

Standing Committee Report Summary

Watershed Development Component of PMKSY

- The Standing Committee on Rural Development (Chair: Dr. P. Venugopal) submitted its report on ‘Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana erstwhile IWMP’ on July 19, 2017. A watershed is an area that separates water flowing into rivers or basins. Management of a watershed involves the rational utilisation of land and water resources, through preventing soil run-off, increasing the productivity of crops, rain water harvesting and recharging of ground water tables.
- The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) was launched in 2015, and is being jointly implemented by three ministries. The Ministry of Rural Development undertakes water conservation activities, the Ministry of Water Resources undertakes measures for creation of irrigation sources, and the Ministry of Agriculture promotes efficient water utilisation. The salient observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
 - **Expeditious efforts for completion of projects:** 53% of the net sown area in the country, accounting for 74 million hectares is rain fed, and the watershed development component of PMKSY aims to enhance productivity in these areas through suitable irrigation measures. The Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), now part of PMKSY, has been under implementation since 2009. The Committee noted that between 2009 to 2015, out of the 8,214 projects covering 39 million hectares being carried out, not even a single project has reached closure date as of April 2017. As per the watershed development project guidelines, projects should be completed in four to seven years. It recommended that serious efforts should be made to expedite the completion of ongoing projects under the watershed component.
 - **Budgetary allocation:** The Committee recommended that in the context of non-completion of projects due to shortfall of funds, the budgetary allocations should be commensurate to the requirements of the projects sanctioned.
 - **Coordination with states for better implementation:** Under IWMP, the fund sharing pattern between centre and states was 90:10. This has changed to 60:40 under the watershed development component of PMKSY. The Committee noted that this change has made the role of states in effective fund utilisation even more significant. It added that the delay in completion of projects could be avoided through better coordination with state government agencies and stakeholders.
 - It recommended that all state level nodal agencies (primary coordinating and supervisory bodies for ground level activities), and stakeholders should work together for better implementation and completion of projects within the stipulated time frame.
 - **Detailed Project Reports (DPRs):** The Committee noted that DPRs for 1,774 projects had not been prepared. It also noted lack of quality in preparation of DPRs, such as not taking into account challenges of a geographical location, and ways to overcome them. It stated that this was because agencies responsible for the preparation of DPRs lacked the required skill sets for such projects. It recommended that credible, government agencies, with substantial expertise should be involved in the preparation of DPRs. Local people should also be involved in the process, and DPRs should be place in the public domain to maintain transparency and accountability.
 - **Third party evaluation:** Under a new initiative, three agencies have been appointed for monitoring and evaluation of projects in the north, west and north-east regions. The Committee noted that such an evaluation mechanism will provide much better insights into the functional and ground level aspects of ongoing projects. It recommended that the process of selection of these agencies for the south and east regions should be expedited since watershed development projects were being implemented across the country.

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