

Delhi's Fiscal Marksmanship

The government spends a great deal of time, money and effort in preparing the annual budget. Each department is asked to craft its budget which goes through several layers of the bureaucracy before it is finally approved. Midway through the year, the department is asked to revise its estimates based on the spending in the first part of the year. Thus it has ample opportunity to correct the course. Despite all this, gross under and over spending is more the rule than the exception. The mismatch is not just for a year but over five year plan period. This reflects a failing in budget planning and implementation. We term this as a failure in fiscal marksmanship by the government.

Using the data of the last five year plan—Ninth Five Year Plan 1997-2002—we present the top ten examples of Delhi's poor fiscal marksmanship.

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1. 'Conversion of Dry Latrines into Water Borne for Liberation of Scavengers' scheme under Department of Social Welfare had an outlay of Rs 1,900 lac and the actual expenditure was only Rs 71,000.
2. The Department of Health and Family Welfare's 'Jan Arogya Bima Policy for Poor Children' had actual expenditure of only Rs 5,000. The approved outlay was Rs 1,150 lac.
3. The Directorate of Health Services had an approved outlay of Rs 150 lac for the 'Establishment Cell for Implementation and Monitoring of Health Programmes/Special Programmes of Delhi Government' whereas the amount spent was only Rs 50,000.
4. Rs 8,000 lac was set aside as approved outlay for the 'Opening of New Middle Schools' scheme by the Education Department. Only Rs 1,086 lac were spent in the five years.
5. The Transport Department's scheme of 'Development of Alternative Mode of Transport including Electric Trolley Buses' had an NFYP approved Outlay of Rs 2,500 lac with no figure for the NFYP expenditure given. The approved outlay for the Tenth Five Year Plan is Rs 28,200 lac.
6. The MCD's 'Strengthening of the Inspectorate Staff' scheme had an outlay of Rs 100 lac and the corresponding expenditure was Rs 5,476 lac .
7. The Education Department's outlay of Rs 14,100 lac for the 'Provision of Additional Schooling Facilities in the Age Group 14-17 Years' had a corresponding expenditure of only Rs 1,737 lac.
8. The total approved outlay of the Tourism Department was Rs 3,200 lac and the expenditure only 789 lac. The outlay for the Tenth Five Year Plan is Rs 6,000 lac.
9. The Department of Archaeology's scheme of 'Setting up of Delhi City Museum' had an approved outlay of Rs 1,325 lac and the actual expenditure was only Rs 46 lac.
10. The MCD's scheme of 'Improvement of Science Teaching' had an approved outlay of Rs 150 lac and the actual expenditure incurred was Rs 6,849 lac.