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There is no case for scrapping MPLADS funds

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While some MPs may not have been able to use their MPLADS funds to the fullest capacity, that cannot be treated as the dominant trend

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SANJAY KUMAR, ARINDAM KABIR, HARSHVARDHAN SINGH RATHORE



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The case at hand

Last month, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) alleged that three Congress MPs from Rajasthan had misused the MPLADS funds. The party claimed that Brijendra Singh Ola of Jhunjhunu had allocated ₹25 lakh, Rahul Kaswan of Churu had allocated ₹50 lakh, and Sanjana Jatav of Bharatpur had allocated ₹45 lakh for developmental work in the Kaithal district of Haryana, instead of utilising the funds for developmental work within their constituencies in Rajasthan. This, the BJP argued, ran contrary to the core objective of MPLADS. It raised concerns about

the appropriateness of allocating public funds across State boundaries. The party further alleged that the allocations were politically motivated, as Kaithal is the Assembly constituency of Aditya Surjewala, son of Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Randeep Singh Surjewala.

The Congress rejected this charge of impropriety. Mr. Ola said that the allocations were made within the framework of existing MPLADS guidelines (2023), which state that elected MPs can recommend eligible works up to a limit of ₹50 lakh in a financial year outside their constituency/State, except in cases of natural calamities. (In the event of a “calamity of severe nature” in any part of the country, an MP can recommend works up to a maximum of ₹1 crore.) He also accused BJP MPs of having previously used MPLAD funds for questionable purposes.

The debate over the rationale of this scheme is not new. While critics argue that MPLADS funds are poorly utilised and should be discontinued, supporters of the scheme argue that funds should continue to be given as MPs need them for carrying out developmental work.

Use of funds

The MPLAD Scheme enables each MP to recommend developmental projects worth ₹5 crore annually, usually within their own constituency. According to data from the live MPLADS dashboard (mplads.mospi.gov.in), which is updated as projects progress, during the ongoing 18th Lok Sabha, ₹5,486 crore has been allocated for MPLADS funds. Of this, ₹1,453.69 crore has been spent so far. Many developmental works are still under way.

During the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-2024), ₹4,837.87 crore was allocated for MPLADS funds, of which ₹3,639.53 crore was reported as spent. Of the total 96,211 works recommended to be carried out, 41,143 were completed. While nearly half the works were not completed, 75.23% of the allocated budget was spent. The share of the total allocated budget that remained unspent could be attributed to inactivity during at least two years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The data suggest that the MPLADS funds were used well in previous years as well. During the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-2019), only 8.7% funds remained unused. In the 15th Lok Sabha (2009-2014), this share was much lower (3.47%). And in the 14th Lok Sabha (2004-2009), only 0.99% remained unused.

While it is true that some MPs may not have been able to use their MPLADS funds to the fullest capacity for developmental work, that cannot be treated as the dominant trend. In fact, there are notable examples of MPs who have fully utilised their MPLADS allocations and it is worth highlighting them.

According to a report in October 2025, Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal (Rajya Sabha, Punjab) emerged as the top spender among Punjab's Rajya Sabha MPs, having utilised ₹9.34 crore of his allocation of ₹14.72 crore (over 63%). Mr. Seechewal had primarily utilised his funds to address water scarcity in villages.

Iqra Choudhary, the Samajwadi Party MP for Kairana, has been appreciated by many for maintaining a fully updated MPLADS profile with geotagged images. This exemplifies transparency and enables a citizen to easily verify what work was done and where.

In the 17th Lok Sabha, Tejasvi Surya (Lok Sabha MP from the BJP representing Bengaluru South) spent ₹19.36 crore, according to an analysis by Bangalore Political Action Committee. By also asking the highest number of questions in the Lok Sabha, he emerged as a top performer among Bengaluru city MPs.

Abhishek Banerjee, the Trinamool Congress MP from Diamond Harbour, was cited in a report for having the highest number of project completions among West Bengal MPs. He completed 173 works and spent ₹6.13 crore.

No case for discontinuation

There is therefore no case for discontinuing the MPLADS Scheme or for rethinking or reducing the amounts. A better approach for improvement would be to organise short workshops with consultants, where MPs are guided on how to effectively utilise their MPLADS funds for development purposes.

After all, MPs know the importance of utilising MPLADS funds. Expenditure on developmental projects within their constituencies addresses local needs and gives them political benefits. And it is when people truly benefit that MPs have a greater chance of getting re-elected.

Sanjay Kumar, professor and election analyst; Arindam Kabir, researcher with Lokniti-CSDS; Harshvardhan Singh Rathore, student of Jindal School of International Affairs who is interning with Lokniti-CSDS

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