

Chapter 3

Infrastructure, organisation and management of Direct Benefit Transfer

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3.1 Non-implementation of DBT on all schemes of all departments

The State DBT cell shall primarily work towards coordinating the implementation of DBT in various schemes. The Cell shall act as a nodal point for all the activities and matters related to DBT operations in the State. As DBT operates in an environment that involves multiple stakeholders, the Cell shall be responsible for liaising with all such stakeholders for the seamless transitioning of schemes to DBT. The State Level Cell, as a part of the decentralized DBT architecture, will contribute towards achieving effective delivery of government benefits in the country by:

- Coordinating with Centre/Ministries and disseminating the directives to the respective departments in States.
- Developing scheme/department-specific ICT applications to capture data pertaining to DBT more effectively.
- Closely monitoring and evaluating the progress of various departments on DBT related indicators vis-a-vis expected outcomes.
- Incorporating best practices and international experiences to enhance the effectiveness of benefits delivery.
- Partnering with multi-lateral agencies and consulting firms to piggyback on their technological and industry knowledge.

Further, GoI issued directions in 2017-18 regarding identification and on-boarding of State Sector/UT Schemes on State DBT Portal in lines of Central Sector (CS)/Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) in a time-bound manner.

The DBT Cell was constituted on 13 June 2016 in Haryana State and it coordinates with DBT implementing departments for the implementation of DBT in various Centrally and State sponsored schemes. As per process of identification of new scheme, the department being implementing agency identifies the new DBT scheme which is uploaded by the DBT cell on State DBT portal on the request of concerned department.

During scrutiny of records of DBT cell, audit noticed that the data pertaining to 25 Departments having 135 schemes were uploaded by the implementing departments. However, audit observed that out of 53 departments existing in Haryana State, the identification of DBT schemes in remaining departments was still pending (July 2021).

During exit conference, DBT Cell stated that that continuous following up with the departments is being done for identification of schemes.

3.2 Non-conducting of quarterly meeting of Advisory Board

As per Haryana Government Notification dated 16 September 2016, for ensuring a smooth roll-out of direct cash transfers in an orderly and timely manner an Advisory Board of DBT cell in accordance with the guidelines of GoI was constituted. The terms of reference of Board were as under:

- To hold review meetings on quarterly basis, to ensure that the timeline for transition of all schemes to DBT mode is adhered to;
- Introduction of novel ideas which can help in delivering benefits in a more effective way;
- Review of rate of Aadhaar seeding in Bank accounts in respect of each scheme of each Department;
- Review of digitization of data;
- Streamlining of data base and ultimately its connectivity with DBT portal; and
- The receipt of saving accruing on account of DBT initiative back to State.

A protocol document for State DBT was issued (June 2017) to enable adoption and understanding of the DBT process within each Department so as to ensure that DBT framework was adopted in implementation of schemes.

Audit noticed during scrutiny of record that first meeting of advisory board was held on 30 June 2017 and no further meeting was conducted. The Advisory Board had significant role in introducing novel way of delivering benefits in more efficient way, providing long term, wider and strategic inputs to the executive body of the DBT Cell. However, only one meeting of the Board was conducted since its formation. This indicated that the Board was not functioning as envisaged.

The department replied (July 2021) that due to Covid Pandemic the meetings could not be held in time. The reply of the department is not accepted as Covid Pandemic started during March 2020 only but no quarterly meetings were conducted since June 2017.

3.3 Non-sharing of data of DBT schemes at State DBT Portal

(A) DBT is a major reform initiative of the GoI to ensure better and timely delivery of benefits from Government to the people. DBT is a significant governance reform to ensure greater transparency and accountability in public service delivery through effective use of technology.

During scrutiny of records of the DBT cell for the period April 2017 to July 2020, it was claimed that ₹ 1,182.18 crore has been saved in the seven¹ out of 25 departments by implementing the DBT during the financial year 2014-15 to 2018-19. However, departments of Higher Education, Technical Education, Social Justice & Empowerment and Secondary Education had not worked out the savings during the years 2016-17 to 2018-19. Similarly, savings for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18 have not been worked out by Rural Development department. It was also seen that 18 out of 25 departments had not worked out the savings data from 2014-15 onwards. Further, scheme wise savings are not reflected on the DBT Portal and DBT cell has no methodology to verify authenticity of the savings information uploaded by the respective departments.

It is pertinent to mention here that department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare distributed/disbursed ₹ 382.78 crore during the years 2017-18 to 2019-20 in 11 schemes wherein these were on-boarded on DBT portal. Out of ₹ 382.78 crore, only ₹ 1.21 crore in one scheme (2019-20) was disbursed through DBT. Remaining ₹ 381.57 crore was disbursed under 10 schemes during the years 2017-18 to 2019-20 without implementing them as DBT, which was in contravention of the above said guidelines issued by the GoI.

While accepting the audit observations, DBT Cell replied (July 2021) that for calculation and reporting of saving/benefits on monthly basis instructions have been issued to the departments. The departments have adopted different methods for calculating savings. DBT Cell also stated that Agriculture department uploaded/enrolled eleven schemes on the State DBT portal but did not provide any information and also did not upload the data on the state DBT Portal in spite of lot of communication.

(B) As per Haryana Government notification No. TA-HR (DMC)/2020/1768 dated 6 February 2020 introduced a new scheme named “Mukhya Mantri Parivar Samridhi Yajna (MMPSY)”. Finance Department, Government of Haryana was the Nodal Authority for the implementation of this scheme in the State. Audit observed that the scheme in question was not on boarded till January 2021. However, DBT Cell did not pursue the matter with DBT mission, GoI for framing of guidelines in this regard. It indicates that a robust framework for seeking and on boarding new schemes on DBT Portal was not put in place. DBT Cell failed to coordinate with all Departments in compiling a list of schemes and programs, including conduct of secondary research to ensure comprehensive listing.

While accepting the fact DBT cell stated (July 2021) that information was sought from Department of Economic & Statistical Analysis, Haryana regarding

¹ Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Higher Education, Technical Education, Social Justice and Empowerment, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Rural Development.

schemes, at that time, the scheme in question, was not in existence. Now the scheme has been on-boarded on the State DBT portal and the data for Financial Year 2020-21 uploaded.

3.4 Non-incorporating of best practices

As per objective of State DBT Cell guidelines issued by DBT Mission, Cabinet Secretariat, DBT cell will contribute towards achieving effective delivery of Government benefits in the country by:

- Developing scheme/department-specific ICT applications to capture data pertaining to DBT more effectively;
- Incorporating best practices and international experience to enhance the effectiveness of benefits delivery; and
- Partnering with multi-lateral agencies and consulting firms to piggyback on their technological and industry knowledge.

It was seen in Audit that the officers of DBT cell attended only one workshop (March 2017) at the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) at Chandigarh during the period of audit i.e. from 2017-18 to July 2020. It was also noticed that no centralized specific ICT application was adopted by DBT cell. The DBT cell failed to coordinate with all Departments in compiling a list of all schemes and programs and different departments adopted different methods of implementation of DBT to deliver the benefit to ultimate beneficiaries. It was further noticed that no partnership with multi-lateral agencies and consulting firms to make use of their technological and industry knowledge have been made by DBT Cell.

During exit conference, it was stated that Haryana has been ranked first in India in implementation of DBT during 2019-20.

3.5 Non-compliance of the Instruction regarding transfer of funds

As per the DBT Mission Cabinet Secretariat Guidelines for State all DBT transactions are to be routed through NPCI. While Aadhaar linked DBT transactions will be routed through Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS), non-Aadhaar transactions will be routed through National Automated Clearing House (NACH). NPCI is an umbrella organisation for all retail payments system in India. It was set up with the guidance and support of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Banks' Association (IBA). NPCI offers a range of services like National Financial Switch (NFS), Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS), Cheque Clearing, Immediate Payments Service (IMPS), National Automated Clearing House (NACH), Electronic Benefit Transfer, RuPay cards, etc.

During scrutiny of record of DBT Cell, it was noticed that instructions in respect of transfer of funds was issued to all the Administrative Secretaries and departments of Government of Haryana mentioning, the funds to be routed through NPCI and in Aadhaar linked bank accounts. If in any case, funds are to be transferred through other's account instead of directly to beneficiary (like in the case of institutions), the permission for the same may be taken by the concerned Department from the concerned Ministry/GoI or from the Finance Department, Government of Haryana as the case may be and the same may be ensured by the Treasury Officer that necessary permission in such cases has been obtained by the Departments. Further, if the funds are not credited to beneficiaries after three attempts, then the undisbursed funds may be immediately deposited in the receipt head of concerned Department. To rule out the possibility of wrong payment and deviation from the Aadhaar Act, the expenditure under the schemes drawn from the treasury and disbursed through NPCI must tally and should be reflected on Haryana State DBT portal on monthly basis.

Audit observed that funds were not routed through NPCI and in Aadhaar linked bank accounts in all the schemes in Haryana State and no monitoring process was being adopted by State DBT Cell for authentication of fund flow towards the beneficiaries in the respective departments. This was in contravention to the above mentioned instructions of the Government.

During exit conference, it was stated by the DBT Cell that the departments upload the expenditure on the State DBT portal in the form of Electronic mode in a single column which consists of APB, NEFT, RTGS and AEPS. There is no provision on the State DBT portal for bifurcation of funds transferred through NPCI as the formats of the State DBT Portal has been devised by DBT Mission, GoI. The officials of State Government suggested that the Aadhaar based payments routed through NPCI can be obtained through Treasury based IT applications.

3.6 Conclusion

DBT was not implemented across all departments and schemes. After establishment of DBT cell only one meeting (on 30 June 2017) of advisory board was held and no further meeting was conducted. DBT Cell failed to coordinate with all Departments in compiling a list of schemes and programs, including conduct of secondary research to ensure comprehensive listing. DBT cell could not get the holistic picture of saving, in the absence of specific guidelines.

3.7 Recommendations

- The State Government may evolve proper mechanism, for identification and on boarding of all DBT applicable schemes on DBT portal.

- DBT Cell may ensure that meeting of advisory board is conducted periodically as envisaged in the guidelines.
- ICT system should be upgraded and linked with PFMS so that all the relevant information can be extracted through this system. At present, only a few datasets are available with respect to the legacy data.