40 crore) and Planning Department (Rs 231.95 crore).

According to CAG, , major defaulting departments that had not submitted utilization certificates (UCS) are the Urban Development Department (Rs 9,254.93 crore); Planning Department (Rs4,185.85 crore); Rural Development and Water Conservation Department (Rs 2,966.75 crore) and Industries, Energies and Labour Department (Rs 1,698.27 crore). <https://hwnews.in/news/national/although-revenue-fiscal-deficits-within-statutory-gsdp-limits-maha-govt-failed-to-achieve-revenue-surplus-target-cag/>

13. Mumbai: RTI shows MU bungled funds for seven years (*mid-day.com*) 22 Dec 2023

Shocking findings about financial issues, record-keeping problems, and more have come to light at the Mumbai University through multiple CAG reports from 2010 to 2017, obtained via an RTI (Right to Information) query. Members of the Mumbai University and College Teachers Association (MUCTA) initiated this request and have now urged the Director of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India to conduct a thorough audit of the university from 2017 onwards.

MUCTA, concerned about the university's operations, highlighted that there hasn't been an inspection or audit since March 2017. Dr Subhash Athavle, MUCTA's general secretary, emphasised the need for transparency and accountability in handling the university's finances. He said, "As per information obtained through RTI, the last audit of Mumbai University conducted was in the year 2017. This gap of six years raises serious questions about transparency and accountability of funds within the University's financial and administrative operations."

In their letter to the CAG director, MUCTA expressed worries that the absence of regular audits might lead to mismanagement and misuse of public funds. They stressed the importance of transparency, especially considering Mumbai University's significant role in India's education system. The association urged immediate action and requested compliance with the previous audit report, citing discrepancies identified.

Athavle accused the university administration, including the Vice Chancellor, of serious charges, "Dr Ravindra Kulkarni, a former pro-vice-chancellor violated government rules by purchasing a car worth over Rs 30 lakh for himself. Despite raising concerns and informing audit controllers, no significant action has been taken. The money in Mumbai University is the fees of the students, which is actually the public money. It is necessary to audit it on time to make its transactions transparent. It is unfortunate that despite so many financial irregularities pointed out in a reputed

educational institution, and the money of the people is being wasted, the government is silent on this."

The last CAG audit in 2017 revealed various issues, including missing records, fund lapses, irregularities in bill payments, and excess payments to contractors. The CAG also highlighted irregularities and discrepancies in implementing educational schemes like Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). The CAG's internal report stated that the Rs 5 crore fund received for Mumbai University's RUSA was improperly invested in a fixed deposit. However, RUSA guidelines strictly prohibit investing such funds in anything other than a savings account.

The report highlighted that despite receiving endowment funds from donors like philanthropists and businesses, Mumbai University did not effectively utilise these funds for their intended purposes, such as awards. This report between 2010 and 2017 identified numerous such misuses and irregularities. Furthermore, Athavle mentioned the absence of proper accounts for millions of rupees between 2010 and 2017, as reported by the CAG, for which compliance reports are pending from Mumbai University. When approached, officials of Mumbai University refused to respond on the issue.

A few other irregularities highlighted by CAG between 2010 and 2017

- Issues in implementing Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)
- Poor maintenance of the endowment fund from 2010-11 to 2015-16
- Billing and payment irregularities in the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) scheme in 2013-14
- Weak internal control of receipts
- Cash book maintenance irregularities, notably between March 2014 and March 2015
- Overpayment of service tax and professional tax - Rs 6.40 lakh in 2015
- Unauthorised occupancy of messes and international hostel premises, alongside hostel building deterioration
- Advances made to individuals/companies with no work done or money returned
- Construction irregularities, including price differences

Rs 30 lakh

The amount allegedly used by a former official for himself <https://www.mid-day.com/amp/mumbai/mumbai-news/article/mumbai-rti-shows-mu-bungled-funds-for-seven-years-23326100>

14. राजस्थान में कर्जखोर अफसरों की करतूत, एक को दबाने के लिए किया और बड़ा घोटाला, CM-विधानसभा तक बायपास (amarujala.com) 22 Dec 2023

राजस्थान वित्त विभाग से ऐसा कारनामा सामने आया है, जिसका उदाहरण देश में शायद ही कहीं और देखने को मिले। पहले RWSSC को HUDCO से 4,000 करोड़ रुपये का लोन दिलवाया। इसे चुकाने के लिए विधानसभा को बताए बिना पीएचईडी का 500 करोड़ का राजस्व बजट मद 0215 में जमा करवाए बिना सीधे RWSSC को ट्रांसफर करने का प्रावधान कर दिया। साधारण शब्दों में समझें तो विधानसभा के अधिकारों का हनन है, अब सीएजी ने भी इसे संविधान के खिलाफ बताते हुए आपत्ति जड़ दी है।

राजस्थान वित्त विभाग में जहां हाथ डालो, वहीं घोटाले निकल रहे हैं। इस बार बेहद अनोखा कांड सामने आया है। पहले सरकार में अपने नंबर बढ़वाने के लिए जमकर कर्ज लिया। यहां तक की विधानसभा की जानकारी के बाहर जाकर हजारों करोड़ रुपये की ऑफ बजट बोरोइंग कर डाली। इस कर्ज को चुकाने के लिए एक आदेश जारी कर विधायिका की शक्तियों पर अतिक्रमण कर डाला।

वित्त विभाग के अधिकारियों ने 500 करोड़ का रेवेन्यू बजट मद 0215 में जमा करवाने के बजाय सीधे RWSSC के पीडी खातों में जमा करवाने का तुगलकी फरमान जारी कर दिए। इसके लिए वित्त मार्गोपाय विभाग की आईडी संख्या 102205684 से यह आदेश जारी किया। दरअसल, पीडी खातों में जमा राजस्व को खर्च करने के लिए विधायिका की अनुमति की जरूरत नहीं होती। इतना ही नहीं इन्होंने इस बजट मद में पहले से जमा राशि में से 200 करोड़ की राशि विधायिका की बिना अनुमति के जरनल एंट्री (जेई) द्वारा इस पीडी खाते में स्थानांतरित कर खर्च दी। आगे ऐसी समस्त राशि पीडी खातों में जमा करवाने के लिए इंटीग्रेटेड फाइनेंशियल बजट मैनेजमेंट सिस्टम (आईएफएमएस) पर प्रोविजन भी करवा लिया।

पीएचईडी विभाग के बजट मद 0215 में पानी के लगने वाले यूजर चार्ज एवं अन्य से सालाना 500 करोड़ की आय होती है। जो संवैधानिक प्रावधानों के तहत राज्य की संचित निधि में जमा होती है। विधानसभा के बजट सत्र में विधायिका द्वारा प्रदत्त सीमा के अंतर्गत बजट शीर्ष 4215 के अंतर्गत इसे पूरे वित्तीय वर्ष के दौरान खर्च किया जाता है।

समझें खेल क्या है?

RWSSC को HUDCO से 4000 करोड़ रुपये का लोन दिलवाया गया। वित्त विभाग के अफसरों ने इसे अन्य योजनाओं में ठिकाने लगा दिया। ऐसे में यह लोन और इसका ब्याज कैसे चुकाया जाए, यह बड़ा सवाल है। क्योंकि यह ऑफ बजट बोरोइंग है, जिसकी जानकारी विधायिका को नहीं दी गई। यदि बजट में विधायिका से RWSSC को 4000 करोड़ की ग्रांट देने की मांग की जाती है तो ऑफ बजट बोरोइंग की जानकारी विधायिका के सामने रखनी पड़ेगी। इसलिए इस लोन को चुकाने के लिए अफसरों ने विधायिका को बाँयपास कर सीधे पीएचईडी की सालाना 500 करोड़ की रेवेन्यू को RWSSC के पीडी खातों में ट्रांसफर करने का खेल रच दिया।

सीएजी ने क्या-क्या आपत्ति जताई

-संविधान के अनुच्छेद 205 व 206 के तहत राज्य सरकार को प्राप्त होने वाली राजस्व राशियों को सबसे पहले कंसोलिडेटेड फंड में जमा करवाना चाहिए

-इसके बाद विधानसभा की ओर से अनुमत किए गए बजट प्रावधानों के बाद ही यह पीडी खातों में ट्रांसफर किए जाने चाहिए

-लेकिन वित्त विभाग का यह आदेश न सिर्फ संविधान को धता बता गया, बल्कि विधानसभा को भी बाँयपास करने वाला है

-मौजूदा बजट सत्र में इस यह आदेश सरकार के लिए भूचाल खड़ा कर सकता है। क्योंकि सीएजी ने इसे संविधान के खिलाफ बताते हुए सरकार से इस संबंध में जारी प्रशासनिक स्वीकृति/परिपत्र/आदेशों की प्रति मांग ली है।

-साथ ही यह भी निर्देशित किया है कि इस औचित्य और उद्देश्य से आदेश जारी किए गए वह भी बताया जाए

एक नहीं ऐसे अनेकों कांड किए हैं, जहां इन्होंने ऑफ बजट बोरोइंग की है। कॉरपोरेशंस की एफडी तक तुड़वा ली। इन्होंने विधानसभा को बाँयपास कर उसका भी अपमान किया है। -राजेंद्र राठौड़, वरिष्ठ नेता बीजेपी

<https://www.amarujala.com/rajasthan/jaipur/rajasthan-finance-department-to-suppress-a-scam-debt-ridden-officers-created-a-bigger-scam-2023-12-22>

SELECTED NEWS ITEMS/ARTICLES FOR READING

15. Missed target (*telegraphindia.com*) Dec 22, 2023

This twisted tale of procuring assault rifles best illustrates the equipping woes of the armed forces. Many of the troubles are due to self-imposed impediments induced by the military

In 2010-11, the Indian army decided that it needed a new rifle for its soldiers to replace the INSAS rifles that were in service since the 1990s. The proposal was to buy a Multi Calibre Assault Rifle with an interchangeable barrel, which could be used as per operational requirement. The only problem was that such a weapon did not exist. The whole business was bizarre. However, the army continued with the charade of the acquisition process till it was eventually shelved five years later.

The saga of the rifle didn't end there. It is an ongoing tragedy that continues till date, encapsulating the ordeals of India's defence preparedness. In the 1962 war, the soldiers had fought with Lee Enfield .303 bolt action rifles, which were subsequently replaced by the 7.62mm Self Loading Rifle or SLR. Based on the Belgian 7.62mm FN FAL licence-built rifle dating back to 1953, its variants were in service during the 1965 and the 1971 wars and, partially, during the 1999 Kargil conflict.

In place of the SLR came a suite of indigenous weapons developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation and manufactured by the Ordnance Factory Board, called the Indian Small Arms System or INSAS. In keeping with the global military trends of using weapons to incapacitate the enemy soldier rather than killing him, this was a 5.56mm calibre weapon system. Before this weapon was introduced, a substantial part of the army was deployed in Kashmir for counterinsurgency duties. The soldiers fighting armed militants there preferred neither the SLR nor the INSAS, but the Russian-origin AK-47 rifles of 7.62mm calibre. They were imported in significant quantities from east European countries and given to soldiers in Kashmir.

The indigenous INSAS rifles failed to win the confidence of the army, resulting in incessant demands for their replacement since 2005. It led to the funny requirement of a rifle with interchangeable barrels, a weapon that did not exist. Once it was decided to jettison the outlandish proposal, the search for alternatives began. The army was keen on an imported weapon — IWI, Ceska, Colt, Beretta, Sig Sauer and others were considered. As defence minister, the late Manohar Parrikar was resistant to the idea of importing a foreign rifle in bulk as the standard service assault rifle. He tried to push the DRDO and the OFB but could not achieve anything before he chose to return to Goa as chief minister to conjure up a Bharatiya Janata Party government with defectors.

As a desperate measure, the army decided to procure a US-made rifle under the fast-track mode in 2019 and 2020. Sig Sauer 716, a 7.62mm calibre rifle, was chosen. But there was no money with the Narendra Modi government to buy around eight lakh Sig Sauer rifles for the whole army. The late General Bipin Rawat approved the jugaad of procuring two lots each of nearly 72,400 Sig Sauer 716 rifles from the United States of America. These rifles would only be given to frontline soldiers of infantry battalions deployed in operational areas while the bulk of the weapons for the army would be with 'reduced technical specifications'. It was a rather unusual solution because frontline

soldiers trained on one weapon would be using another one in operations. No other modern army resorts to such scheming with its soldiers.

While the first tranche of Sig Sauer rifles was delivered with no modern attachments, the second order failed to materialise for the want of funds. The bigger story was with the other rifle, one with 'reduced technical specifications' that was to be given to most of the soldiers. During his election campaign for the 2019 general elections, Modi inaugurated an OFB factory at Korwa in Amethi, Rahul Gandhi's former Lok Sabha constituency, to build Russian AK203 rifles for the army. Indo-Russia Rifles Private Limited or IRRPL was a joint venture with a 50.5% stake for OFB, 42% for the Kalashnikov Group and 7.5% for Rosoboronexport, Russia's State-owned arms export agency. The plan was for IRRPL to import some 70,000 AK-203 rifles to meet urgent operational needs, followed by the licensed production of around 600,000 weapons in 10 years.

The Russian rifles were to be available within months and hyped as a major accomplishment of Modi's 'Make in India' programme in defence. But the deal ran into numerous problems. The biggest among them was of payment of royalties to Russia and transfer of technology for the indigenous content to be incorporated into the rifles. The cost of the weapon made no sense. The estimated cost of each AK-203 rifle, built under Russian licence, was around Rs 86,000, which would drop to around Rs 80,000 over time due to amortisation of costs. In contrast, the Sig Sauer rifle costed Rs 72,782 at that time.

Some of these issues seemed to have been negotiated with the Russians when the army chief, General Manoj Pande, announced in January that the first batch of 5,000 AK-203 rifles would be delivered by IRRPL to the army by March 2024. These were to be part of the 70,000 rifles produced by September 2025, with indigenous content of 5% to 70%. It fitted with the defence ministry's indigenisation list under Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan that barred the purchase of foreign assault rifles after December 2021. The pledge has been discarded with the Modi government recently approving the import of another 73,000 Sig Sauer assault rifles from the US for Rs 840 crore. It suggests that IRRPL has failed to meet its delivery commitments for AK-203 rifles, once again.

This twisted tale of procuring assault rifles, the basic weapon of the infantry soldier, best illustrates the equipping woes of the armed forces. Many of the troubles are due to self-imposed impediments induced by the military. The rest can be laid on the doors of the government. Little that has gone wrong is because of bad luck or misfortune. Everyone is working in silos, blaming other stakeholders. The end result is that the army wanted to replace the INSAS rifles in 2005 but is yet to do so after 18 years.

First, the army sought an outlandish weapon. Then, every new army chief had his own idea about the kind of rifle needed. When the need became urgent, the former defence minister, Parrikar, insisted on an indigenous rifle. Then the Modi government did not provide the funds for importing a modern assault rifle for all soldiers. This led to emergency procurement of a small quantity in 2019, with another lot being purchased from the US. Our soldiers will thus be using two different types of rifles, one American and one Russian. Which other modern army in the world has such a weird mix of assault

rifles for its soldiers? Has it not thought about the problems of fielding multiple weapon types with different spares and ammunition?

The need for a political propaganda resulted in an overhyped announcement of the production of Russian rifles in Amethi under the rubric of ‘Make in India’ and atmanirbharta. The project was neither cheap nor is it producing the most advanced of weapons and has still not met the stipulated timelines. All this while our soldiers have been deployed to counter the Chinese threat on the disputed border. These delays in licensed Russian production of an assault rifle do not provide much confidence about India’s ability to counter the strategic threat from China.

Imports and licensed production are only a short-term solution to immediate operational needs. There is no alternative to an indigenous defence industry that spends adequately on research and development. Ukraine’s recent woes are a great example of the handicap imposed on a country that does not produce weapons indigenously. During the 1971 Bangladesh war, India supplied the Mukti Bahini freedom-fighters with rifles and carbines produced by our ordnance factories. Today, the government finds it tough to replace the army’s basic assault rifle. India deserves better. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/missed-target-what-an-assault-rifle-says-about-indias-defence-preparedness/cid/1988543>

16. Govt set to miss target for divestment in 2023-24 too (*timesofindia.indiatimes.com*) Dec 22, 2023

NEW DELHI: The Centre is once again set to miss its target for privatisation of state-run companies in the current financial year as the process has nearly stalled, and with general elections on the horizon, the appetite for progress on this crucial policy issue would be limited.

In the past nearly a year, the process has faced several roadblocks, including bureaucratic sloth, hurting several big-ticket public sector enterprises, including privatisation of IDBI Bank.

The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) had termed 2023-24 as a year of consolidation and had asserted that it would try and complete some of the big-ticket sales, such as, IDBI Bank, logistics firm Concor, BEML, Shipping Corporation of India (SCI). There has been no movement on the proposed stake sales in two state-run banks and one insurance company, although government think tank NITI Aayog submitted its report almost two years ago, recommending Central Bank of India and Indian Overseas Bank for privatisation.

The government had also scrapped privatisation of state-run helicopter services provider Pawan Hans and disqualified the winning consortium led by Star9 Mobility due to several legal cases. This was after many attempts that the Centre took to sell the company.

DIPAM has largely been dependent on small transactions on the stock market. It has so far raised Rs 10,050 crore from disinvestment out of the Rs 51,000 crore target and has received dividend worth Rs 40,017 crore so far this year.

The large public sector policy, which was announced with much fanfare, aimed at providing a greater role to the private sector, has also been a non-starter. In fact, officers at DIPAM say "not much is happening" and are waiting for the new government to take office next year for the process to get a fresh lease of life.

DIPAM has been stating that the disinvestment process should not be tied to a particular revenue target and instead should focus on the quality of transactions.

With direct tax and GST collections remaining buoyant, the focus has been less intense on privatisation, always a political hot potato. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/govt-set-to-miss-target-for-divestment-in-2023-24-too/articleshow/106192281.cms?from=mdr>

17. Centre, states, and money: Is India's co-operative federalism dream breaking down? (*moneycontrol.com*) Dec 22, 2023

India's governments at the central and state level, particularly those ruled by Opposition parties, share a rather fraught relationship. And while politics plays its role, the power the Centre exerts over the availability and sharing of monetary resources is also a considerable factor.

Earlier this week, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and asked for New Delhi to release pending funds to the state. According to Banerjee, the Centre owes over Rs 1 lakh crore funding to West Bengal for centrally sponsored schemes and money related to natural disaster claims.

For instance, the Union government has not given funds to West Bengal under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme since March 2022. This, the Centre has said, is because the state has not complied with its directions to implement the scheme transparently, once again putting the spotlight on the fractious relationship between the Centre and the state over finances.

Falling control over own finances?

First things first: expenditure by states is greater than the Centre's. Take the current year, where the Centre is budgeted to spend Rs 45.03 lakh crore and states collectively have a spending target of Rs 50.22 lakh crore. The states' budgeted capital expenditure, at Rs 8.85 lakh crore for 2023-24, is higher than the Centre's Rs 8.37 lakh crore, after adjusting for the loans component of its capex.

Second, spending by states is known to have a greater impact on the economy. As per a 2013 paper by RBI economists, a 1 percent increase in revenue expenditure by states is estimated to result in a 0.6 percent increase in GDP, while a similar increase by the Centre raises the GDP by about 0.2 percent. The size of these 'multipliers' is even larger when it comes to capex: 2.1 for states and 0.4 for the Centre.

The problem, however, lies in the dynamics of states' revenue and expenditure. On the expenditure side, states are competing with each other to improve their infrastructure base so that they can attract private and overseas investments and create jobs. In this, the Centre has even offered its assistance by starting a scheme under which it provides

long-term, interest-free loans to states for capex. The allocation for this scheme was increased by 30 percent in 2023-24 to Rs 1.3 lakh crore.

On the other hand, states have alleged the control they have over their own revenues has been reducing, with the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in July 2017 further lowering their ability to tinker with tax rates and increase revenues.

That indirect tax revenue under GST is rising, even for states, cannot be denied. But the growth in GST revenue has not been uniform. Following the end of the GST compensation period in June 2022, certain states—especially mineral-rich ones such as Chhattisgarh—have felt the brunt of the new indirect tax regime being a destination-based system. And the government has admitted as much.

"I don't see how we can come up with something specifically targeted at them (states disadvantaged by GST being destination-based) – unless the Finance Commission looks at it and changes the devolution formula and gives them something additional," Vivek Johri, former chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs, had told Moneycontrol in July.

The feeling of reduced control on their own tax revenue is also why states are widely considered to be opposed to the inclusion of fuel products such as petrol and diesel under GST. But this is a double-edged sword, with the Union government repeatedly calling on them to cut local taxes on petrol and diesel to bring down pump prices.

Own revenues and borrowings

Contrary to the above, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) pointed out in its recently published study of state finances that states' own tax revenue as a percentage of their overall tax revenue has gone up in recent years to 65.4 percent on average from 62.8 percent just prior to the rollout of GST, indicating that states' dependence on tax devolution from the Centre has reduced slightly since GST was introduced.

Sources of tax revenue that states still control, apart from fuel, include stamp duty, land registration fees, excise duty on liquor, and motor vehicle tax.

States that have seen the largest increase in the share of their own tax revenue in overall tax revenue after the introduction of GST include Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Odisha. Meanwhile, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Goa, and Gujarat have seen their own tax revenue form a smaller portion of their overall tax revenue.

"However, while the RBI report claims that states' reliance on devolution from the Centre has decreased post-GST, a comparison with a longer period pre-GST shows that this is not the case," economists Madhavi Arora and Harshal Patel of Emkay Global Financial Services noted.

According to Arora and Patel, states' own tax revenue "has flat-lined as a percentage of GSDP (gross state domestic product), while it has failed to reach pre-GST levels as a share of total tax revenue".

The RBI report also said states have plenty of scope to increase their non-tax revenue by regularly revising charges on public services such as electricity and water and royalties from mining, among others. But the first of these is next to impossible for any political party that wants to return to power at the legislative assembly level.

If revenue does not rise to meet new expenditure, governments can always increase their borrowing from the market. Well, at least the Centre can, as it did during the COVID-19 pandemic. States, however, cannot borrow and spend freely as their borrowing limit is capped by the government, with their fiscal deficit threshold kept at 3 percent of GDP. Meanwhile, the Centre is still nowhere close to bringing its own deficit down to 3 percent, something that was to be achieved in 2006-07.

The Union government is targeting a fiscal deficit of 5.9 percent for 2023-24 on its way to reducing it to 4.5 percent by 2025-26, as per the revised fiscal consolidation roadmap.

That states' borrowing limit is a sticking point can be gleaned from the fact that the finance minister has already been asked seven questions on the issue in the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament by MPs such as NK Premachandran and John Brittas.

Cesses and surcharges

In addition to an unlimited borrowing capacity, which, of course, must be used judiciously, the central government also has access to a pool of resources that it does not have to share with states: cesses and surcharges. And this pool has grown sharply in recent years, much to the consternation of states.

Currently, states get 41 percent of the shareable Union taxes, down from the 42 percent recommended by the 14th Finance Commission following the division of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories. However, cesses and surcharges—such as the Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess, Road and Infrastructure Cess, and Health and Education Cess—are not part of this divisible pool of resources and are for the exclusive use of the Centre. And this pile of money has grown rapidly to 17.7 percent of the Centre's gross tax revenue in 2021-22 from just 6.4 percent in 2011-12.

The net result of the proliferation of the Centre's cesses and surcharges is that the actual tax devolution to states has been lower than what successive Finance Commissions have recommended.

As per the aforementioned RBI report, the pool of Union taxes to be divided among states has fallen to 78.9 percent of gross tax revenue in 2021-22 from 88.6 percent in 2011-12. This is despite the 14th Finance Commission recommending an increase in the tax devolution to 42 percent from 32 percent, effective April 2015.

If India is to become a developed country by 2047, all levels of government need to work together. And as the name suggests, co-operative federalism requires some give and take; the Centre will have to address valid concerns of the states, which must become more efficient and find new sources of revenue. <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/centre-states-and-money-is-indias-co-operative-federalism-dream-breaking-down-11942321.html>

18. How did the Modi govt fare on its flagship Make-in-India initiative? Did the Gir Lion roar? (*moneycontrol.com*) Dec 22, 2023

While the Production-Linked Incentive scheme has done wonders for a handful of sectors, including electronics manufacturing, in many others, investments have been sluggish. In fact, the commerce ministry is working on reviewing the scheme to ensure better utilisation across sectors.

Though the government has taken a series of measures to push for this reform agenda, the two most notable steps are the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and the opening up of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in key sectors.

India's flagship Make-in-India campaign witnessed a soft launch in September 2014, just a few months after Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister, after a thumping electoral victory by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that year.

The government's stated objective was to facilitate investment, foster innovation, enhance skill development, protect intellectual property and build best-in-class manufacturing infrastructure.

Though the government has taken a series of measures to push for this reform agenda, the two most notable steps are the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and the opening up of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in key sectors.

In 2014, the government liberalised the FDI limit from 26 percent to 49 percent in the insurance sector. In September 2014, under the Make-in-India initiative, FDI policy for 25 sectors was liberalised further. In May 2020, the Centre increased the FDI limit in defence manufacturing under the automatic route from 49 percent to 74 percent.

According to the Centre, the Make-in-India initiative is based on four pillars – new processes to enhance 'ease-of-doing-business', development of new infrastructure, such as industrial corridors and smart cities, opening up of FDI to attract investment, and a shift in mindset to ensure that the government acts as a facilitator for the industry rather than as a regulator.

The push towards this initiative continued during the second term of the present government as campaigns like Atmanirbhar Bharat followed.

The verdict on the Make-in-India programme is a mixed one, with some saying it is too ambitious while India has made tall strides in sectors such as electronics and pharmaceuticals.

Exports have been rising steadily over the last decade. Exports of electronic goods increased from Rs 39,978 crore in 2016-17 to Rs 1,09,797 crore in 2021-22. Indian pharma exports have grown 103 percent since 2013-14, from Rs 90,415 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 1,83,422 crore in 2021-22.

However, some experts feel that India's Make-in-India journey is yet to take off, with the country becoming a centre for assembly rather than manufacturing.

There are others who say that India has made a strong start. For instance, Foxconn is likely to invest \$1 billion in a mobile manufacturing plant in India, according to reports. With another Union Budget round the corner, Moneycontrol evaluates India's manufacturing push and what the budget can include to build India's manufacturing story.

PLI scheme

In the Union Budget 2021-22, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced an outlay of Rs 1.97 lakh crore for PLI schemes, which currently covers 14 key sectors, ranging from electronic products to drones.

The government had, in 2021, said that the minimum production in India as a result of the scheme is expected to be over \$500 billion in five years.

As of June 2023, 733 applications have been approved in 14 sectors, with expected investment of Rs 3.65 lakh crore, according to estimates from the government. Around 176 medium, small and micro enterprises (MSMEs) are among the PLI beneficiaries in sectors such as bulk drugs, medical devices, pharma, telecom, white goods, food processing, textiles and drones.

While the PLI scheme has done wonders for a handful of sectors, including India's electronic manufacturing, in many others, investments have been sluggish. In fact, the commerce ministry is working on reviewing the scheme to ensure better utilisation across sectors.

According to recent media reports, the government is planning changes in the textiles, pharmaceuticals, drones, solar and food processing industries, which together form nearly a third of the PLI scheme.

FDI rules

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the BJP, in its budget for 2014-15, announced the intent to promote FDI in sectors that could boost domestic manufacturing and job creation.

Following this, then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced several steps to boost foreign investment inflows into key sectors, including easing the composite cap on foreign exchange to a certain extent for defence and insurance sectors, and allowing manufacturing units to sell products through retail, including e-commerce platforms without any additional approval.

The next big overhaul in this policy came in June 2016 that included FDI beyond 49 percent in defence under the approval route and 100 percent FDI for e-commerce in food products manufactured in India under the approval route.

Since then, the incumbent government has further liberalised FDI rules in several sectors such as defence, oil refineries, telecom, aviation, among others.

According to estimates from Invest India, total FDI inflows into the country in the last 23 years (April 2000 - September 2023) stood at \$953.143 billion, of which those in the last nine years (April 2014 - September 2023) amounted to nearly 65 percent.

Way forward

India's Make-in-India stride is expected to receive a further boost as major economies look to reduce their dependence on China and scout for alternative manufacturing hubs. In this context, New Delhi has seen interest from conglomerates including Tesla and Apple to set up shop within the country.

The Budget for 2024-25 is likely to focus on ease-of-doing business, including decriminalisation of certain offences and labour laws, Moneycontrol reported citing sources on November 23 ([give link](#)).

The World Bank's Ease-of-Doing Business Survey, in which India's ranking rose from 142 in 2015 to 63 in 2020, has been discontinued. India had been doing well in the global ranking with respect to ease-of-doing business for the past few years.

Though India's Make-in-India push via easier FDI norms and the PLI scheme has been acknowledged, there are concerns with regard to its sustenance.

The recent global slowdown has started impacting FDI flows. Foreign direct equity investments into India fell by 24 percent on-year to \$20.5 billion during the first six months of the current fiscal.

Total FDI, including equity capital of unincorporated bodies, reinvest earnings and other capital, fell 15.5 percent during April to September and inflows decreased from key countries such as Singapore, Mauritius, US, and United Arab Emirates.

Expert-speak

“While there are a number of steps taken by the government, a further increase in the speed of creating infrastructure, including the logistics infrastructure, would support the manufacturing sector and the Make-in-India initiative. Currently, the PLI schemes are more focused on manufacturing output and less focused on research and innovation. While there is a separate research-based incentives scheme, the government may consider giving investment in research certain incentives under the PLI schemes itself,” Gunjan Prabhakaran, Partner & Leader, Indirect Tax, BDO India, told Moneycontrol.

“In addition, it is seen that after the announcement of the scheme, the various recipient industries have been engaging with the government to iron out the practical issues, including the eligibility norms itself, which leads to the modification of the schemes. This results in delays. This delay can be reduced if the schemes are designed in consultation with the industry, with the government laying down specific parameters. Lastly, some of the sectors have seen significant delays in the disbursement of incentives, which need to be addressed on a sector-specific basis as well as on conceptual level itself,” he said.

“The PLI schemes boost the Make-in-India initiative. The success of the two PLI schemes in pharma is getting reflected in declining imports. The pharma and medical devices industry proved its mettle during COVID-19. We served the domestic needs and exported as well. Under Vaccine Maitri, we supplied vaccines to around 96 countries,” Ashok Madan, ED, Indian Drug Manufacturers' Association (IDMA), told Moneycontrol.

Many, including former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan, has questioned the efficacy of the output-linked incentive plan. Rajan, in a note back in May 2022/2023?, had said that the rise in exports of finished cell phones cannot be attributed to the country’s manufacturing prowess since manufacturers were most likely engaging in assembly alone.

Recently, former chief economic advisor to the government and current NITI Aayog member Arvind Virmani, in an interview to Moneycontrol, said that the government needs to identify the problems associated with the PLI scheme before expanding it further.

“If we want to extend PLI, we may have to identify problems in specific sectors and address them. Similarly, we may analyse whether the current structure of the PLI scheme is good only for electronics or works for other sectors, too,” he said on November 14. <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/how-did-the-modi-govt-fare-on-its-flagship-make-in-india-initiative-did-the-gir-lion-roar-11943291.html>

19. National Infra Pipeline outlay stands at Rs 109 lakh crore (*millenniumpost.in*) Dec 22, 2023

National Pipeline (NIP) was launched with 6,835 projects and has expanded to capture over 9,288 projects with a total outlay of Rs 108.88 lakh crore between 2020-25, the Finance Ministry said on Thursday.

“NIP comprises brownfield and greenfield infrastructure projects of above Rs 100 crore across both economic and social infrastructure,” the Finance Ministry said in a post on X.

NIP consists of projects implemented by all the states and Union Territories of India and 22 infrastructure ministries, it said.

NIP is a first-of-its-kind initiative to provide world-class infrastructure across the country and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

It will improve project preparation, attract investments (both domestic and foreign) into infrastructure, and will be crucial for attaining the target of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by FY25.

Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (MSSC) provides financial advantages to women and encourages them to take charge of their finances and make informed decisions, another post said.

MSSC account may be opened by women of any age group with a minimum deposit of Rs 1,000 and a maximum deposit of Rs 2 lakh for a period of two years.

The interest rate for MSSC is 7.5 per cent per annum, which is compounded quarterly, and the facility of partial withdrawal and premature closure on compassionate grounds are also available under this scheme.

The government has authorised the Department of Posts, all public sector banks and four private sector banks to operate MSSC, he said, adding that some lenders like Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, and IDBI Bank have not yet started the scheme.

Mahila Samman Savings Certificate Scheme has been made available for a two-year period up to March 2025.

An application for opening an account can be submitted on or before March 31, 2025. India is one of the early adopters of the T+1 settlement on Indian exchanges and it ensures faster delivery of securities, facilitating transparency and protecting investors, the ministry said in another post. <https://www.millenniumpost.in/business/national-infra-pipeline-outlay-stands-at-109-lakh-crore-545189>

20. Agri capex, a black box (*thehindubusinessline.com*) Updated - December 21, 2023

While there could be statistical underestimation, the changes in Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and adverse terms of trade may have worked as negative factors

The state of capital formation in agriculture has been a subject of debate. Here are some data points: Gross capital formation in agriculture (GCFA) has been decelerating since 2013-14. The GCFA, as a percentage of agriculture and allied sectors' GDP, has come down from 17.5 per cent in the three years ending 2013-14, to 15.7 per cent in the three years ending 2020-21. Although this is in keeping with the overall trend of deceleration in capital formation in the economy as a whole, the rate of deceleration in agriculture is steeper. The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of both GCF and GCFA was 9 per cent during the period 2004-05 to 2013-14. But the CAGR of the GCFA has dropped sharply to 3 per cent in the period from 2013-14 to 2020-21 while that of GCF has recorded a slightly higher rate of 5 percent. The GCFA has crucial implications for future growth of agriculture and, therefore, it is imperative to understand the possible reasons for this deceleration.

The GCFA has two components — gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) and changes in inventories and stocks (CIS). In this analysis, we mainly look at the major component, which is GFCF. The GFCF in agriculture is reported for public sector and private sector (private corporate and household sector) separately. The GFCF in the public sector is mainly on account of irrigation projects. Capital formation in the private corporate sector is related mainly to plantation activities and is estimated by collecting the data from Tea, Coffee and Rubber Boards, etc.

In the private (household) sector, capital formation is on account of construction activities such as digging of wells/tube-wells, construction of bunds and farmhouses, etc., which is estimated by using the results of the All India Debt and Investment Survey

(AIDIS) conducted every 10 years by the RBI. For the intervening years, the estimates are prepared by projecting the base year AIDIS results by using indices of rural construction, Annual Survey of Industries and Indian Livestock Censuses (ILC), etc. For forestry and fisheries, the capital formation is compiled from the Budget documents and results of ILC (using projections for inter-census years).

There are several features of the current system of compilation of statistics on capital formation in agriculture that are worth noting. The expenditure under the head of public expenditure is predominantly related to irrigation. Over 90 per cent of the reported investments under this head relate to investments by the State governments in major and medium irrigation projects. Expenditures made by the ministries of agriculture and rural development on crop husbandry, soil and water conservation, preservation of forestry and other agricultural programmes leading to tangible or non-tangible assets, is not accounted under capital formation in agriculture, but included as capital formation under Public Administration.

Public investments in rural electrification and power supplied to agriculture are not included under agriculture but are covered under the power sector. Similarly, investments in rural roads are not included under agriculture but they form a part of the investments in the roads sector. Investments in storage and in agricultural research are also not reflected under agriculture. Most of the industrial sectors contribute directly or indirectly to the development of agriculture. For example, fertiliser production is meant only for use in agriculture. Pesticide is also mostly used in agriculture. However, capital formation in these sectors is categorised under the manufacturing sector.

Supply of electricity in the rural areas, rural roads, godowns, cold storages and agricultural markets facilitate and promote the growth of agriculture. A considerable proportion of the goods traffic on road and rails is on account of transporting agricultural commodities. The rural cooperative banks and commercial banks lend credit to agriculture. Agricultural education and research is exclusively meant for agriculture. Increase in the capital formation in all these activities helps in the growth of agriculture. However, currently the investments made under these heads are not categorised under agriculture or allied sectors.

For example, expenditure under electricity is included in the expenditure on 'Electricity, gas, water supply & other utility services'. Similarly expenditures on rural roads, godowns, cold storages and agricultural markets ('Construction'); rail and road infrastructure ('Transport, storage, communication') and agricultural credit ('Financial services') are included in the expenditures under sectors indicated in the parentheses.

Combination of factors

In this backdrop, the present deceleration in capital formation in agriculture could be due to a combination of factors. First, given the features of the current statistical system discussed above, the deceleration in public investment could be due to a compositional shift away from irrigation.

As already discussed, a predominant part of public investment in agriculture relates to irrigation in major and medium irrigation projects. The investments on these projects may have slowed in the last 10 years with a shift in focus to micro irrigation.

At the same time, the investments in the sectors not included in GCFA but are important for agriculture (such as crop husbandry, soil and water conservation, social forestry and other agricultural programmes; rural electrification and power; rural roads; storage; agricultural research; fertilizer and pesticide industries; agricultural markets; transportation and financial services for agriculture) may have accelerated. This compositional shift in investment needs to be analysed in detail to get a better understanding of the deceleration.

Second, the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) is an important programme which was instrumental in spurring investments in agriculture by the States since its inception in 2007. Before 2014, since the entire funding was by the Union Government, it was mandatory for the States to maintain a minimum spending on agriculture every year, as a percentage of State's total spending.

This minimum threshold was equal to the average of the previous three years. However since 2014, as the States were meeting 40 per cent of the expenditure of RKVY, this requirement has been relaxed. This has diluted the incentive structure for States to keep investing in agriculture year after year. This, in turn, may have adversely affected the capital formation in agriculture after 2013-14.

As for private investment, more than 80 per cent of the investment in agriculture is by the private sector (Agricultural Statistics at a Glance, GoI). Terms of trade in agriculture (vis-à-vis non-agriculture, ToT) is an important determinant of the private investment in agriculture. ToT reflect the prices received by farmers and the ToT has decelerated substantially in the recent period. This deceleration in ToT may have also dampened the private investment in agriculture.
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