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KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, RESEARCH AND REFERENCE BRANCH

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The not-so-ideal case of idle local area funds of legislators

AKRAM MOHAMMED
BENGALURU, DHNS.

STUCK IN RED-TAPISM

The saga of unspent funds seems never ending, as around Rs 672.55 crore of the Karnataka Legislators Local Area Development Scheme (KLLADS) was left unused in personal deposit (PD) accounts of deputy commissioners at the end of 2019-20 fiscal, shows government data.

The trend continues in the 2020-21 fiscal, after which the government has issued directions to use the funds, by clearing action plans submitted by legislators. According to MLAs, money for several works completed under KLLADS is yet to be released, due to which funds remain unused in PD accounts.

KLLADS has an annual budget of Rs 2 crore for each constituency, to take up infrastructure projects. The funds are released to PD accounts of DCs, based on the action plan submitted by the legislators.

The third and fourth instalments of KLLADS were not

Funds released

2018-19	462.99 cr
2019-20	296.09 cr.
2020-21	599.28 cr

Unspent

2017-18	939.74 cr
2018-19	948.97 cr
2019-20	672.55 cr

released in 2019-20 as earlier funds remained unspent. At the end of 2018-19, Rs 948.97 crore was not spent and the figure for 2017-18 was Rs 939.74 crore.

JD(S) legislator Bandeppa Kashempur said release of KLLADS funds was irregular.

"They released Rs 2 crore in 2018-19, Rs 67 lakh in 2019-20 and around Rs 1.5 crore this year," he said.

There are also technical issues which delay the release of funds, even for projects that are already complete.

"Borewells were dug in Bidar South constituency at a cost of Rs 65 lakh for drink-

ing water purposes due to drought last summer. Only Rs 20 lakh was released, while the remaining amount is yet to be given," he said.

Former MLA and chairman of Karnataka State Agricultural Produce and Processing Corporation U B Banakar said that the delay in release of funds was the prime reason why it remained unspent in DC accounts.

"This has remained a problem for long," he said.

Delay in completion of third-party inspection of various projects taken up under the scheme is also one of the causes, sources said.

"Moreover, new rules are being introduced for spending KLLADS funds. For instance, a recent circular prohibits legislators from granting KLLADS funds for community halls, if a community hall is already sanctioned to a village or town. As a result, funds allotted for the hall under the action scheme of the MLAs is not released, leaving it unspent," sources said.