



Mains Marathon

Day 11: "The Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) is effective tool for targeted intervention and helps to generate employment opportunities and infrastructure". In this context discuss the challenges faced by MPLADS in its implementation? (250 Words)

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Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Start your answer by giving a brief over the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS).
- Discuss the Significance of MPLADS
- Discuss the Challenges of MPLADS
- Conclude your answer by giving a Way forward

Answer

MPLAD is a **Central Sector Scheme** which was **announced in December 1993**. Initially, it came under the control of the Ministry of Rural Development. Later, in October 1994, it was transferred to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

Functioning

- **Each year, MPs receive Rs. 5 crore in two instalments of Rs. 2.5 crore each.** Funds under MPLADS are non-lapsable.
- Lok Sabha MPs have to recommend the district authorities projects in their Lok Sabha constituencies, while Rajya Sabha MPs have to spend it in the state that has elected them to the House.
- Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.
- The **projects include assets building such as drinking water facilities, primary education, public health sanitation and roads.**
- Since June 2016, the MPLAD funds can also be used for implementation of the schemes such as **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan),** conservation of water through rain water harvesting and **Sansad Aadarsh Gram Yojana,** etc.

Significance of MPLADS Scheme

Focus on durable assets: MPLAD Scheme, the guidelines focus on the creation of durable community assets like roads, school buildings etc. Recommendations for non-durable assets can be made only under

limited circumstances.

The entire population across the country stands to benefit through the creation of durable assets of locally felt needs, namely drinking water, education, public health, sanitation and roads etc, under MPLAD Scheme”.

Maximum projects in rural areas: Further, 82% of the projects have been in rural areas and the remaining in urban/semi-urban areas.

Employment Opportunities: The creation of infrastructure under the scheme opens up opportunities for unemployed persons to get employed and it gives a boost to the local economy.

Issues Related to MPLAD Scheme

- **Breach of Federalism:**
 - Union Government can incur expenditure only with respect to matters over which it has subject domain as per **seventh schedule**.
 - MPLADS encroaches upon the domain of local self-governing institutions and thereby **violates Part IX and IX-A of the Constitution**.
- **Conflict with Doctrine of Separation of Powers:**
 - The Scheme disturbs the scheme of separation of powers under the Constitution, **as MPs are getting involved in executive functions**.
- **Implementation Lapses:**
 - MPLAD scheme gives scope for MPs to utilise the funds as a source of patronage that they can dispense at will.
 - The **CAG** has flagged **instances of financial mismanagement** and artificial inflation of amounts spent.
 - Also, the scheme is alleged to be marred by the **nexus of MP and private firms**.
 - Due to this sometimes spending of MPLADS funds is seen for private works, recommending funds to ineligible agencies, diverting funds to private trusts, etc.
- **No Statutory Backing:**
 - The MPLAD Scheme is **not governed by any statutory law** and is subject to the whims and fancies of the government of the day.
- **Some Commission Recommendations:**
 - In 2002, the **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution** recommended immediate discontinuation of the MPLAD scheme on the ground that it was inconsistent with the spirit of federalism and distribution of powers between the centre and the state.
 - Similar thing has also been taken by the **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission's report 2007**.

Constitutionality of the Scheme

Based on above arguments the MPLADS was challenged in the Supreme Court (SC) in 2010. A five-judge bench of the SC held that:

- **Indian Constitution does not recognise strict separation of powers.**
 - Even though MPs have been given a seemingly executive function, their role is limited to 'recommending' works and actual implementation is done by the local authorities.
 - Therefore, the scheme does not violate separation of powers.

Way Forward

While the question of constitutionality of the MPLAD scheme may have been put to rest by the Supreme Court ruling, other issues related to implementation of the scheme still remain. These can be rectified by:

- **Better transparency and monitoring** of funds spent and sanctioned works.
- The scheme can be made more **inclusive by including citizens** for which project to be executed

from MPLAD funds.

- Also, lapsable funds can put pressure on MPs for optimum utilisation and prevent build up of unutilised funds

Given the decentralized nature of the MPLAD scheme, with adequate monitoring and sufficient political will, it can work as an indispensable tool of development at the grassroots.

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/mains-marathon-daily-answer-writing-practice/papers/2022/member-parliament-local-area-development-scheme-effective-tool-targeted-intervention-helps-generate-employment-opportunities-infrastructure-context-discuss-challenges-faced-implementation-paper-2-social-justice/print>