



## Abolition of Posts in MES

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### Why in News

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Recently, the **Defence Minister of India** has approved a proposal for the abolition of a number of posts in the **Military Engineering Service (MES)**.

- This move is in lines with the recommendations of the **Lt. Gen. D.B. Shekatkar (Retd.) Committee**.
- MES is the **infrastructure development agency** for the armed forces and defence establishments.

### Key Points

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- **Optimum Utilisation of Resources:** This step of abolition of around 9000 posts of basic and industrial staff will **lead to significant savings**.  
Almost **70% of the budget** is used for **payment of salaries and allowances** and leaves very little money for actual infrastructural development.
- **Restructuring of Workforce:** The committee also recommended to restructure the civilian workforce in a manner that the work of the MES could be **partly done** by **departmentally employed staff** and **other works could be outsourced**.
- **Efficient & Lean Workforce:** Its goal is to make the MES an effective organisation with a leaner workforce, well **equipped to handle complex issues** in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- **Projected Savings:** The recommendations can **save up to ₹25,000 crore** in defence expenditure, if implemented over the next five years.  
According to **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, **India was the among the top three top military spenders** in the world in **2019** after the **US and China**.

### Shekatkar Committee

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- It was a **11-member committee**, appointed by the **erstwhile Defence Minister in mid-2016**.
- It was headed by **Lt. Gen. D.B. Shekatkar (Retd)**.
- It had the **mandate** to suggest measures to **enhance combat capability** and **rebalance defence expenditure of the armed forces**.
- **It submitted its report in December 2016**.
- **Recommendations:**
  - It made about **99 recommendations** from optimising defence budget to the need for a Chief of the Defence Staff.
    - Of these, the first batch of **65 recommendations** pertaining to the Army were **approved in August 2017**.
  - It recommended that **India's defence budget should be in the range of 2.5-3% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product)**, in view of current and future threats.
  - It had also suggested the **establishment of a Joint Services War College** for training of middle-level officers, with three separate **war colleges at Mhow** (Madhya Pradesh), **Secunderabad** (Telangana) **and Goa**, focusing on training younger officers.
  - The committee had also mooted for the **Military Intelligence School at Pune** to be **converted to a tri-service intelligence training establishment**.
  - The recommendations on the creation of the **Chief of Defence Staff** post and a **Department of Military Affairs** have been already implemented.
  - **Restructuring of Army headquarters**
    - The Army headquarters had **instituted 4 studies** with an overall aim to **enhance the operational and functional efficiency** of the force, optimize budget expenditure, facilitate modernization and address aspirations.
    - These **studies** are Re-organisation and right-sizing of the Indian Army, Re-organisation of the Army Headquarters, Cadre review of officers and Review of terms of engagement of rank and file.
  - **Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) Model**
    - In the model, the **assets** owned by the government are **operated by the private industries**.
    - The **main advantage** of the model is that it is **efficient** and will **boost competitiveness** among the private entities.
  - **Closure of Military Farms and Army Postal Establishments** in peace locations.
  - **Other recommendations which have been implemented** include, optimisation of signals establishments, restructuring of repair units, redeployment of ordnance echelons, better utilisation of supply and transportation units and animal transport entities, etc.