

MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Review of Funds Allocation and Utilization under MPLAD Fund Scheme

[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 14th Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Estimates]

COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES
(2022-23)

TWENTY-THIRD REPORT

(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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(Presented to Lok Sabha on 21 March, 2023)



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

March, 2023 / Phalguna, 1944 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES (2022-2023)

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| 2. | Shri Muraleedharan. P | Director |
| 3. | Dr. (Smt.) Sheetal Kapoor | Committee Officer |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Committee on Estimates (2022-23) having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, do present this Twenty-Third Report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 14th Report of the Committee (2021-22) on the subject 'Review of Funds Allocation and Utilisation under MPLAD Fund Scheme' pertaining to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

2. The 14th Report of the Committee on Estimates (2021-22) was presented to Lok Sabha on 4th April, 2022. The Government furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in the 14th Report on 18 October, 2022. The draft report was considered and approved on 16 March, 2023, by the Committee.

3. An analysis of action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 14th Report of the Committee on Estimates is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI
16 March, 2023
25 Phalgun ,1944(Saka)

GIRISH BHALCHANDRA BAPAT
CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

CHAPTER - I
REPORT

This Report of the Committee deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Fourteenth Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Review of Funds Allocation and Utilisation under MPLAD Fund Scheme' pertaining to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

2. The Fourteenth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 04.04.2022. It contained 18 Observations/Recommendations. Action Taken Replies of the Government in respect to all the Observations/Recommendations have been received from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

3. Replies to the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report have broadly been categorized as under:-

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:
Recommendation. Para No 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,10,12,13,14,15 and 16

Total: 13
(Chapter-II)

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's reply:
Recommendation. Nil

Total: 00
(Chapter-III)

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee:
Recommendation. 5,9,17 & 18

Total:04
(Chapter-IV)

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final reply of Government is still awaited:
Recommendation. No. 11

Total: 01
(Chapter-V)

4. The Committee desire that Action Taken Notes in respect of the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-I and final Action Taken Reply in respect of the recommendation contained in Chapter-V for which interim reply has been given by the Government may be furnished to them within six months of the presentation of the Report to the House.

5. The Committee will now deal with the Observations/Recommendations which require reiteration or merit further comments.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 2)

Release of MPLADS funds

6. In their recommendation contained in the original 14th Report, the Committee had stated as under:

“The Committee note that both at the time of constitution of Lok Sabha after General Elections and after the election of a Rajya Sabha Member, first installment of ₹2.5 crore is released to the Nodal District Authority without any documents. However, in the remaining years, one of the criteria for releasing the first installment in the subsequent years is furnishing of the Provisional Utilization Certificate of previous year covering at least 80% of the expenditure of the first installment of the previous year. The Committee view this condition of furnishing 80% utilization in a gap of almost one year as an impediment when the region-wise conditions and circumstances in each State hugely differ from one another. The Committee observe that the criteria of furnishing Utilization Certificate for the release of second installment of a financial year is both cumbersome and time consuming procedure as obtaining and furnishing Utilization Certificate involve different authorities, paper work and several formalities. This invariably leads to delay in release of funds and also delay in payments to respective agencies/contractors resulting in stalling of ongoing projects and cost escalation.

Hence, the Committee urge the Ministry to review the aforesaid criteria and bring appropriate amendments in the guidelines so as to simplify and expedite the process of fund release. The Committee recommend that there should be a mechanism put in place to facilitate the process of proposal, its estimates, tender, passing of bills and release of payment to contractors within a stipulated time frame which would help in smooth implementation of the projects under the MPLAD Scheme.

**7. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry submitted as under:
“Simplification of Procedure for release of funds under MPLADS**

The condition of furnishing of Utilization Certificate for release of funds has been incorporated in MPLADS Guidelines in consonance with the provisions of GFR. However, the Ministry is in the process of comprehensive revision of MPLADS Guidelines and implementation of Revised Fund Flow Procedure introduced by Ministry of Finance vide their O.M., dated 9-3-2022 wherein the Ministry intends to put in place a system under which District Authorities will not be required to wait for the actual funds to be released by the Ministry as they will be allocated drawing limits for the entire financial year and the actual funds will flow to vendors directly on real time basis. Therefore, the funds under the Scheme are expected to be released, utilized and monitored in a more efficient manner.

Implementation of Projects

As per para 3.3 of MPLADS Guidelines, the District Authority shall identify the Implementing Agency capable of executing the eligible work qualitatively, timely and satisfactorily. The District Authority shall follow the established work scrutiny; technical, work estimation, tendering and administrative procedure of the State/UT Government concerned in the matter of work execution and shall be responsible for timely and effective implementation of such works. Following provisions already exist in extant MPLADS Guidelines for expeditious implementation of projects under MPLADS:-

All recommended eligible works should be sanctioned within 75 days from the date of receipt of the recommendation, after completing all formalities. The District Authority shall, however, inform MPs regarding rejection, if any, within 45 days from the date of receipt of recommendations, with reasons thereof. In case of the time limits mentioned in the section falling within the period of operation of model code of conduct notified by the Election Commission, then such period as notified by model code of conduct will not be included in the reckoning of time limits.

The sanction letter/order shall stipulate a time limit for completion of the work to the Implementation Agency. The time limit for completion of the works should generally not exceed one year. In exceptional cases, where the implementation time exceeds one year, specific reasons for the same shall be incorporated in the sanction letter/order. The sanction letter/order shall also include a clause for suitable action against the Implementation Agency in the event of their failure to complete the work within the stipulated time as per the State Government Procedure. A copy of the sanction letter/order shall be sent to the MP concerned.

Decision making powers in regard to technical, financial and administrative sanctions to be accorded under the Scheme, vest in the district level functionaries. To facilitate quick implementation of projects under this Scheme, full powers should be delegated by the State/ UT Governments to the district functionaries. The District

Authorities will have full powers to get the works technically approved and financial estimates prepared by the competent district functionaries before according the final administrative sanction and approval. The District Authority should, before sanctioning the work, ensure that all clearances for such works have been taken from the competent authorities and the work conforms to the Guidelines.”

8. The Committee had urged the Ministry to review the criteria of furnishing of Provisional Utilization Certificate of previous year for releasing the first installment in the subsequent year since such a condition leads to delay not only in release of funds but also in payments to agencies/contractors. The Ministry, in the Action Taken reply, have stated that they are in the process of comprehensive revision of MPLAD Guidelines and implementation of Revised Fund Flow Procedure. The Committee are further informed that the Ministry intends to put in place a system where District Authorities would be allocated drawing limits for the entire financial year in order to simplify the procedures. The Committee appreciate that the Ministry has taken steps to make actual funds available to vendors on real time basis by setting up drawing limits. The Committee would like to know as to how the drawing limits are proposed to be earmarked and the way it would be governed / reviewed. The Committee would like to be apprised about the procedure specified in this regard.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 3)

Suspension of MPLADS Fund

9. In their recommendation contained in the original 14th Report, the Committee had stated as under:

“The Committee note that MPs constantly receive several requests from general public/Societies/Trusts from their respective constituencies to carry out various developmental works/create assets for the welfare of the people. With MPLADS Funds having been suspended during COVID-19 pandemic for two years, i.e., 2020-21 and 2021-22, MPs have not been able to recommend any new project and thus these requests from general public/Societies/Trusts have not been entertained. The Committee strongly desire that as COVID 19 pandemic situation in the country has eased, for the present M.P.s, the MPLADS Fund of 5th year may be released during 4th year, in advance, in order to enable the MPs to recommend/sanction projects on aforementioned requests.

The Committee also recommend that there should be a fixed timeline of half yearly release of installments during a financial year. The Committee hope that early

release of second installment of a particular year would ensure timely remittances to the respective company/contractors so that the projects are carried out smoothly.

As it was decided not to operate MPLADS for FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22, thus there was no release of MPLADS installments during these two years including the unreleased installments on or before 31.03.2020. Annual budgetary outlay for MPLADS for FY 2020-21 was placed at the disposal of D/o Expenditure, M/o Finance for managing the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. However, during the course of examination of the subject, the Committee observed that installments for the financial year 2019-20 were also not released for most of the MPs. The Committee note that there are certain sanctioned/approved projects which have been completed or are at the stage of completion but due to non-release of previous installments, payments for such projects/works are still pending which unfortunately resulted in projects being abandoned mid-way. To overcome this, the Committee now call upon the Government to make appropriate arrangements to release pending installments of previous years in order to clear the committed liabilities under MPLAD Scheme and to help people derive benefits from erstwhile dead/abandoned projects under MPLADS.”

10. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry submitted as under:

“Release of MPLADS Fund of 5th year in 4th year, in advance”

Release of MPLADS Funds of 5th year in 4th year in advance is not feasible as same is not in consonance with the provisions of GFR. However, the Ministry is in the process of comprehensive revision of MPLADS Guidelines and implementation of Revised Fund Flow Procedure introduced by Ministry of Finance vide their O.M., dated 9-3-2022 wherein the Ministry intends to put in place a system under which District Authorities will not be required to wait for the actual funds to be released by the Ministry as they will be allocated drawing limits for the entire financial year and the actual funds will flow to vendors directly on real time basis. Therefore, the funds under the Scheme are expected to be released, utilized and monitored in a more efficient manner.

Release of installments of previous years

Release of funds under MPLADS is strictly subject to fulfillment of fund-related criteria and submission of fund-related documents and those documents being found in order upon scrutiny along with fulfillment of criteria of unspent and unsanctioned balance. Delayed submission of requisite fund-related documents like Utilization Certificates, Provisional Utilization Certificates and Audit Certificates, by the District Authorities, has a cascading effect on release of pending installments.

The Ministry is releasing pending installments under MPLADS as soon as the fund related criteria is fulfilled and the fund related documents, as provided in MPLADS Guidelines, are submitted by the District Authorities. During the FY 2021-22, 766 installments of ₹1729.5 crore were released including 289 installments of ₹ 722.50 crore for the FY 2019-20 and 106 installments of ₹ 265 crore pertaining to the period prior to FY 2019-20. Similarly, during the FY 2022-23 (till 31.08.2022), 367 installments of ₹ 836.5 crore have been released including 30 installments of ₹ 75 crore for the FY 2019-20 and 111 installments of ₹ 277.5 crore pertaining to the period prior to FY 2019-20”.

11. In the wake of an unprecedented situation of the two years (2020-22) of COVID pandemic, when the MPs were unable to recommend any projects and the MPLAD funds were suspended, the Committee had brought attention to the fact that several projects, which have either been completed or were out at the final stage of completion, had to wait, owing to non release of previous installments. Hence, the Committee had urged the Ministry to make appropriate arrangements for timely release of funds. In their Action Taken reply, the Ministry had stated that the MPLAD guidelines are set for comprehensive revision wherein drawing limits for entire financial year would be made for District Authorities thereby making funds under the scheme to be utilized and maintained efficiently. Since the MoSPI is contemplating comprehensive changes in the fund release guidelines, the Committee would like to be apprised of the mechanism in which drawing limits would be rationalised for District Authorities across the country. They hope that the revised guidelines would ease the processes of funds release thus paving the way for early start of completed projects.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 5)

Completion of Abandoned Projects/Works

12. In their recommendation contained in the 14th Report, the Committee had stated as under:

“The Committee observe that on several occasions certain projects/works which were duly proposed, sanctioned, approved and had commenced during the tenure of predecessor MP were left abandoned. In some instances, those project were found neither functional nor in a condition to be used, during the tenure of successor MP. The Committee observe that although the successor MP does recommend completion of such projects/works, the State Governments are reluctant to complete the carry over projects/works. The Committee view this as a serious loophole and urge the Ministry to take up the matter with the State Authorities/Nodal District Authorities to identify such

projects (which are lagging due to change of elected representative as abandoning any project/work mid-way would be a sheer wastage of funds) and take steps to get them completed in time. The Committee recommend that the Ministry has a role inter-alia to evaluate MPLAD Scheme and hence need to seek information on such abandoned projects from each State and put in place a strong monitoring mechanism to ensure that the sanctioned projects are completed in time. The Committee also opine that the unused fund allotted to the predecessor MP should be utilized for the completion of such abandoned projects/works with minimal delay in documentation process. The Committee would like to have a State/UT/MP wise status report on such projects for the last three terms of Lok Sabha.”

13. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry submitted as under:

“Provisions in MPLADS Guidelines to take care of Abandoned Projects

Para 3.13 of the MPLADS Guidelines provides that “The sanction letter/order shall stipulate a time limit for completion of the work to the Implementation Agency. The time limit for completion of the works should generally not exceed one year. In exceptional cases, where the implementation time exceeds one year, specific reasons for the same shall be incorporated in the sanction letter/order. The sanction letter/order shall also include a clause for suitable action against the Implementation Agency in the event of their failure to complete the work within the stipulated time as per the State Government Procedure. A copy of the sanction letter/order shall be sent to the MP concerned.”

Also, para 3.23 of the MPLADS Guidelines stipulates that “List of all completed and ongoing works with MPLADS funds should also be displayed at the District Authority Office and posted in the website for information of the general public. For public awareness, details of completed works may be displayed in prominent places like Tehsil/Niabat/Sub-Tehsil/Block/Gram Panchayat offices also.”

As an abiding principle, works once sanctioned by the District Authority are to be mandatorily completed. If the works are not completed within the stipulated time-line, Para 3.3.1 of the MPLADS Guidelines may be invoked which stipulates as follows:

“In case, there is still any abandoned/ suspended MPLAD work under the Scheme, it shall be completed by the State Government from their own funds. The State Government will also fix responsibility and take necessary disciplinary action against the erring officials. The District Authority may ensure that the funds must have been utilized as sanctioned earlier so that duplication of allocation of funds does not take place”.

It is up to the willingness of successor Member of Parliament to recommend amount from his MPLADS funds towards completion of an abandoned project/work. The amount

from the MPLADS funds of the new Member shall be sanctioned by the District Authority towards the abandoned work only if the Member indicates his consent to do so formally on his letterhead.

The MPLADS Guidelines are so designed that on execution of the works diligently as per the laid down procedure, the unspent funds/savings from the works are refunded back to the District Authority from the implementing agency.

Evaluation of works done under MPLADS

The Ministry has been getting the works done under MPLAD Scheme, evaluated periodically through an agency independent of this Ministry. Last such evaluation was done in the year 2021 when this Ministry engaged an independent agency for carrying out the monitoring/evaluation of works done under MPLADS in selected 216 Nodal Districts during the period from 01.04.2014 to 31.03.2019. The final findings/report of the evaluation, has been sent to the District Authorities and State Nodal Department for further appropriate action.

Status of Abandoned Projects

State/UT/MP wise status report on such projects for the last three terms of Lok Sabha is being collected/compiled and same will be submitted in due course. “

14. The Committee had noted that developmental works commenced during the tenure of predecessor M.P. were mostly left abandoned even when the successor M.P. would recommend completion of such projects; State Governments being reluctant to carry forward such projects/works. The Committee note from the Action Taken reply of the Ministry that as an abiding principle, works, once sanctioned by the District Authority, are to be mandatorily completed. The Ministry has further indicated the willingness of successor Member of Parliament as the sole driver in getting the abandoned work (of predecessor M.P.) completed. Since the Committee had suggested it based on the ground experience of most of the MPs, hence, while reiterating their earlier recommendation, the Committee would like the Ministry to identify the works of developmental nature which are still incomplete not only due to lack of funds but also lack of proper attention of the District Authorities. The Committee would ask the Ministry to take up the matter with the State authorities and issue instructions to them in tune with the MPLAD guidelines so that completion of development works neither remain halted nor stay non-functional. Also as desired by them, a State/UT/MP wise status report on abandoned projects for the last three terms of Lok Sabha must be prepared and furnished to them within one month of the presentation of the Report.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 9)

Centage Charge by PSUs

15. In their original recommendation, the Committee had stated as under:

“The Committee note that the Ministry has authorized several PSUs like NBCC Ltd. to undertake various projects/works under MPLAD Scheme while at the State level the same is being accomplished by State Corporations. Both the PSUs & State Corporations provide supervisory, architectural and other institutional support for implementation of quality work under the MPLAD Scheme. The Committee, further, note that as per the extant MPLADS Guidelines, centage charged by the PSUs has not been allowed. This often leads to disputes at the district level with reference to the centage which has to be charged by the PSUs officially. The Committee view that since all these PSUs do not draw money from the Central Budget, the Ministry should make appropriate amendments in the guidelines including upper ceiling on centages that can be allowed to CPSUs and State PSUs both, for projects/works under MPLADS.”

16. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry submitted as under:

“Para 4.17.1 of the MPLADS Guidelines stipulates as follows:-

“Excluding Administrative Expenses as provided for in para 4.17, the Nodal Department, District Authority or Implementing Agency shall not levy any expenses like supervision charges, centage charges, salary of personnel, travelling expenses, etc. in the implementation and supervision of works including preparatory works under the MPLADS”.

The suggestion for allowing centage charges to CPSUs and State PSUs for projects/works under MPLADS has been examined and is not found to be feasible for inclusion in the MPLADS Guidelines.”

17. The Committee had observed that under MPLADs, centage charged by PSUs has not been allowed which often leads to disputes at the district level which causes delay in completion of the project or even abandonment of the project. The Committee feel laying of centage charges by PSU justified because many PSUs do not get funds under the Central Budget. The Ministry in their Action Taken reply, have stated that excluding the administrative expenses (as provided for in para 4.17 of the MPLAD guidelines), the nodal department, District

Authority or Implementing Agency shall not levy any expenses in the implementation and supervision of developmental works. While noting the existing provisions with regard to administrative charges, the Committee urge the Ministry to take a relook since it is in the process of renewing MPLADs guidelines. The Committee expect the Ministry to allow centage charged by PSUs in the cost of developmental works so that the efficiency and expertise of PSUs are utilised fully for completion of sanctioned projects within the timeline.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 11)

Need for the audit of Administrative Expenses

18. In their original recommendation, the Committee had stated as under:

“Under the MPLAD guidelines, there is a provision of 2% Administrative Expenses which gets deducted for the Facilitation Centre at the District Collector Office. The 2% Administrative Expenses, from every installment released, in respect of Hon'ble Member is shared by the Nodal Authority, Implementing District Authority and State Nodal Department in the given ratio. The Committee observed that the Administrative Expenses once distributed by the Nodal District would be considered as spent & separate Utilization Certificate would not be necessary for those expenses. Taking view of the fact that the cost of Facilitation Centre is borne out of 2% administrative expenses deducted from the MPLADS Fund allocated to the MPs, the Committee are of the firm view that the Ministry should strictly monitor and keep a check on the appropriate utilization of these expenses. The Ministry should also ensure that strict action should be taken against those found guilty of any misappropriation in this regard. The Committee strongly feel that this 2% Administrative Expenses is essentially public money and there should be a mandatory audit to ascertain its proper usage. The Committee would urge the Ministry to frame guidelines in this regard in consultation with District Authorities so that they may get notified from the next financial year onwards. The Committee may be apprised of the steps taken in this regard”.

19. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry submitted as under:

“The suggestion has been noted and same is being examined in consultation with the stakeholders to see if it is feasible for inclusion in the MPLADS Guidelines.”

20. The Committee had noted that Administrative Expenses once distributed, were considered as spent and there was no system in place to monitor its usage. Taking view of this, the Committee had recommended for audit of 2% Administrative Expenses. The Ministry in their Action Taken reply had indicated that the issue of audit of Administrative Expenses would be examined with the consultation of stakeholders for its feasibility. The Committee are happy to note that the Ministry has agreed to examine the feasibility of audit of Administrative Expenses and would like to be apprised of the progress / steps taken in this regard.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 17)

Time Bound Action

21. In their original recommendation, the Committee had stated as under:

“The Committee observe that the Para 3.13 of MPLAD guidelines have provision for action against defaulting implementing agencies. As per the guidelines, the sanction letter should necessarily mention the time limit for completion of the work which should generally not exceed one year. The Committee note that the sanction letter must include a clause for suitable action against the implementation agency in the event of their failure to complete the work as per government procedure. The Committee are glad to note that the MPLAD guidelines are envisioned to achieve the results but the Ministry has the onus to bring to action the provisions under the guidelines. They urge the Ministry to take concerted efforts with utmost dedication for timely completion of sanctioned development works. Hence, the Committee would like to be apprised of the cases where ‘suitable’ actions were taken against defaulting agencies on unsatisfactory response received from the District Authority.”

22. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry submitted as under:

“Para-3.13 of the MPLADS Guidelines stipulates that “the sanction letter/order shall stipulate a time limit for completion of the work to the Implementation Agency. The time limit for completion of the works should generally not exceed one year. In exceptional cases, where the implementation time exceeds one year, specific reasons for the same shall be incorporated in the sanction letter/order. The sanction letter/order shall also include a clause for suitable action against the Implementation Agency in the event of their failure to complete the work within the stipulated time as per the State Government Procedure. A copy of the sanction letter/order shall be sent to the MP concerned.”

Also, para-3.14 of the MPLADS Guidelines stipulates that “Decision making powers in regard to technical, financial and administrative sanctions to be accorded under the Scheme, vest in the district level functionaries. To facilitate quick implementation of projects under this Scheme, full powers should be delegated by the State/ UT Governments to the district functionaries. The District Authorities will have full powers to get the works technically approved and financial estimates prepared by the competent district functionaries before according the final administrative sanction and approval. The District Authority should, before sanctioning the work, ensure that all clearances for such works have been taken from the competent authorities and the work conforms to the Guidelines”.

In a federal structure, it may not be feasible to conceive of any mechanism to have direct superintendence on the functioning of the District authorities, however, Ministry takes cognizance of such cases, which are brought to its notice wherein the implementation agency failed to complete the work within stipulated time as per government procedure. Such cases are taken up with the respective State/UT Governments whereby Ministry also impresses upon fixing of responsibility against erring Officers by the State/UT Government besides reiterating adherence to the provisions of MPLADS Guidelines.”

23. The Committee, while noting that Para 3.13 of MPLAD guidelines have provision for action against defaulting implementing agencies, had urged the

Ministry to take concreded efforts so that the developmental works do not suffer from time overrun. They had also urged the Ministry to apprise them of the rest of the cases where suitable action had been taken against defaulting agencies. The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have stated that they take cognizance of the delayed cases as and when brought to their notice and then the cases are taken up with the respective State/UT Governments. The Committee feel that being a nodal Ministry, MoSPI should devise a mechanism/portal where in data pertaining to works/projects under MPLAD funds are maintained and monitored regularly. The Committee would like the Ministry to involve State authorities/implementation agency and integrate technology in a way that data pertaining to developmental works are maintained, reviewed and monitored in an effective way. The Committee further feel that delays of any kind, if highlighted in an integrated portal, would enable the Ministry to take appropriate action in time. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken in this regard.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 18)

Creation of Subordinate unit/Office

24. In their original recommendation, the Committee had stated as under:

“The Committee observe that the concept of Monitoring Committees at district level is designed to keep a check on timely release of funds, completion of developmental work, etc., but there is no direct supervision of works by the MOSPI in each State/District. MPLADS, being a Central Scheme, comes under the purview of MOSPI for its role in release of funds, monitoring, account keeping and evaluation, hence, the Committee strongly feel that MOSPI should establish a dedicated monitoring unit so as to have a direct look at the progress of developmental works sanctioned under MPLADS. Once an online portal with real-time data is developed, monitoring the progress against each indicator would be easy for this dedicated unit and transparency and speed in the scheme implementation could be achieved. At present, the Ministry awaits and relies upon the Reports (quarterly) of the Monitoring Committees for further actions with respect to release of funds, sanction letters etc. The Committee are of the strong opinion that having a unit would definitely identify any problems at State level and better coordinate with State Governments to streamline and implement the MPLADS projects in a time bound manner, as the MPLADS is implemented at the field level.”

25. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry submitted as under:

“The MPLAD Scheme has a very robust monitoring mechanism at Central, State/UT, District level with well-defined roles and responsibilities:-

a. At the central level: The Ministry holds meetings in the States and also at the Centre to review the implementation of the MPLAD Scheme (Para 6.2 of MPLADS Guidelines).

b. At State / UT level: A committee is constituted under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary/Development Commissioner/Additional Chief Secretary to review MPLADS implementation progress with the District Authorities and MPs at least once in a year. The Nodal Department Secretary and other Administrative Department Secretaries should also participate in such meetings (Para 6.3 of MPLADS Guidelines).

c. At District Level: The District Authority reviews, every month and in any case at least once in every quarter, MPLADS works implementation with the Implementing Agencies. The District Authority shall invite the MPs concerned to such review meetings and send a report of such review meetings to Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Para 6.4 of MPLADS Guidelines).”

26. The Committee had observed that there is no direct supervision of works by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in each State/District and had thus recommended for the establishment of a dedicated monitoring unit in each State so as to have a direct look at the progress of developmental works sanctioned under MPLADS. The Ministry, in their Action Taken Reply, have remained silent about establishment of any monitoring unit rather they have elaborated the protocols of meetings for reviewing of implementation of the MPLAD Scheme. The Committee are aware of the protocols of the meetings however these protocols are generally not adhered to by District and State Authorities. Hence, while reiterating their earlier recommendation, the Committee feel that the Ministry need to revise guidelines in a way so that every State in the country has a ‘monitoring unit / mechanism’ so as to review the progress of developmental works being carried out with MPLAD funds. With technological solutions / portals / IT applications, such a monitoring is no longer a tedious task. Hence, they expect that the Ministry, being nodal in supervision of developmental works under MPLAD funds, should positively consider the proposal of setting up of the ‘monitoring unit’ and apprise them of the steps to be taken in this regard.

Chapter – II

Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 1)

Introductory to the Recommendations/Observations made by the Committee in the Report.

Being introductory part, no action is required.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 2)

Release of MPLADS funds

The Committee note that both at the time of constitution of Lok Sabha after General Elections and after the election of a Rajya Sabha Member, first installment of ₹2.5 crore is released to the Nodal District Authority without any documents. However, in the remaining years, one of the criteria for releasing the first installment in the subsequent years is furnishing of the Provisional Utilization Certificate of previous year covering at least 80% of the expenditure of the first installment of the previous year. The Committee view this condition of furnishing 80% utilization in a gap of almost one year as an impediment when the region-wise conditions and circumstances in each State hugely differ from one another. The Committee observe that the criteria of furnishing Utilization Certificate for the release of second installment of a financial year is both cumbersome and time consuming procedure as obtaining and furnishing Utilization Certificate involve different authorities, paper work and several formalities. This invariably leads to delay in release of funds and also delay in payments to respective agencies/contractors resulting in stalling of ongoing projects and cost escalation.

Hence, the Committee urge the Ministry to review the aforesaid criteria and bring appropriate amendments in the guidelines so as to simplify and expedite the process of fund release. The Committee recommend that there should be a mechanism put in place to facilitate the process of proposal, its estimates, tender, passing of bills and release of payment to contractors within a stipulated time frame which would help in smooth implementation of the projects under the MPLAD Scheme.

Reply of the Government

Simplification of Procedure for release of funds under MPLADS

The condition of furnishing of Utilization Certificate for release of funds has been incorporated in MPLADS Guidelines in consonance with the provisions of GFR.

However, the Ministry is in the process of comprehensive revision of MPLADS Guidelines and implementation of Revised Fund Flow Procedure introduced by Ministry of Finance vide their O.M., dated 9-3-2022 wherein the Ministry intends to put in place a system under which District Authorities will not be required to wait for the actual funds to be released by the Ministry as they will be allocated drawing limits for the entire financial year and the actual funds will flow to vendors directly on real time basis. Therefore, the funds under the Scheme are expected to be released, utilized and monitored in a more efficient manner.

Implementation of Projects

As per para 3.3 of MPLADS Guidelines, the District Authority shall identify the Implementing Agency capable of executing the eligible work qualitatively, timely and satisfactorily. The District Authority shall follow the established work scrutiny; technical, work estimation, tendering and administrative procedure of the State/UT Government concerned in the matter of work execution and shall be responsible for timely and effective implementation of such works. Following provisions already exist in extant MPLADS Guidelines for expeditious implementation of projects under MPLADS:-

All recommended eligible works should be sanctioned within 75 days from the date of receipt of the recommendation, after completing all formalities. The District Authority shall, however, inform MPs regarding rejection, if any, within 45 days from the date of receipt of recommendations, with reasons thereof. In case of the time limits mentioned in the section falling within the period of operation of model code of conduct notified by the Election Commission, then such period as notified by model code of conduct will not be included in the reckoning of time limits.

3.13 The sanction letter/order shall stipulate a time limit for completion of the work to the Implementation Agency. The time limit for completion of the works should generally not exceed one year. In exceptional cases, where the implementation time exceeds one year, specific reasons for the same shall be incorporated in the sanction letter/order. The sanction letter/order shall also include a clause for suitable action against the Implementation Agency in the event of their failure to complete the work within the stipulated time as per the State Government Procedure. A copy of the sanction letter/order shall be sent to the MP concerned.

3.14 Decision making powers in regard to technical, financial and administrative sanctions to be accorded under the Scheme, vest in the district level functionaries. To facilitate quick implementation of projects under this Scheme, full powers should be delegated by the State/ UT Governments to the district functionaries. The District Authorities will have full powers to get the works technically approved and financial estimates prepared by the competent district functionaries before according the final

administrative sanction and approval. The District Authority should, before sanctioning the work, ensure that all clearances for such works have been taken from the competent authorities and the work conforms to the Guidelines.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 3)

Suspension of MPLADS Fund

The Committee note that MPs constantly receive several requests from general public/Societies/Trusts from their respective constituencies to carry out various developmental works/create assets for the welfare of the people. With MPLADS Funds having been suspended during COVID-19 pandemic for two years, i.e., 2020-21 and 2021-22, MPs have not been able to recommend any new project and thus these requests from general public/Societies/Trusts have not been entertained. The Committee strongly desire that as COVID 19 pandemic situation in the country has eased, for the present M.P.s, the MPLADS Fund of 5th year may be released during 4th year, in advance, in order to enable the MPs to recommend/sanction projects on aforementioned requests.

The Committee also recommend that there should be a fixed timeline of half yearly release of installments during a financial year. The Committee hope that early release of second installment of a particular year would ensure timely remittances to the respective company/contractors so that the projects are carried out smoothly.

As it was decided not to operate MPLADS for FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22, thus there was no release of MPLADS installments during these two years including the unreleased installments on or before 31.03.2020. Annual budgetary outlay for MPLADS for FY 2020-21 was placed at the disposal of D/o Expenditure, M/o Finance for managing the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. However, during the course of examination of the subject, the Committee observed that installments for the financial year 2019-20 were also not released for most of the MPs. The Committee note that there are certain sanctioned/approved projects which have been completed or are at the stage of completion but due to non-release of previous installments, payments for such projects/works are still pending which unfortunately resulted in projects being abandoned mid-way. To overcome this, the Committee now call upon the Government to make appropriate arrangements to release pending installments of previous years in order to clear the committed liabilities under MPLAD Scheme and to help people derive benefits from erstwhile dead/abandoned projects under MPLADS.

Reply of the Government

Release of MPLADS Fund of 5th year in 4th year, in advance

Release of MPLADS Funds of 5th year in 4th year in advance is not feasible as same is not in consonance with the provisions of GFR. However, the Ministry is in the process of comprehensive revision of MPLADS Guidelines and implementation of Revised Fund Flow Procedure introduced by Ministry of Finance vide their O.M., dated 9-3-2022 wherein the Ministry intends to put in place a system under which District Authorities will not be required to wait for the actual funds to be released by the Ministry as they will be allocated drawing limits for the entire financial year and the actual funds will flow to vendors directly on real time basis. Therefore, the funds under the Scheme are expected to be released, utilized and monitored in a more efficient manner.

Release of instalments of previous years

Release of funds under MPLADS is strictly subject to fulfillment of fund-related criteria and submission of fund-related documents and those documents being found in order upon scrutiny along with fulfillment of criteria of unspent and unsanctioned balance. Delayed submission of requisite fund-related documents like Utilization Certificates, Provisional Utilization Certificates and Audit Certificates, by the District Authorities, has a cascading effect on release of pending installments.

The Ministry is releasing pending instalments under MPLADS as soon as the fund related criteria is fulfilled and the fund related documents, as provided in MPLADS Guidelines, are submitted by the District Authorities. During the FY 2021-22, 766 instalments of Rs.1729.5 crore were released including 289 instalments of Rs 722.50 crore for the FY 2019-20 and 106 instalments of Rs. 265 crore pertaining to the period prior to FY 2019-20. Similarly, during the FY 2022-23 (till 31.08.2022), 367 instalments of Rs 836.5 crore have been released including 30 instalments of Rs 75 crore for the FY 2019-20 and 111 instalments of Rs 277.5 crore pertaining to the period prior to FY 2019-20.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 4)

Delayed Submission of Fund-related Documents

The release of funds under MPLADS is subject to fulfillment of fund-related criteria as mentioned in the Guidelines and submission of fund-related documents and those documents being found in order upon scrutiny, along with fulfillment of criteria of unspent and unsanctioned balance. Delayed submission of requisite fund-related

documents like Utilization Certificates, Provisional Utilization Certificates and Audit Certificates, by the District Authorities, has a cascading effect on release of pending installments.

The Committee, during the course of examination, found certain instances wherein funds were not released even though the requisite documents were submitted by the concerned District Authorities to the Ministry. The Committee also found that due to lack of coordination between District Nodal Officers and Central Ministry, release of installments got delayed. Taking cognizance of this, the Committee would like the Ministry to have a re-look into this aspect of documentation so that the issue of delay in release of funds could be minimized. The Committee opine that timely release of funds is vital as implementing agencies/contractors will stop work if payment is pending. The Committee reiterate that no work of developmental nature should stand idle.

Reply of the Government

The release of funds under MPLADS is subject to not only fulfillment of fund-related criteria as mentioned in the Guidelines and submission of fund-related documents by the District Authorities but also such documents being found in order upon scrutiny along-with fulfillment of criteria of unspent and unsanctioned balance. Following are the few instances when funds cannot be released by the Ministry even after submission of the requisite documents by the concerned District Authorities:-

- The requisite documents are found not in order upon scrutiny by the Ministry. For example, the documents provided by the District Authority may not be in prescribed format; the documents provided may not be signed by the competent authority or the documents may not be ink-signed; there may be a huge difference in the unspent balance shown in MPR and the amount shown in bank statement; the Utilization Certificates provided may be incorrect (e.g. unspent balance of previous year may not match with submitted UC, installment received by District Authority mentioned in the UC may not match with actual release by the Ministry); the Audit Certificate may contain observations of Auditors.
- The MPR provided by the District Authority may be non-eligible, i.e., it may not be fulfilling criteria of unspent balance and/or unsanctioned balance.

The Ministry has been prompt in pursuing such cases with the concerned District Authorities so that the requisite documents, duly corrected, are submitted at the earliest and the funds are released to the Hon'ble MPs in an expeditious manner.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 6)

Time-bound settlement

Under the MPLAD scheme, the funds of predecessor MP cannot be utilized directly by successor MP. The Committee are informed that the unspent funds to the tune of ₹ 1723 crore of the predecessor Members could be put to appropriate use only upon completion of all the eligible works of the predecessor Member and closure of the bank account of the predecessor Member and transfer of the balance of funds of the predecessor Members to the bank account of the successor Members. The Committee note that this entire process of "transfer/distribution of uncommitted balances of funds and closure of accounts" is a time consuming process and ₹ 1723 crore is standing to the credit of such cases. The Committee expect the Ministry to identify the problems inherent with such huge amount of funds lying idle. They call upon the Ministry to ensure that the Saving Bank account of the predecessor MP linked to MPLADS is closed and fund transferred to the MPLADS account of the successor MP in a time bound manner, as prescribed under MPLAD guidelines and the Committee are apprised of the progress in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The funds of predecessor Members by successor Members can be utilized only upon completion of all the eligible works of the predecessor Members and closure of the bank accounts of the predecessor Members and transfer of the balance funds of the predecessor Members to the bank account of the successor Members (sitting) in accordance with the procedure laid down in Para-4.7 to 4.10 of the MPLADS Guidelines.

Para-4.10.1 of MPLADS Guidelines stipulates that the work of MPLADS shall be completed within 18 months from the date of demitting office in case of Rajya Sabha MPs or dissolution of the Lok Sabha. District Authorities shall settle and close the account of the concerned MP after completing all other formalities in another 3 months time, under intimation to the Govt. of India and with detailed information in the Monthly Progress Report (MPR). If the District Authority does not finish the projects within 18

months of demitting of an MP or dissolution of Lok Sabha, the District Authority will be required to complete the balance work out of State/District funds. In no case, any extension will be given and District Authority shall be held responsible in case of any lapse in this regard.

The Ministry has been regularly pursuing with the District Authorities for early closure of the bank accounts of the predecessor Members and transfer of the balance funds of the predecessor Members to the bank account of the successor Members(sitting). Copies of instructions issued to States/UTs vide O.M.No.C-38/2015-MPLADS, dated 14-5-2020, 16-7-2020, 31-8-2020, 1-1-2021, 23-4-2021 and 7-12-2021, are enclosed for reference.

Also, the Ministry is in the process of comprehensive revision of MPLADS Guidelines and implementation of Revised Fund Flow Procedure introduced by Ministry of Finance vide their O.M., dated 9-3-2022 wherein the Ministry intends to put in place a system under which District Authorities will be allocated drawing limits for the entire financial year and the actual funds will flow to vendors directly on real time basis. Hence, there will be no parking of funds in the proposed system.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 7)

Specific Guidelines for educational societies/trust

The Committee note that as per extant guidelines of MPLAD Scheme, there is a ceiling of ₹50 lakh for the lifetime of each Trust/Society from MPLADS funds. The Committee have found that some trusts/societies are engaged in community service since long and hence operate several institutions. For instance, there are certain societies which have about 100 units/schools under their purview but due to existing provisions in the guidelines, MPs cannot recommend funds for such large number of schools. The Committee view this provision as a hurdle for the development of education system/infrastructure in the country. They, therefore, opine that the Ministry should enhance the ceiling of ₹50 lakh, so as to enable the MPs to recommend/sanction significant amount of fund for the purpose. The Committee also recommend that in

order to assist more and more schools and for better future of education system in the country, the purview of MPLAD Scheme should be expanded and MPLAD Scheme guidelines amended in a way so as to allow the MPs to recommend/sanction fund for the development/betterment of Government-Aided schools in the country as well.

Reply of the Government

The suggestion/recommendation of the Committee has been noted and will be examined in consultation with the stakeholders to see its feasibility for inclusion in the MPLADS Guidelines.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 8)

Requests from Other Institutes

During the course of examination, the Committee have found that on various occasions, MPs receive requests from certain institutes, which are not included in the extant guidelines, for sanction of MPLAD fund for various developmental works. In such cases, MPs are not in a position to assist them even if the institutes/organizations seem deserving. To cite an instance, the Committee are aware of certain Ambulance providers where the ownership of the vehicles are with the Zila Parishads/Corporations yet their maintenance aspects are better handled by a Non-profit organisation/NGO. Since it is the prime responsibility of the elected representatives to look into such grievances/practical difficulties of public/institutes/societies, the Committee feel that the MPLADS guidelines should be suitably amended to enable MPs to recommend such projects/works or help deserving Non-profit organizations/NGOs too under MPLADS Scheme. Overall, the Committee recommend that the purview of the MPLAD Scheme should be broadened so as to enable the MPs to assist more and more number of institutes/recommend works of developmental nature, thereby, ensuring creation of durable community assets for the betterment of education system/infrastructure in the country.

Reply of the Government

The review and revision of MPLADS Guidelines for inclusion of new areas and sectors in the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) Guidelines for enabling Hon'ble Members of Parliament to recommend works of development nature, is a dynamic process. In a dynamic environment where the development needs of local community keep changing, the suggestions and inputs of stakeholders for revision/modification in MPLADS Guidelines are received on a continuous basis. Ministry examines new suggestions and inputs and incorporates the same in the Guidelines, if the suggestions are found to be feasible and aligned with the objective of the MPLAD Scheme. Since the issue of the extant MPLADS Guidelines in June, 2016, twenty one amendments have been made in the Guidelines.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 10)

Need for Facilitation Centre

The Committee note that under the scheme, there is a provision of Facilitation Centre at District Collector office. The Capital cost of setting up of such facilities including equipment, furniture, etc. is not to exceed ₹5 lakh and will be met from 2% Administrative Charges of MPLADS funds. The main function of the Facilitation Centre is to provide relevant information to all MPs at one place for the effective implementation of the scheme. The Ministry have further apprised the Committee that 2% administrative expenses from every installment released by the Ministry in respect of the Hon'ble Member is shared in such a proportion that 0.2 % is allocated to the State Nodal Department, 1 % is allotted to the Implementing District and 0.8 % is retained by the Nodal District.

The Committee are astonished to note that in cases where even an MP is not availing the Facilitation Centre, still 2 % administrative expenses continue to be deducted from every installment released to the Member. The Committee express their dismay as they find the deduction of 2% administrative charges from MPLADS Fund of the MP, even though Facilitation Centre is not availed, should not be done. In light of this, the Committee urge the Ministry to appropriately amend the provision relating to

deduction of administrative charges from the MPLADS Fund, where the services of Facilitation Centre is not availed.

Reply of the Government

In addition to meet expenditure on setting-up of Facilitation Centre, the deduction of 2% made towards administrative fund is also utilized for meeting expenses on various administrative activities of State Nodal Department, Nodal District and Implementing District(s) such as Third party inspection-physical audit and quality check; Monitoring of works at State level; Translating and printing of the MPLADS Guidelines in their respective regional language; Hiring of services/consultants for handling Data Entry, uploading of data on website, etc.; Creating awareness among public about the Scheme and dissemination of information of ongoing and completed works; Purchase of stationery; Office equipment including computer hardware/software for MPLADS planning/ monitoring (excluding laptop); Telephone/fax/postal charges etc.

That is, setting-up of Facilitation Centre is one of the various administrative activities for which 2% Administrative Fund can be used.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 12)

Non-Utilization of Funds

The Committee observe that under MPLADs Scheme large amount of funds remain unutilised/lapsed on several occasions as recommended projects could not commence due to delay in obtaining technical clearance, financial clearance, administrative clearance etc. The Committee expect the Ministry to issue instructions to the Nodal District Authorities that all the clearances/formalities involved in obtaining the approval for recommended projects/works may be done in a time-bound manner through online Single Window System and strict action should be taken against those found guilty of deliberately delaying the process since such projects are recommended for the welfare/interest of the general public and all round development of their area.

The Committee also recommend that in case where certain recommended/sanctioned project could not commence on time, there should be a valid reason for the same and it should be timely intimated to the concerned MPs so as to enable them re-allocate the fund to another/new project/work which would considerably help in appropriate and optimal utilization of MPLADS fund.

Reply of the Government

To ensure expeditious execution and effective monitoring of progress of works recommended by the Hon'ble MPs under MPLAD Scheme, various provisions exist in MPLADS Guidelines.

2. Para-3.12 of MPLADS Guidelines stipulates that all recommended eligible works should be sanctioned within 75 days from the date of receipt of the recommendation, after completing all formalities. The District Authority shall, however, inform MPs regarding rejection, if any, within 45 days from the date of receipt of recommendations, with reasons thereof.

3. Para-3.13 of MPLADS Guidelines provides that the sanction letter/order shall stipulate a time limit for completion of the work to the Implementation Agency. The time limit for completion of the works should generally not exceed one year. In exceptional cases, where the implementation time exceeds one year, specific reasons for the same shall be incorporated in the sanction letter/order. The sanction letter/order shall also include a clause for suitable action against the Implementation Agency in the event of their failure to complete the work within the stipulated time as per the State Government Procedure. A copy of the sanction letter/order shall be sent to the MP concerned.

4. The District Authority would be responsible for overall coordination and supervision of the works under the scheme at the district level and inspect at least 10% of the works under implementation every year. The District Authority should involve the MPs in the inspections of projects to the extent feasible [Para 6.4(i) of the MPLADS Guidelines].

5. The District Authority shall review, every month and in any case at least once in every quarter, MPLADS works implementation with the Implementing Agencies. The District Authority shall invite the MPs concerned to such review meetings and send a report of such a review meetings to Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation [Para 6.4(vi) of the MPLADS Guidelines].

6. Para 6.5(i) MPLADS Guidelines provides that it will be the responsibility of the officers of the Implementing Agencies to regularly visit the works spots to ensure that the works are progressing satisfactorily as per the prescribed procedure and specifications and the time schedule. In addition to this, Para 6.5(ii) of the MPLADS requires that the Implementing Agencies shall furnish physical and financial progress of each work to the District Authority every month with a copy to the concerned State Department. The Implementing Agencies should provide the report also in the soft format. A work register should also be maintained by the implementing agencies showing details of the physical and financial progress of projects being undertaken by them. This register should also contain the details of spot visit made by the implementing agencies. Implementing Agency must inspect 100% of the works.

7. Further, Para 6.5(iii) of the MPLADS Guidelines specifies that the Implementing Agencies shall furnish completion report/certificates and utilization certificates to the District Authority within one month of completion of the works.

8. The Facilitation Centers should, inter-alia, provide following information(Para 9.2 of Annexure-IIA of the MPLADS Guidelines):-

- i. Details of works: (a) recommended by the MP (b) pending examination (c) found ineligible and rejected (d) sanctioned (e) pending sanction, with reasons therefore.
- ii. Details of works under implementation, including their physical and financial progress.
- iii. Details of completed works, including total expenditure incurred thereon.
- iv. Latest Monthly Progress Report.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 13)

Ease in availability of Real Time Data

The Committee note that the Ministry is maintaining a website/dashboard which reflects real-time status/progress of various projects/works being carried out under MPLAD Scheme in the country; to enable MPs as well as the general public to check the status/progress of these projects/works. But the Committee are astonished to note that most of the elected representatives do not get any information regarding the status of their recommended works from Zila Parishad/ the District Administration. In order to ensure that maximum number of people are aware of this website/dashboard, the Committee note that the Ministry have in the past instructed the State Government/Nodal District Authorities to take necessary steps/measures in this regard along with disseminating information with regard to its features/operations and given training too. However, the desired impact is still not seen. The Committee strongly feel that there is an urgent need to review the existing Dashboard on MPLADS of MOSPI and develop such an online Portal/web-based MIS which ensures that the information in respect of different programmes/projects/works under MPLAD Scheme gets generated and updated timely. It will help the MPs as well as all the stakeholders including general public get updated/real-time information about the status and progress of these programmes/projects/works. The Committee strongly feel that the Ministry should continue to strive towards developing an elaborate and user friendly dashboard of MPLADS Portal for the Members of Parliament specifically, wherein they can log into their e-account to view the minutes and circulars/notifications with respect to developmental works related to their respective constituencies. An automated sms alert mechanism should also be put in place so that the Members of Parliament could get notifications related to uploading of circulars etc. on Member's specific dashboard. Also, a copy each of the said notifications should automatically reach all State Secretaries/UT administrators, who, thereafter, can endorse it to all the DMs/DCs posted in their State/UT. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken in this regard.

Reply of the Government

To enable Hon'ble MPs as well as the general public to check the status/progress of MPLADS projects/works, the Ministry has made provisions for the District Authorities to enter details of works/projects along with financial details on the MPLADS portal (www.mplads.gov.in). Log –in IDs have been given to the District Authorities to enter project/work-wise details. The same is visible to the general public through the tab “WMS report”.

2. A revamped version of MPLADS portal was launched in June, 2019 with provisions for Hon'ble Members to make recommendations for works/projects on-line. Further, implementing agency as a stakeholder has already been added on the MPLADS portal to enlarge granularity of the data, i.e., till the last mile. The integrated MPLADS portal has facilities for online submission of Audit Certificates, Utilization Certificates, Provisional Utilization Certificates and Monthly Progress Reports. District Authorities have been advised to make utmost utilization of these services/facilities on the MPLADS portal.

3. The Ministry is contemplating to further revamp the existing MPLADS Portal after the release of revised guidelines.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 14)

Monitoring Committee

The Committee note that under the scheme there is a provision of Monitoring Committee at District Level to keep a check on release of funds, administrative sanction, proper and timely implementation of work, etc. It is the task of the District Authority to review MPLAD works implementation with the Implementing Agency every month and in any case, at least, once in every quarter. Further, the District Authority is to invite the MPs concerned to such review meetings and send report of such review meetings to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. In view of this, the Committee urge the Ministry to ensure that review meetings are convened regularly

by the Monitoring Committee for effective implementation of the MPLAD Scheme and attention be drawn on various lacunae which hinder the implementation/execution of the Scheme. Ensuring that the reports of such review meetings are received within the stipulated time would enable the Ministry to take immediate necessary steps based on the observations/recommendations contained in reports and help in addressing the issues/lacunae so brought forth.

Reply of the Government

The scheme has a very robust monitoring mechanism at Central, State/UT, District level with well-defined roles and responsibilities.

2. At District level, the District Authority shall review, every month and in any case at least once in every quarter, MPLADS works implementation with the Implementing Agencies. The District Authority shall invite the MPs concerned to such review meetings and send a report of such review meetings to Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Para 6.4 of MPLADS Guidelines). Ministry has been receiving reports of such review meetings of Monitoring Committees from some of the District Authorities. However, the suggestion of the Committee has been noted for further necessary action.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 15)

Third Party Physical Evaluation

The Committee observe that MOSPI has taken up the task of holistic revision of the extant MPLADS Guidelines which would be based upon the findings of the proposed third party physical evaluation of MPLADS works in 216 districts during financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22. The Committee are further informed that the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the third party physical evaluation of MPLADs is currently in process wherein an independent third party would evaluate MPLADs work through a transparent process. The Committee are happy to note that MOSPI is actively engaged in the up-gradation of MPLADs Scheme via amendments in its extant guidelines and till date twenty amendments have been made to improvise works under the scheme. In view of this, the Committee would like the Ministry to ensure that works

sanctioned under MPLADS do not get merely delivered rather stay operational for years to come. The Committee hope that their recommendations would be placed before the selected Third Party Evaluator. They would urge the Ministry to update them also on the status of the Third Party physical evaluation done for the works sanctioned under the scheme. The Committee would like to be apprised about action taken by MOSPI on the report of Third Party evaluation team at the appropriate time.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry, through an independent agency, conducted a Third Party Evaluation of the MPLADS works/assets created during the period from 01-04-2014 to 31-03-2019, in 216 districts across the country. The Evaluation was conducted by a private agency in the year 2021 and the agency submitted its final report on 31-8-2021.

The suggestions made in the Evaluation Report are being examined and will be incorporated in the revised Guidelines, if found feasible and aligned with the objectives of the MPLAD Scheme.

Observations/Recommendations (Para No 16)

Full Utilization of Funds for Third Party Evaluation

The Committee note that the Ministry sets aside ₹ 10 crore annually for the Third party evaluation of the developmental works/projects created under MPLAD Scheme. The amount of ₹ 10 crore is allocated to the Ministry under the head 'Professional Services' for selection of an independent agency for third party evaluation through Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) Process. The Committee observe that the Ministry has been irregular in conducting third party evaluation owing to which ₹ 10 crore (meant for such evaluation) gets surrendered. The Committee take serious note of this lapse and urge the Ministry to frame upon a mechanism which would ensure annual evaluation for a sample of projects every year. A dedicated unit must be set up in the Ministry which would priorities regular evaluation without any lapse. The Committee

would also like to be apprised of the results of the previous third party evaluations conducted by the Ministry and action taken thereof.

Reply of the Government

Reasons for surrender of Rs.10 crore provided in BE 2020-21 (reduced to Rs.2 crore in RE 2020-21) for Third Party Evaluation

Due to administrative reasons, there was delay in finalization of L-1 and award of the contract for evaluation of MPLADS works by a Third Party, hence, the entire amount could not be exhausted in the Financial Year 2020-21, resulting in surrender of saving under the head. However, the Evaluation of the Scheme was done in the year 2021 as mentioned below.

Third Party Evaluations of MPLADS

The Ministry has been getting the Evaluation of MPLAD Scheme done through third party periodically. In the year 2007-08, the Ministry engaged National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Consultancy Services(NABCONS) for conduct of third party monitoring of MPLADS works. The monitoring was done of 208 districts in four phases spread over four years- 2007-08 to 2010-11.

In the year 2012-13, the Ministry engaged the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) Ltd. for the Third Party Monitoring of the MPLADS works in 100 selected districts covering 50 Districts each in North Zone and West Zone.

In the year 2021, the Ministry engaged an agency, namely M/s Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP(DELOITTE) for carrying out the monitoring/evaluation of works done under MPLADS in selected 216 Nodal Districts during the period from 01.04.2014 to 31.03.2019.

Results of the previous Third Party Evaluations

Findings:

The NABCONS and AFC, both the monitoring agencies had, inter-alia, found that the MPLAD Scheme is a unique Scheme, having the characteristic features of decentralized development and has resulted in creation of good quality assets, which have had a positive impact on the local economy, social fabric and the physical environment. In its report, NABCONS had specifically mentioned that at the macro level, the achievement of the MPLAD Scheme appears to be incomparable with other Scheme. It is the only scheme at All India level, involvement of the local communities, groups and sections of people is experienced/ ensured for identification of works/facilities required as per the “felt needs” and wish list of the local people.

However, the third party physical monitoring of MPLADS work has revealed a few shortcomings/lacunae in the implementation of the scheme; some of which are sanction of ineligible works, encroachment of MPLADS assets, non-existence of some MPLADS assets, diversion of use of MPLADS assets, delay in financial sanction and completion of works and works awarded to ineligible trust/societies.

The Report of DELOITTE has revealed that out of the total assets assessed and verified, 95.9% of assets were found to be functional and 95.6% of the total sampled projects created under MPLADS are found to be immovable/durable. The Report further revealed that MPLADS is one of the few multi-sectoral schemes implemented by the Govt. of India. Works implemented under MPLADS are impacting achievement of Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) for the country either directly or in other ways that have an impact on some of the larger developmental goals. The Report confirms that MPLADS is fulfilling its objectives and recommended continuation of MPLADS with suitable changes in the Guidelines and Technology.

Action Taken:

In all cases of irregularities brought-out in the reports of NABCONS and AFC, the Ministry had requested the States/UTs Government and concerned District Authorities to initiate suitable action against the erring officials. In other cases, suitable rectification measures were suggested such as removal of encroachments,

eviction of unauthorized occupants, restoring the assets to its intended use and erection of plaques in all work sites.

Further, directions were issued to the District/State Government for following the State procedure for the execution of MPLADS works, taking commitment from the user agency for maintenance, furnishing of Work Completion Report immediately after completion of work, maintenance of relevant Registers/records, etc.

In view of the findings of the two agencies, adherence to the provisions of MPLADS Guidelines were reiterated in various meetings and State visits made by the officers of this Ministry. Also, the Guidelines have been suitably modified like fixing the limit of unspent balance for release of funds so as to ensure optimal utilization of these funds.

The report submitted by the DELOITTE has been circulated among all States/UTs and same is also under examination in this Ministry.

CHAPTER III

Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies

-NIL-

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 5)

Completion of Abandoned Projects/Works

The Committee observe that on several occasions certain projects/works which were duly proposed, sanctioned, approved and had commenced during the tenure of predecessor MP were left abandoned. In some instances, those project were found neither functional nor in a condition to be used, during the tenure of successor MP. The Committee observe that although the successor MP does recommend completion of such projects/works, the State Governments are reluctant to complete the carry over projects/works. The Committee view this as a serious loophole and urge the Ministry to take up the matter with the State Authorities/Nodal District Authorities to identify such projects (which are lagging due to change of elected representative as abandoning any project/work mid-way would be a sheer wastage of funds) and take steps to get them completed in time. The Committee recommend that the Ministry has a role inter-alia to evaluate MPLAD Scheme and hence need to seek information on such abandoned projects from each State and put in place a strong monitoring mechanism to ensure that the sanctioned projects are completed in time. The Committee also opine that the unused fund allotted to the predecessor MP should be utilized for the completion of such abandoned projects/works with minimal delay in documentation process. The Committee would like to have a State/UT/MP wise status report on such projects for the last three terms of Lok Sabha. "

Reply of the Government

Provisions in MPLADS Guidelines to take care of Abandoned Projects

Para 3.13 of the MPLADS Guidelines provides that "The sanction letter/order shall stipulate a time limit for completion of the work to the Implementation Agency. The time limit for completion of the works should generally not exceed one year. In exceptional cases, where the implementation time exceeds one year, specific reasons for the same shall be incorporated in the sanction letter/order. The sanction letter/order shall also include a clause for suitable action against the Implementation Agency in the event of their failure to complete the work within the stipulated time as per the State Government Procedure. A copy of the sanction letter/order shall be sent to the MP concerned."

2. Also, para 3.23 of the MPLADS Guidelines stipulates that “List of all completed and ongoing works with MPLADS funds should also be displayed at the District Authority Office and posted in the website for information of the general public. For public awareness, details of completed works may be displayed in prominent places like Tehsil/Niabat/Sub-Tehsil/Block/Gram Panchayat offices also.”

3. As an abiding principle, works once sanctioned by the District Authority are to be mandatorily completed. If the works are not completed within the stipulated time-line, Para 3.3.1 of the MPLADS Guidelines may be invoked which stipulates as follows:

“In case, there is still any abandoned/ suspended MPLAD work under the Scheme, it shall be completed by the State Government from their own funds. The State Government will also fix responsibility and take necessary disciplinary action against the erring officials. The District Authority may ensure that the funds must have been utilized as sanctioned earlier so that duplication of allocation of funds does not take place”.

4. It is up to the willingness of successor Member of Parliament to recommend amount from his MPLADS funds towards completion of an abandoned project/work. The amount from the MPLADS funds of the new Member shall be sanctioned by the District Authority towards the abandoned work only if the Member indicates his consent to do so formally on his letterhead.

5. The MPLADS Guidelines are so designed that on execution of the works diligently as per the laid down procedure, the unspent funds/savings from the works are refunded back to the District Authority from the implementing agency.

Evaluation of works done under MPLADS

6. The Ministry has been getting the works done under MPLAD Scheme, evaluated periodically through an agency independent of this Ministry. Last such evaluation was done in the year 2021 when this Ministry engaged an independent agency for carrying out the monitoring/evaluation of works done under MPLADS in selected 216 Nodal Districts during the period from 01.04.2014 to 31.03.2019. The final findings/report of the evaluation, has been sent to the District Authorities and State Nodal Department for further appropriate action.

Status of Abandoned Projects

7. State/UT/MP wise status report on such projects for the last three terms of Lok Sabha is being collected/compiled and same will be submitted in due course. “

Comment of the Committee

Please see Para 14 of Chapter-I

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 9)

Centage Charge by PSUs

The Committee note that the Ministry has authorized several PSUs like NBCC Ltd. to undertake various projects/works under MPLAD Scheme while at the State level the same is being accomplished by State Corporations. Both the PSUs & State Corporations provide supervisory, architectural and other institutional support for implementation of quality work under the MPLAD Scheme. The Committee, further, note that as per the extant MPLADS Guidelines, centage charged by the PSUs has not been allowed. This often leads to disputes at the district level with reference to the centage which has to be charged by the PSUs officially. The Committee view that since all these PSUs do not draw money from the Central Budget, the Ministry should make appropriate amendments in the guidelines including upper ceiling on centages that can be allowed to CPSUs and State PSUs both, for projects/works under MPLADS.

Reply of the Government

Para 4.17.1 of the MPLADS Guidelines stipulates as follows:-

Excluding Administrative Expenses as provided for in para 4.17, the Nodal Department, District Authority or Implementing Agency shall not levy any expenses like supervision charges, centage charges, salary of personnel, travelling expenses, etc. in the implementation and supervision of works including preparatory works under the MPLADS”.

The suggestion for allowing centage charges to CPSUs and State PSUs for projects/works under MPLADS has been examined and is not found to be feasible for inclusion in the MPLADS Guidelines.”

Comment of the Committee

Please see Para 17 of Chapter-I

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 17)

Time Bound Action

The Committee observe that the Para 3.13 of MPLAD guidelines have provision for action against defaulting implementing agencies. As per the guidelines, the sanction letter should necessarily mention the time limit for completion of the work which should generally not exceed one year. The Committee note that the sanction letter must include a clause for suitable action against the implementation agency in the event of their failure to complete the work as per government procedure. The Committee are glad to note that the MPLAD guidelines are envisioned to achieve the results but the Ministry has the onus to bring to action the provisions under the guidelines. They urge the Ministry to take concerted efforts with utmost dedication for timely completion of sanctioned development works. Hence, the Committee would like to be apprised of the cases where 'suitable' actions were taken against defaulting agencies on unsatisfactory response received from the District Authority.

Reply of the Government

Para-3.13 of the MPLADS Guidelines stipulates that "the sanction letter/order shall stipulate a time limit for completion of the work to the Implementation Agency. The time limit for completion of the works should generally not exceed one year. In exceptional cases, where the implementation time exceeds one year, specific reasons for the same shall be incorporated in the sanction letter/order. The sanction letter/order shall also include a clause for suitable action against the Implementation Agency in the event of their failure to complete the work within the stipulated time as per the State Government Procedure. A copy of the sanction letter/order shall be sent to the MP concerned."

2. Also, para-3.14 of the MPLADS Guidelines stipulates that "Decision making powers in regard to technical, financial and administrative sanctions to be accorded under the Scheme, vest in the district level functionaries. To facilitate quick implementation of projects under this Scheme, full powers should be delegated by the State/ UT Governments to the district functionaries. The District Authorities will have full

powers to get the works technically approved and financial estimates prepared by the competent district functionaries before according the final administrative sanction and approval. The District Authority should, before sanctioning the work, ensure that all clearances for such works have been taken from the competent authorities and the work conforms to the Guidelines”.

3. In a federal structure, it may not be feasible to conceive of any mechanism to have direct superintendence on the functioning of the District authorities, however, Ministry takes cognizance of such cases, which are brought to its notice wherein the implementation agency failed to complete the work within stipulated time as per government procedure. Such cases are taken up with the respective State/UT Governments whereby Ministry also impresses upon fixing of responsibility against erring Officers by the State/UT Government besides reiterating adherence to the provisions of MPLADS Guidelines.”

Comment of the Committee

Please see Para 23 of Chapter-I

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 18)

Creation of Subordinate unit/Office

The Committee observe that the concept of Monitoring Committees at district level is designed to keep a check on timely release of funds, completion of developmental work, etc., but there is no direct supervision of works by the MOSPI in each State/District. MPLADS, being a Central Scheme, comes under the purview of MOSPI for its role in release of funds, monitoring, account keeping and evaluation, hence, the Committee strongly feel that MOSPI should establish a dedicated monitoring unit so as to have a direct look at the progress of developmental works sanctioned under MPLADS. Once an online portal with real-time data is developed, monitoring the progress against each indicator would be easy for this dedicated unit and transparency and speed in the scheme implementation could be achieved. At present, the Ministry awaits and relies upon the Reports (quarterly) of the Monitoring Committees for further actions with respect to release of funds, sanction letters etc. The Committee are of the strong

opinion that having a unit would definitely identify any problems at State level and better coordinate with State Governments to streamline and implement the MPLADS projects in a time bound manner, as the MPLADS is implemented at the field level.

Reply of the Government

The MPLAD Scheme has a very robust monitoring mechanism at Central, State/UT, District level with well-defined roles and responsibilities:-

- a. At the central level: The Ministry holds meetings in the States and also at the Centre to review the implementation of the MPLAD Scheme (Para 6.2 of MPLADS Guidelines).
- b. At State / UT level: A committee is constituted under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary/Development Commissioner/Additional Chief Secretary to review MPLADS implementation progress with the District Authorities and MPs at least once in a year. The Nodal Department Secretary and other Administrative Department Secretaries should also participate in such meetings (Para 6.3 of MPLADS Guidelines).
- c. At District Level: The District Authority reviews, every month and in any case at least once in every quarter, MPLADS works implementation with the Implementing Agencies. The District Authority shall invite the MPs concerned to such review meetings and send a report of such review meetings to Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Para 6.4 of MPLADS Guidelines).

Comment of the Committee

Please see Para 26 of Chapter-I

CHAPTER V

Observations/ Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 11)

Need for the audit of Administrative Expenses

Under the MPLAD guidelines, there is a provision of 2% Administrative Expenses which gets deducted for the Facilitation Centre at the District Collector Office. The 2% Administrative Expenses, from every instalment released, in respect of Hon'ble Member is shared by the Nodal Authority, Implementing District Authority and State Nodal Department in the given ratio. The Committee observed that the Administrative Expenses once distributed by the Nodal District would be considered as spent & separate Utilization Certificate would not be necessary for those expenses. Taking view of the fact that the cost of Facilitation Centre is borne out of 2% administrative expenses deducted from the MPLADS Fund allocated to the MPs, the Committee are of the firm view that the Ministry should strictly monitor and keep a check on the appropriate utilization of these expenses. The Ministry should also ensure that strict action should be taken against those found guilty of any misappropriation in this regard. The Committee strongly feel that this 2% Administrative Expenses is essentially public money and there should be a mandatory audit to ascertain its proper usage. The Committee would urge the Ministry to frame guidelines in this regard in consultation with District Authorities so that they may get notified from the next financial year onwards. The Committee may be apprised of the steps taken in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The suggestion has been noted and same is being examined in consultation with the stakeholders to see if it is feasible for inclusion in the MPLADS Guidelines.

Comment of the Committee

Please see Para 20 of Chapter-I

NEW DELHI

16 March, 2023

25 Phalguna, 1944 (Saka)

GIRISH BHALCHANDRA BAPAT

CHAIRPERSON

COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTEENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATES (2022-2023)**

The Committee sat on Thursday, the 16th March, 2023 from 1500 hrs. to 1530 hrs. in Room No. '52-B', First Floor, Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

**Shri Nihal Chand Chauhan - Convener
Members**

2. Kunwar Danish Ali
3. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
4. Shri P.P. Chaudhary
5. Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal
6. Shri Dharmendra Kumar Kashyap
7. Shri Mohanbhai Kalyanji Kundariya
8. Dr. K.C. Patel
9. Shri Vinayak Bhaurao Raut
10. Shri Ashok Kumar Rawat
11. Shri Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy
12. Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy
13. Shri Dilip Saikia
14. Shri Francisco Cosme Sardinha
15. Shri Jugal Kishore Sharma
16. Shri Prathap Simha
17. Smt. Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo
18. Shri Shyam Singh Yadav

SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Anita Bhatt Panda - Additional Secretary
2. Shri Muraleedharan. P - Director
3. Shri R.C. Sharma - Additional Director

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee and briefed them about the agenda of the sitting viz. Consideration and adoption of three draft Report(s).

3. The Committee then took up for consideration and adoption of the following draft Reports:

(i) Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their 14th Report (17th Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Review of Funds Allocation and Utilization under MPLAD Fund Scheme;

(ii) Xxx xxx

(iii) Xxx xxx

4. The Committee after due deliberations adopted the draft Action Taken Reports. The Committee, then, authorised the Chairperson to finalize the draft Reports and present the same to Lok Sabha.

5. xxx xxx

The Committee, then, adjourned.

APPENDIX II

ANALYSIS OF Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 14th Report of the Committee on Estimates (Seventeenth Lok Sabha)

(i)	Total number of recommendations/observations	18
(ii)	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government: (Sl. NO. 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,10,12,13,14,15,&16)	13
	Percentage of total recommendations	72.22%
(iii)	Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's reply: (Sl. No. Nil)	
	Percentage of total recommendations	0%
(iv)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee: (Sl. NO. 5,9,17&18)	04
	Percentage of total recommendations	22.22%
(v)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final reply of Government is still awaited: (Sl. No. 11)	01
	Percentage of total recommendations	5.56