

Government of Telangana's Budget 2023-24 Analysis

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Preface

Formed in 2014, the Telangana State has made significant progress striking a perfect balance between economic development and social welfare. The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices has grown by 165% from ₹ 5 lakh crore in 2014-15 to ₹ 13.27 lakh crore in 2022-23 contributing to 4.9% of India's nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The State's high focus on infrastructural facilities including electricity and industrial policies like TS-iPASS (Telangana State Industrial Project Approval and Self-Certification System), and T-hub have contributed to the huge foreign and domestic investments in the state. Along with the developmental schemes like the Mission Kakatiya, and Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation project, welfare schemes like Rythu Bandhu, Dalit Bandhu, Aasara pension, etc., have struck the perfect balance between development and welfare.

Objective:

This paper analyses the socio-economic, political and all the other factors of the State on account of the announcement of the annual financial statement, also called the budget 2023-24 of the Telangana State. It aims to compare & contrast between previous budget estimates and revised estimates with the current budget estimates. It brings in front the focus of the government, the economic condition of the state, the benefit it brings to every resident of the state and finally, recommendations to lead the state towards filling the gaps in the current budget for a holistic development.

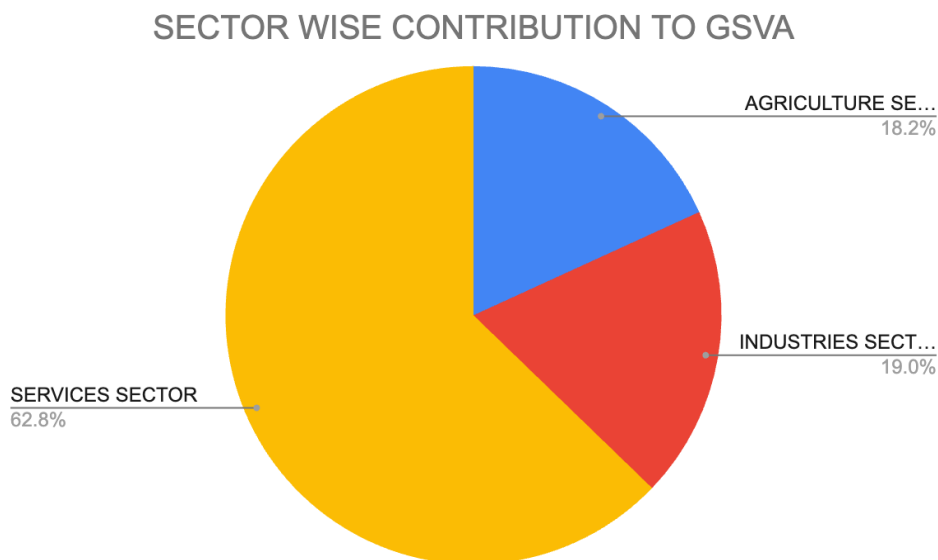
Introduction:

On 6th February, 2023, **Shri Thanneru Harish Rao, Minister of Finance, Government of Telangana**, has put in front of the Telangana state assembly, the most awaited document, the budget 2023-24. The size of the budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 was **₹ 2,90,396 crore**.

In the overview of the budget, it can be seen that the total tax receipts accounted for ₹ 1.5 lakh crore, which is a significant **17% increase** compared to the previous year's tax receipts, and constitutes more than 50% of the total revenue receipts. There was a **gradual increase in all sources of tax** receipts with a 2X increase of the land revenue share. The **fiscal deficit has decreased** by ₹ 4,400 crore compared to the previous budget and stood at ₹ 38,234.94 crore and is **2.7% of GSDP** (Gross State Domestic Product which is ₹ 14 lakh crore), which is well within the FRBM (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management) limits. The budget has been projected with a **revenue surplus of ₹ 4,881.74 crore**.

Although more than **60% of the rural population** is occupied in agriculture and allied activities, the economy of Telangana is driven by the **service sector that contributes to 62.8%** of the GSVA (Gross State Value Added), all thanks to Cyberabad. More than 13% of the state's tax revenue is contributed by state excise i.e., majorly from liquor.

Chart 1: Sector wise contribution to GSVA (Gross State Value Added)



Telangana, as always, since its inception, has the **services sector** contributing the highest in its GSVA (Gross State Value Added) at current prices, and this year it is **62.8%**. All thanks to the robust IT infrastructure, 24/7 uninterrupted power supply, and ease of doing business. The tech giants Amazon, Microsoft, Google & Facebook have their offices in Hyderabad, the world's most dynamic city¹, together having 27,000 employees which is around 4% of the total IT employees (7 lakh IT employees).

However, it brings out a strong imparity among the other regions of the state. Around **95% of the revenue** from the services sector is being contributed by the capital city, **Hyderabad** and the surrounding areas. This shows the major unequal growth & development in the state.

The budget 2023-24 of the state government has laid a pedestal for the **welfare schemes** over other developmental activities. In all the sectors starting from health to education to infrastructure, the share in the **allocation is lower than the national average**. This is a clear indication of the state being more focussed towards welfare schemes as opposed to as it was in the previous budgets brought forward at the starting since the inception of the state.

Outrage prevails among the youth of the state regarding the government job opportunities as it was the youth who fought for the separate statehood due to lack of employment opportunities in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state. After the formation of the Telangana state, there were no measures provided by the government for the local youth to get permanent employment opportunities in the government. The notification to fill in the group 1 posts was released after 8 years of state

¹ [JLL-City-Momentum-Index-2020](#)

formation. Neellu (Water), Nidhulu (Funds), Niyamakalau (government job opportunities) was the slogan for the formation of Telangana State.

The government of Telangana has announced around more than 1 lakh employment opportunities to fill the vacancies in various departments and for various roles. However, the recent cancellation of the prestigious Group 1 prelims examination conducted by TSPSC (Telangana State Public Service Commission) proves the inability and lack of strict measures from the Government to ensure the exams are conducted in a fair manner.

In contrast, the state has witnessed a **sharp decline in the unemployment rate** and is in line with the national average due to the other efforts of the government that increased the employment opportunities in the private sector - both skilled & unskilled. This is because of the setup of industries in the special zones & ease of doing business using the scheme TS-iPASS (Telangana State Industrial Project Approval and Self-Certification System).

In the previous budgets since 2014-15, a humongous allocation in the budget was given to developmental activities such as Mission Bhagiratha, Mission Kakatiya, Rythu Bandhu (Government of India inspired by this scheme has brought Pradhan Mantri Kissan Samman Nidhi), T-Hub, etc. Mission Bhagiratha & Mission Kakatiya have ensured Neellu (Water) to the farmers and rural households. The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti's scheme 'har ghar jal' is inspired by Mission Bhagiratha, which focussed on piped drinking water supply to every rural household. The Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project, world's largest multi-stage lift irrigation project launched in 2019, covers around 45 lakh acres of farm lands in addition to providing water for drinking and industrial needs. Overall, it is the efforts of the previous budgets & state's economic conditions that took the per capita income in the state to ₹ 3,17,115. Which means, **every person in telangana is earning an income of more than ₹ 3 lakh**, on an average, which is way more than the national average.

The current budget focussed on welfare schemes like **Dalit Bandhu** (financial assistance to Dalits), **Aasara Pension** (pension for senior citizens, widows, toddy tappers, weavers, differently abled, AIDS patients, etc.), Sheep Distribution Scheme (For Yadava/Golla/Kuruma communities), Nethanna Bhima Scheme (insurance for weavers), Farmers Loan waiver, Financial Assistance to Beedi Workers, among other schemes that ate up a huge part of the budget.

Chart 2: Allocation to Welfare Schemes

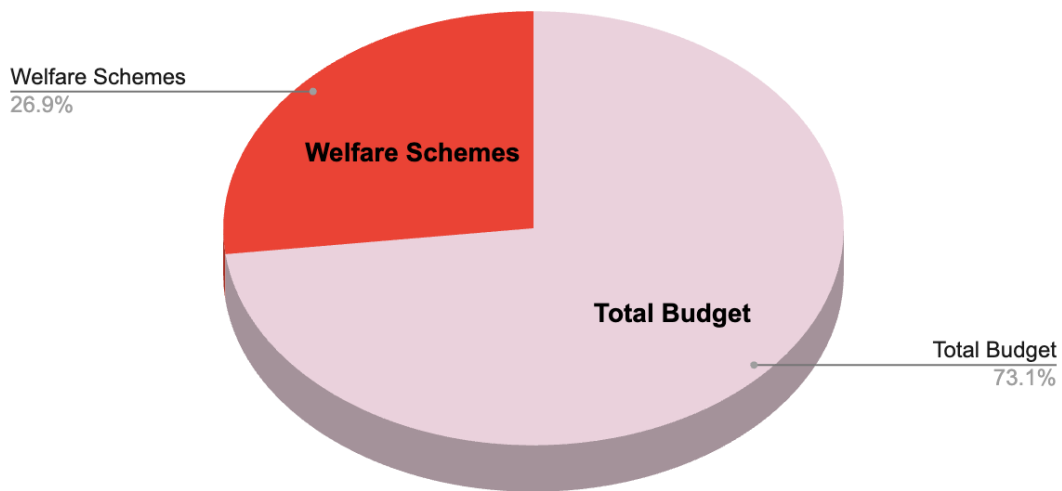
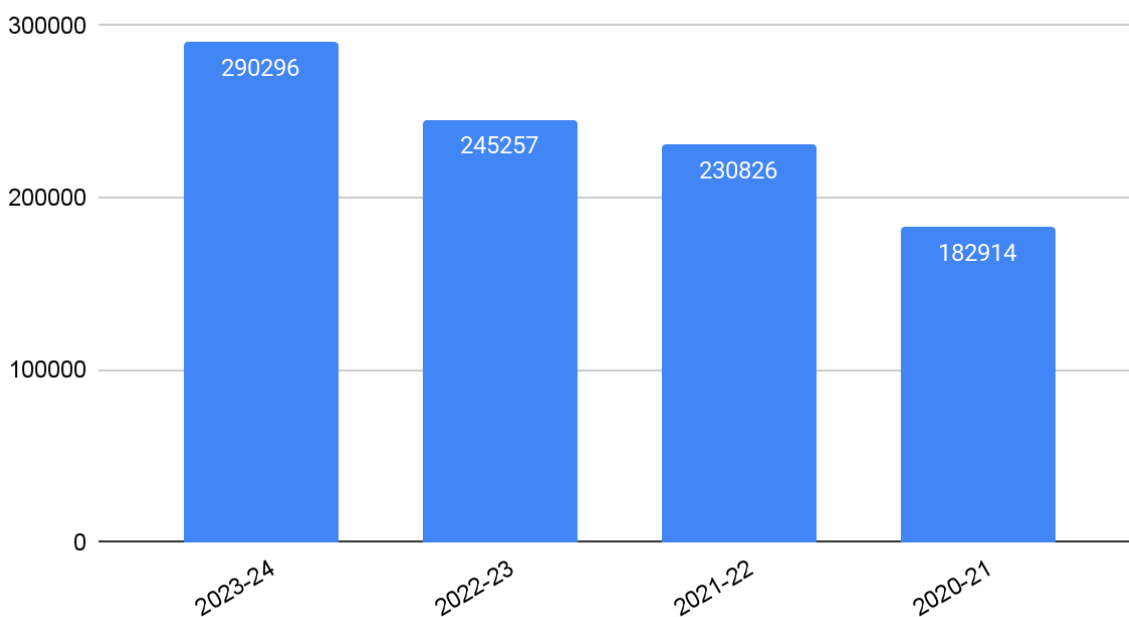


Chart 3: Year wise State Budget

Telangana State Budget Expenditure trend (in ₹ Crores)



Summary:

- Shri Thanneru Harish Rao, Minister of Finance, Government of Telangana, presented in the assembly of the Telangana State, the Budget 2023-24, technically called as the Annual Financial Statement, with a size of ₹ 2.9 lakh crore, on 6th of February, 2023.
- The budget put across the floor turned out to be a **surplus budget** with total expenditure pegged at an estimate of ₹ **2.90 lakh crore** with an increase of 18% from the Revised

Estimates (RE) of 2022-23. And the total receipts were estimated at ₹ 2.85 lakh crore which is again a 18% increase from the RE of 2022-23, which was ₹ 2.33 lakh crore.

- The Government of Telangana has allocated ₹ 17,700 crore to the **Dalit Bandhu** scheme, the **highest share of all the schemes** and some departments. For instance, it is greater than the allocation of Roads, Industries Department & Home Department combined. [₹2500 + 4000 + 9,600 crore]
- The revenue expenditure on social services has seen an enormous spike from the previous budgets (from ₹ 50,000 crore in 2021-22 to more than ₹ 1 lakh crore in 2023-24 budget) although the Economic & General services have seen no major spikes.
- The total public debt is estimated at ₹ 3,57,059 crore which is 23.8% of GSDP and comes to around **per capita debt of ₹ 95,000** (i.e., every person in the state has a debt of ₹ 95,000 on them that is made by the government)
- The per capita income as per the speech of Shri Thanneru Harish Rao, the Finance Minister of Telangana state is ₹ 3,17,115 which is **86% more than the national average** per capita income.
- Most pre-poll promises have been fulfilled by the ruling government except for a few.

Table 1 : Budget 2023-24 - Key figures (in ₹ crore)

Items	2023-24 BE	% change from RE 22-23 to BE 23-24	2022-23 RE	2022-23 BE	% change from BE 22-23 to RE 22-23
Total Expenditure	2,90,296	31.4%	2,37,712	2,56,959	-7.5%
Total Receipts	2,89,672	21.8%	2,37,884	2,56,861	-7.5%
Revenue Receipts	2,16,567	25.3%	1,72,822	1,89,274	-9%
Interstate Settlements	17,828	138%	7,500	-	
Capital Receipts	55,277	1.02%	54,582	63,832	14.4%
Fiscal Deficit	38,235	-10.3%	42,647	52,167	-18.2%
% GSDP	2.7%		3.2%	4.0%	
Revenue Balance	(+) 4,882	63.8%	(+) 2,980	(+) 3,755	-20.6%
% GSDP	0.3%		0.2%	0.3%	
Primary Deficit	15,827	-33.3%	23,736	33,255	-28.6%
% GSDP	1.1%		1.8%	2.5%	

*BE = Budget Estimate ; RE = Revised Estimate

Chart 4: Budget Comparison of Expenditure & Receipts with previous years

TS Budget 2023-24 comparison with 2022-23 stats (₹ Crores)

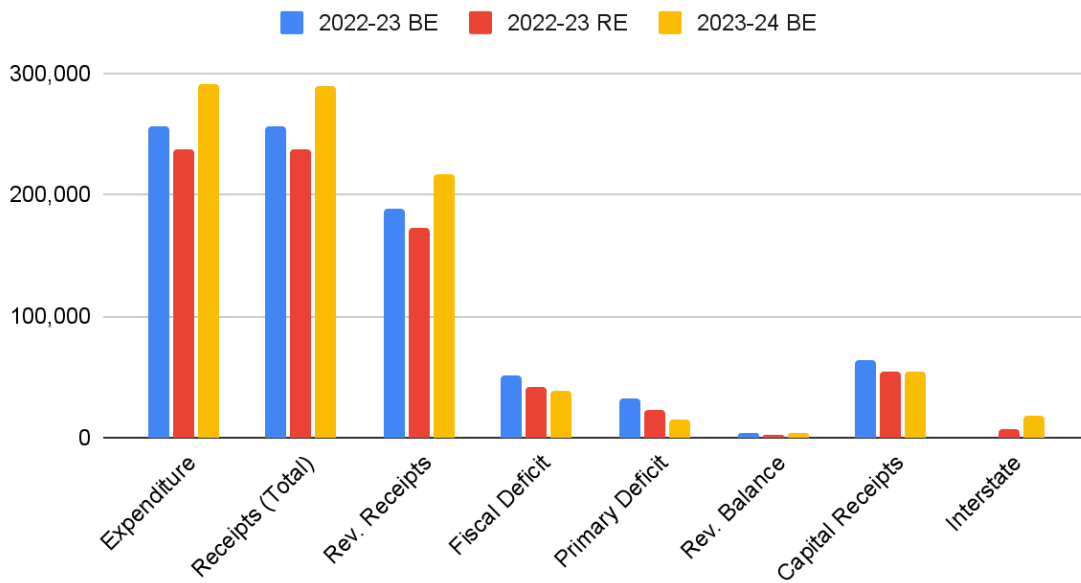
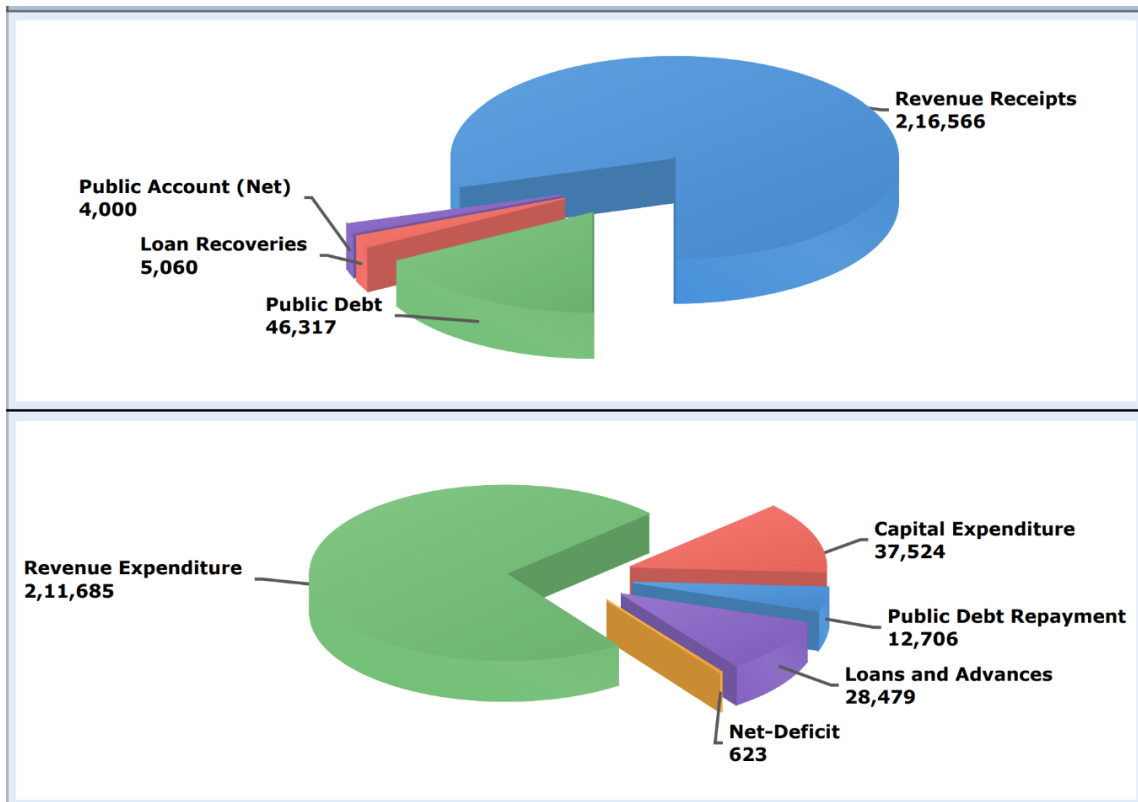


Chart 5: Share of Receipts & Expenditure of Budget 2023-24



Highlights of the Telangana State Budget 2023-24:

- Economic empowerment of Dalit community through the Dalit Bandhu scheme that aims at providing an investment support of **₹ 10 Lakh per Scheduled Caste family** as a 100% grant without any collateral / linkage of banks to help them invest in an asset and build an income generating business. For this scheme, **₹ 17,700 crore** have been allocated.
- **Aasara Pension**, the pension scheme initially started for the senior citizens is extended to single women (widows), beedi workers, dialysis patients, physically disabled, etc., and the age limit to receive the pension was reduced to 57. This has attracted an allocation of **₹ 10,177 crore**.
- The **Kalyana Lakshmi (for Hindus) / Shaadi Mubarak (for Muslims)** scheme to provide financial assistance of **₹ 1,00,116** to the bride, who is the resident of Telangana State, is extended to the Christian women as well which has attracted a budget allocation of **₹ 3210 crore** for Minorities, Backward classes, SC (Scheduled Caste) & ST (Scheduled Tribes).
- To empower the toddy-tapping community, **50% reservation is offered in the allocation of wine shops** and an accidental insurance of ₹ 5 Lakhs is being offered, which will cost the government around **₹ 155 crore** in total.
- The washerman community is offered **250 Units of free electricity** for laundry and washing.
- **KCR Nutrition Kit** to be distributed to Pregnant women. The scheme grabs an overall budget of ₹ 200 crore. ₹ 480 crore allocated for the **Amma Odi** (Mother's Lap) scheme to cater to the newborn and the mother by providing the **KCR Kit and 102 services**.
- ₹ 225 crore to establish Medical colleges across the state & ₹ 605 crore to continue the **Arogyasri scheme** that provides cashless treatment for the backward classes.
- A fund of ₹ 4 crore was allocated for the **Kanti Velugu** programme aiming at free eye check up & distribution of spectacles.
- **The Education Sector** has been allocated an estimated budget of **₹ 19,000 crore**. There was a gradual decrease from 10% of the budget allocation in 2014-15 to 6.5% of the budget allocation now.
- **Mana Ooru, Mana Badi / Mana basti, Mana Badi** scheme has been aimed at developing the infrastructure in several schools across the state. Around **₹ 7,300 crore** was spent on **more than 22,000 schools**.

Political Impact

The budget 2023-24 of Telangana can be seen to focus mostly on welfare schemes of various communities.

Youth:

Giving a ray of hope to the youth of the state, the government of Telangana has made the announcement of more than 1 lakh jobs in Group 1, 2, 3 & 4 posts, and in various other departments. This has built the government's trust over providing employment to the youth. The **33% reservation to women** and other reservation criteria for various backward classes in addition to the filling of vacancies zone-wise has given the local youth, especially young women, a great opportunity to encash.

Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes & Backward Classes:

The Dalit Bandhu scheme of providing **₹ 10 lakhs per Scheduled Caste family** has embarked sympathy towards the government in the dalit community. The **special development fund** allocation for the Scheduled Tribes also contributes to the increase in loyalty among the tribes towards the BRS government.

The investment support scheme for the Dalits has provided **₹ 10 lakhs per dalit family** to support them in starting any small scale business. The dalit vote share is around 14.3% and to capture this vote share it is very much essential to appease the dalit community. For instance, the Dalit Bandhu scheme was launched only for a specific constituency in the beginning, the Huzurabad constituency during the bypolls. Although BRS lost the Huzurabad election to BJP candidate Shri Eatala Rajender, the BRS has for sure influenced the 14.3% dalit voters in the constituency.

The **huge 25ft. statue of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** that is being built right near the new Telangana State secretariat (again to be named after Dr. B. R. Ambedkar), is a way to appease the Scheduled Caste community as the government failed to keep-up its promise to give the powerseat of the Chief Minister to the dalit community.

The free & subsidised power to the industries, **Scheduled Castes, barbers & washerman communities** has cost the government around ₹ 466 crore. This move comes as an appeasement to the industrial sector in addition to the dalit, nayee and washerman communities (BCs).

The 2 BHK houses being built and given to the homeless poor under the double bedroom house scheme of the Telangana government has a 50% reservation for those belonging to the **Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribe communities**, 7% to the minorities and the remaining 43% to the other community people, in the rural areas. In the urban areas, the share was 17% for Scheduled Castes, 6% for Scheduled Tribes, 12% for minorities & 65% for other communities. This scheme's

agenda is pretty simple. The urban population of Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes is much lower than the Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribe population in the villages, thus the vote share.

Pochampalli, Siricialla, etc., areas being the hubs for weavers, the government of Telangana has outlayed a budget allocation of ₹ 453 crore to the weaver community through insurance scheme Nethanna Bhima, and financial assistance through Cheneta Mithra Scheme that offers 50% subsidy on chemicals and yarn.

This has given an opportunity for the weavers to go global through the GI tag for the teliya rumaal like unique works. Such allocations have brought in the left out communities and people in these regions into the mainstream through financial boost. This proves to be a perfect bet for the government to have a major vote bank. It can also be noticed that the **Padmasalis, the 90% of weavers, constitute around 10% of the entire vote share.**

The **Yadava / Golla / Kuruma community** is being benefited by the government's scheme of sheep distribution. **Sheep are being provided at a subsidy of 75%** for rearing them for these communities. In the first-phase, around ₹ 5000 crore was spent and the second phase was launched with a budget of ₹ 6,125 crore. The Golla and Kuruma communities have a vote share of around 8% in the state.

Rural Population:

The Rythu Bandhu scheme provides the farmers with ₹ 5000 per acre, twice a year (once per season). Mission Kakatiya provides water through canals for all the farm lands. In addition to that, Mission Bhageeratha supplies drinking water to the rural households. All these have impressed the rural communities irrespective of religion & caste. All these efforts of welfare combined with development proved to be very effective for the BRS government in winning a few bypoll elections. It is evident from the fact that more than **60% of the rural population** is involved in agriculture and allied activities.

Women:

To empower & support the **women** and for the benefit of girl child, various schemes such as KCR nutrition kit, KCR kit, Kalyana Lakshmi / Shaadi Mubarak like schemes, irrespective of caste & community focus on attracting the women's vote share.

Analysis Cohort/Category Wise : Education Sector, Health Sector, Commerce Sector etc

Overview of the Finances of the Telangana State:

Finances of the state seem to not go as planned in the previous financial year. It can be noticed that the receipts from non-tax sources of the state were estimated at ₹ 25,422 crore but the revised estimates show the realised value as ₹ 15,292 crore, which is approximately 39% (₹ 10,000 crore) less than the estimated.

Grants-in-aid from the Union Government has been projected in 2022-23 at ₹ 41,001.73 crore and is realised at ₹ 30,250 crore, which is again ₹ 10,000 crore (26%) lesser than expected. The same is expected to happen in this budget as well and can be seen as a budget that is far from ground reality.

Current budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 estimated grants-in-aid from the Union Government at ₹ 41,259 crore & inter-state settlement fund of ₹ 17,828 crore, and to be noted is, in the previous fiscal year, 2022-23, the inter-state settlement fund received was only ₹ 7,500 crore. Another interesting point is, the non-debt capital receipts, whose share was just ₹ 60 crore in the previous financial year and realised the same was projected & estimated to be ₹ 5,060 crore for the current financial year. Only time can unveil the facts and bring-in the ground reality.

Due to the **excessive open market borrowings** by the state, the Union Finance Ministry has limited the market borrowings to not more than ₹ 15,000 crore for this fiscal year and the **15th Finance Commission has recommended to not provide any revenue deficit grant** to the state from 2021-22 to 2025-26 (for 5 years).

The total outstanding **liabilities of the state are estimated to be 23.8%** of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). If the off-budget borrowings are included it will cross the limit recommended by the 15th Finance Commission (25%) by pegging at 29.5% of Gross State Domestic Product.

Although Shri T. Harish Rao, the finance minister has portrayed this as a surplus budget, in reality, it is not. It all seems like showcasing the potholes covered by a plastic cover in a very beautiful way. Everybody knows once we step, you fall down in it. All the above mentioned trends point toward a shortage of funds & bankruptcy of the state government. The budget seems like a one that is just balanced with imaginable numbers just to make it look good on the outside.

Education Sector

There has been a very minimal allocation of just **6.5% of the budget** to the education sector pegging at **₹ 19,093 crore**. There were no major announcements regarding the education sector apart from boasting about the schemes introduced previously.

The allocation of ₹ 19,000 crore was split into ₹ 16,000 crore for secondary education department and ₹ 3,000 crore for higher education department of which 500 crore solely for enhancing the infrastructural facilities at universities' hostels, campuses, labs and buildings.

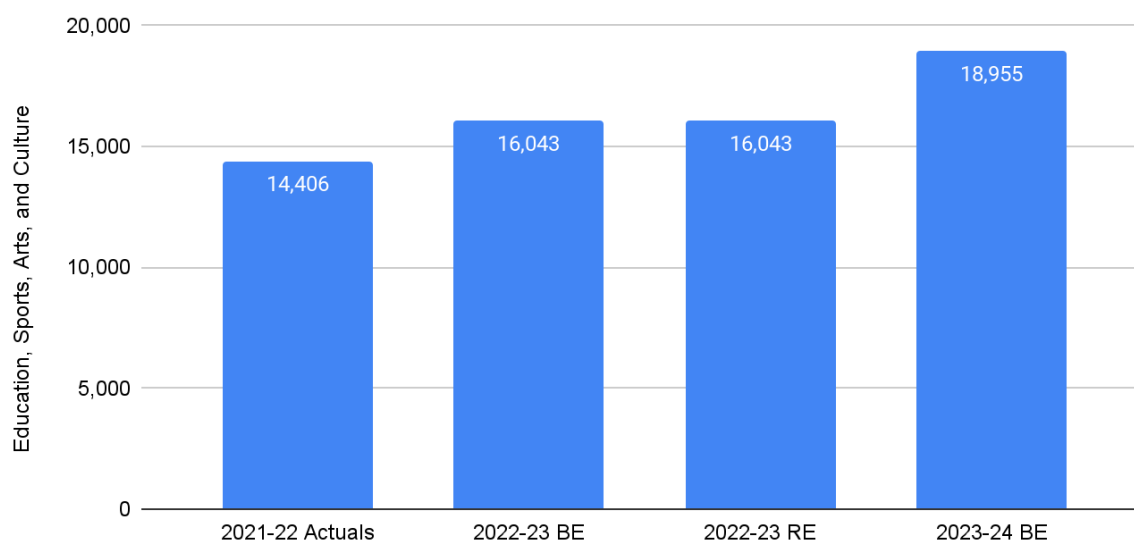
Around 43.2% of the rural schools do not have drinking water access & 85.8% of the rural schools do not have a computer for the children to use in the Telangana state, according to Annual Status of Education Report 2022.

The ambitious Mana Ooru, Mana Badi / Mana Basthi, Mana Badi scheme has bagged ₹ 7,289 crore aiming to upgrade infrastructure of more than 22,000 schools across the state.

To implement the National Education Policy 2020 guidelines, and to run the humongous schemes like free KG to PG education, the allocation of mere 6.5% of the budget allocation by the state government is nowhere sufficient. The states like Kerala, Himachal Pradesh etc., are allocating between 20 to 22% of their budget. The 6.5% is nowhere near to be in the race. Even the neighbouring states like Karnataka have allocated around 11.2% of their budget, which is almost double the allocation of what is done by the government of Telangana.

Chart 6: Trend in allocation for Education Sector from 2021-22

Allocation trend for Education, Sports, Arts, and Culture (in INR Crores)



Health & Family Welfare

The government of Telangana has allocated ₹ 12,378 crore for the Health & Family Welfare department, with the major share going toward construction of Medical Colleges & Super speciality hospitals.

KCR Nutrition Kit - A step towards **Anaemia Mukth Bharath** - providing nutrition kits containing 1 kilogram nutritional mix powder, 1 kilogram dates, 3 bottles of iron syrup, 500 grams ghee and a cup, to pregnant women in anaemia prevalent districts.

KCR Kit scheme - Under this scheme **₹ 12,000 for a male born** and **₹ 13,000 for the female born** are given to the pregnant women in four instalments, one at each milestone of checkup. This financial assistance is to compensate the woman with the wage loss during pregnancy and also to increase institutional deliveries.

Second phase of Kanti Velugu, the ambitious program to make Telangana, avoidable blindness-free, has captured ₹ 200 crore², double of the previous allocation.

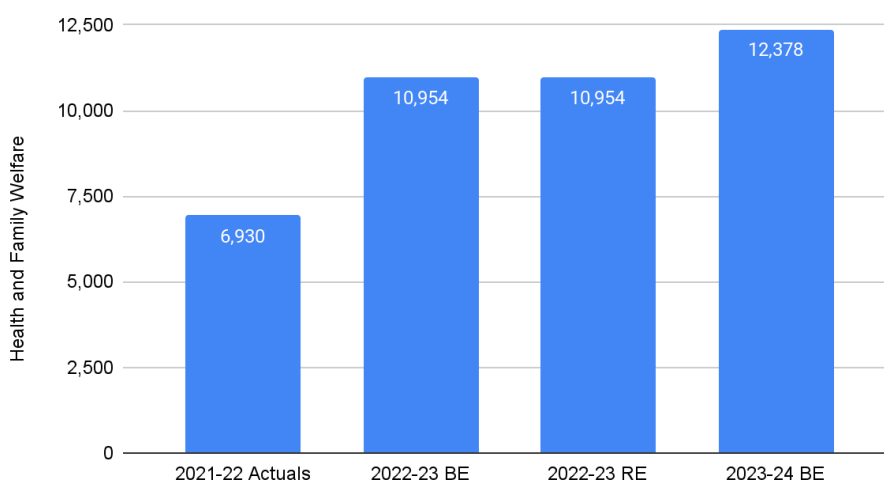
₹ 756 crore were allocated for the Aarogyasri scheme which is the cashless medical treatment providing families below poverty line with cashless treatment for hospitalisation and major surgeries up to ₹ 2 lakhs per year per family across all empanelled private hospitals.

Aarogya Lakshmi, KCR Kit, KCR Nutrition Kit like schemes have proven to be effective and the result is - MMR (Maternal Mortality Rate) @ 43 deaths per 1 lakh deliveries which is less than half of the national MMR(Maternal Mortality Rate). IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) stands at 21 deaths per 1000 births.

Niti Aayog has recognized Telangana as the third best state in terms of health for its commendable job. The hub-spoke model of the Telangana diagnostics, among other measures, helped achieve it.

Chart 7: Budgetary allocation trend for Health & Family Welfare from 21-22

Trend of Allocation for Health & Family Welfare (in ₹ Crores)



² [Indian Express](#)

Agriculture, Rural Development & Irrigation

A total capital outlay of **₹ 28,873 crore** (9.2% of budgetary allocations) has been allocated to the agriculture & allied activities. In addition to this, the allocation of approximately ₹ 7,000 crore to rural development & irrigation, also aids in the development of the farmers and people dependent on the rural economy.

There has been a significant increase in the hub-spoke model for the dairy sector. In most of the villages, new cooperative societies have been formed, inspired from the Amul, or the successfully running cooperative societies like the Mulkanoor cooperative society, Karimnagar Dairy, etc. The cooperative dairy has provided a significant boost to the rural economy.

Under the **sheep distribution scheme**, each traditional shepherd family is being given 20 sheep on 75% subsidy. This scheme in addition to the other veterinary support schemes have boosted the livestock and thus the overall income of the shepherd community.

The Gopala Mitra scheme has been continued with the same corpus fund as always - ₹ 10 crore & an incentive of ₹ 75 crore to milk production have kept the livestock's contribution to the growth constant for the past 3 years.

Focus on Farmers:

To impress the voter share of villages, the Telangana government has allocated more than 50% of allocation of the agriculture budget to the farmers mostly in terms of monetary support.

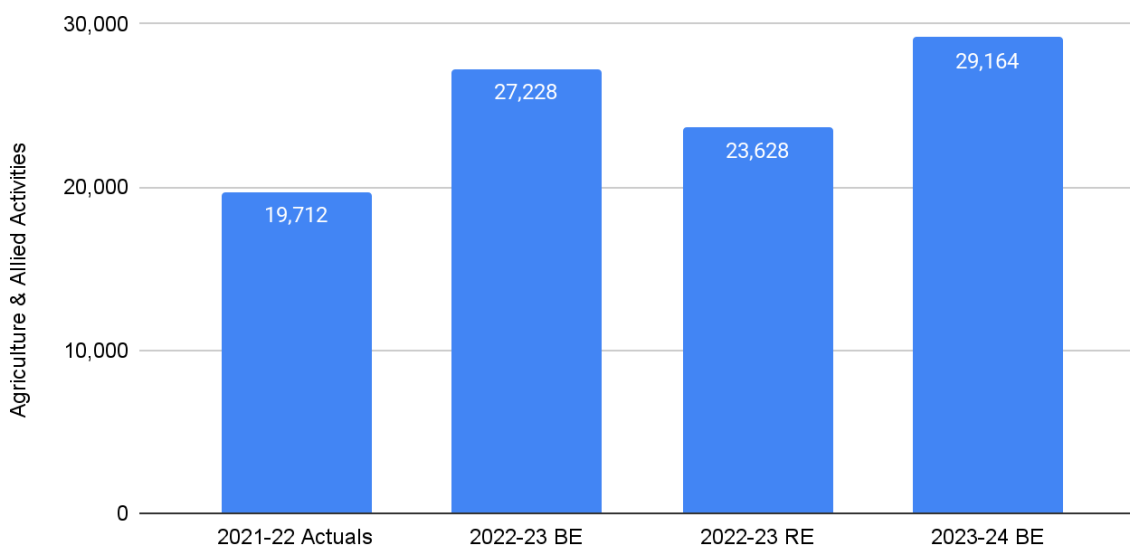
The **Rythu Bandhu**, also known as the agriculture investment support scheme has the major piece of cake from the entire agriculture budget. Around ₹ 11,704 crore (**43% of Agriculture allocation**) is allocated to this pilot scheme of Telangana government of providing investment support of ₹ 5,000 per acre per farmer per season (and is given twice a year i.e., Vanakalam (Kharif/rainy season) and Yasangi (Rabi/Summer season)). This scheme acts like a support to purchase inputs into agriculture such as seeds, pesticides, fertilisers, etc. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme was inspired from this scheme.

For the farm **loan waiver** through the scheme for debt relief to farmers, the government has allocated a corpus of ₹ 4,691 crore. Following that, the next highest allocation was for the insurance scheme for farmers, pegged at ₹ 1,168 crore.

Rythu Bhima (Insurance scheme for farmers) offers ₹ 5 lakhs to the nominee in case of unforeseen event of death of the farmer.

Chart 8: Trend in budgetary allocation for Agriculture and Allied Activities

Allocation Trend for Agriculture & Allied Activities (in ₹ Crores)



Industry & Minerals:

The capital outlay for the Industries & minerals is set at ₹ 3,874 crore. While the Telangana government boasts about more than 3 lakh crore investments attracted from the foreign companies resulting in employment to more than 22 lakh youth, it forgets to realise the prominence of this sector and does not focus much on this sector. The industry & services sector together contribute more than 80% of the GSVA (Gross State Value Added) yet see no major contribution in terms of budgetary allocations.

However, the major policy decisions such as 24-hour uninterrupted power supply, special allocations to SEZs (Special Economic Zones), mega food parks & textile parks, investment in law & order, security & stability in the government's policies towards industries, have all contributed to the rise in this sector.

Government's decision to establish 21 new special food processing zones in all the other districts of Telangana except Hyderabad will emphasise on the development of other backward regions of the state.

Infrastructure:

A total capital outlay of ₹ **4,552 crore** was allocated to the roads & bridges infrastructure. In addition to that, ₹ **11,372 crore** was allocated to the Municipal Administration & Urban Development department, which also focuses on developing proper infrastructure in the municipalities and urban areas.

The fund primarily aids the efforts of the Union Government under NHAI. The state highways, major district roads and village roads, all the roads are being rebuilt to increase the lane capacity to cater to the future needs.

Telangana state has been ranked at 10th position for fatal road accidents as per a report by **National Health Mission**. Therefore, the responsibility of allocating more funds to the roads & bridges to reduce the number of road accidents and the severity of the accident lies on the government. With more allocation to the infrastructure, this can easily be tackled by incorporating better design of roads, incorporation of better technology and manpower.

The RRR (Regional Ring Road) project will be a great roadway connecting all major centres of Telangana.

Public infrastructure such as better public toilet facilities, modern bus stations, increased connectivity of metro rail in Hyderabad, are lacking in the current budget. The allocation to infrastructure focussed majorly only on Hyderabad city and the roads that connect the city. Therefore, huge inequality in development arises due to specific focus of infrastructural development limited to specific centres such as Hyderabad, Sangareddy, Rangareddy, etc.

Environment:

Telangana Government has been focussing on forest & environment and its efforts through the pilot project, 'Telangana ku Harita Haram' has bagged Hyderabad the 'Tree City of the World 2021' title.

The forest cover in the state of Telangana is 24% of the geographical area and the government has a plan to increase it to 33%.

Welfare:

- **Aasara pensions** aim at providing financial assistance to divyangs, senior citizens, people suffering with HIV/AIDS, filaria (Grade-II and III) & dialysis, incapacitated weavers, toddy tappers, poor Beedi workers, and single women (widows). For divyangs the pension amount of ₹ 3016 per month and for the other categories, an amount of ₹ 2016 per month is being disbursed.
- **Kalyana Lakshmi / Shaadi Mubarak** scheme provides ₹ 1,00,116 to unmarried girls belonging to Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes & minorities at the time of marriage.
- **Dalit Bandhu Scheme** - A scheme for the economic empowerment of dalit community by providing ₹ 10 lakh per dalit family to invest in an asset that would earn them returns.
- **Fisherman** - Rights for fishing to local fisherman by growing fish in tanks & reservoirs.
- For **Toddy Tappers**

- 50% reservation in Wine Shops
- Accidental Insurance of ₹ 5 Lakhs
- Through an insurance scheme for weavers, the Nethanna Bhima ₹ 5 lakh is given to the nominee in the event of death of the weaver. The full premium is borne by the government.
- Three acres of agricultural land distribution to landless women belonging to Scheduled Castes to **empower women & the dalit community** as a whole.

Analysing the major announcements of the budget

The government has announced a **Special Development Fund for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes** with an allocation of ₹ 36,750 crore & ₹ 15,233 crore respectively. The combined allocation of ₹ 51,983 crore is the highest allocation among all the other schemes.

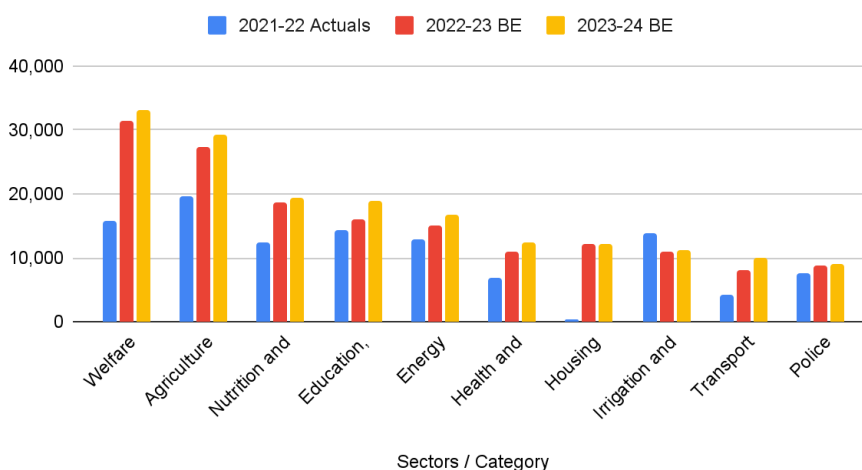
This move comes as a major step to appease the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who constitute the **20% of the total population** in the state, for the upcoming elections. However, this allocation uplifts the downtrodden communities of the society economically.

The 2023-24 budget of the Telangana Government has no special mention of any new schemes except for the **Employees Health Scheme (EHS)** that has been launched to lure in the government employees, who are the high-probable voters. However it has only extended the scope of existing schemes and is just an addition upon the request from employees & teachers to establish a trust for the EHS (Employees Health Scheme).

The rythu bandhu & dalit bandhu schemes are going to equip the farmers & dalits to increase their per capita income. Although they are merely financial assistance schemes, the scope to spend the amount lies with the individuals. Especially under the dalit bandhu scheme, the dalit household, with their own intelligence & knowledge, can set up a successful business that empowers their lives.

Chart 9: Sector-wise budgetary allocation

Comparison of sector wise budgetary allocation (in ₹ crores)



Hits and Misses in the Budget

The efforts towards developmental activities were seen only in the previous budgets. This year's budget seemed to divert its focus from this development driven approach to more of a welfare driven approach not just in one sector but every sector and department catering to major sections of the society. It missed the entire focus on developmental activities like in the initial years of state formation.

The government of Telangana had a clear direction in the first four to six years focussed on development:

- Especially strengthening the infrastructural systems like **24-hours uninterrupted power supply for agriculture across the state**, Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation project, mission Bhageeratha & mission Kakatiya to provide water to agriculture & households.
- Launching **T-Hub, T-PRIDE** (Program for Rapid Incubation of Dalit Entrepreneurs) for startups, and other relevant infrastructure have made a way for small & medium enterprises.
- Developing special SEZs (Special Economic Zones), special arrangements etc., have brought in more investments through both Indian & foreign companies.
- Strengthening the law & order by **equipping the police department with the advanced facilities & the new command control centre** has made the city a safe one.

Hyderabad metro rail connectivity is not that great and its expansion at a slow-pace is hampering the overall growth of the state. The recent budget has mentioned metro rail connectivity to the Airport. Even then, the **majority of the important places in the city like Mehdipatnam, Shaikpet, Nanakramguda, Financial District, ECIL, Zoo park, etc., are left behind without connectivity** for the metro rail.

Expressways are nowhere to be seen to connect the regions of the state, showing disparity in the inclusive development.

Dalit bandhu scheme ate up the major share and has taken a huge toll on the government's pockets leaving no funds for other developmental activities. This scheme is one of the **greatest hits in the budget** that indirectly focuses on development & uplifting of the dalit community. The dalit bandhu offers investment support for the dalit family to start any business or take up any developmental activity. However, it is not in the control of the government as to where the money is going.

Similar schemes and stunts have been performed to appease every single community from weavers to barbers to shepherds to muslims through either Nethanna Bhima (insurance to weavers), or the sheep distribution program or the Shaadi Mubarak scheme for Muslim women.

Although there was emphasis on developing integrated district office complexes, the location of such office complexes was far from the centres and thus **lacked public transport facilities & better connectivity**.

Education Sector

- The ambitious Mana Ooru, Mana Badi / Mana Basthi, Mana Badi scheme that aims at infrastructural upgradation of more than 22,000 schools across the state will not be successful without sufficient fund allocation. This is evident because, in the first phase, around 9,000 schools were renovated at a cost of around ₹ 3,500 crore. Therefore, to renovate 22,000 schools, an allocation of around **₹ 7,300 crore will not be enough**.
- The **Free KG to PG scheme** was announced way back in 2014-15 and to continue such huge & important schemes across the state, the meagre budget allocation is not sufficient.

Health & Family Welfare

- The very **meagre allocation of 4% towards health** is less than the National Average of 5.5% and half of what is recommended by the XV Finance Commission. The fifteenth Finance Commission recommends the states to allocate 8% of their budget to health.
- Major super speciality government hospitals being concentrated in the Hyderabad city makes it difficult for the people living in the interiors of the state to access these facilities. It would be better if there exists a hub & spoke model with more hubs even for the hospitals like how it is done for the T-diagnostics.
- The Basti Dawakhana & Palle Dawakhana **became mere on-paper schemes** rather than producing expected results on the ground. Therefore, measures are to be taken to equip the centres with better facilities to keep them working & running.
- With increasing work-pressure and heavy stress, people now seek more support on mental health. So, the government should also accommodate mental health as a need. There was **no mention of mental health** in the Telangana state's budget.

Agriculture & Allied activities sector

- There was no major emphasis and focus on **farm mechanisation** (decreased the allocation from ₹ 1132 crore in the budget 2021-22 to only ₹ 377 crore in budget 2023-24).
- The budget lacked the allocation to **strengthen the cold chain management**.
- To look at the future, avoiding the wastage of agricultural produce and also to cater to the international markets, the **food processing industry should have been prioritised**. There is no great benefit in just having the name of 'food/rice bowl of India' and to have a

vision of the food bowl/seed bowl of the world. Efforts are to be made in that direction to fulfil it.

- In order to cut down the post-harvest losses, a **robust post-harvesting management mechanism and infrastructure** such as food storage godowns & warehouses, transportation infrastructure have to be developed. There was no specific mention of the same in the budget 2023-24 of the Telangana State.
- The government should have equally focussed on integrated labs for soil testing & nutrient management to put an end to malnutrition in mission mode.
- The major budget allocated to the agriculture sector prioritised the welfare schemes and monetary disbursements to the farmers whereas the focus should have equally been on other areas as mentioned above.
- There was **no major focus on 'Organic Agriculture'** such as the Zero Budget Natural Farming, which the Union government has been emphasising since the previous budgets.
- There was **no proposition of establishments of modern Rythu Bazaars** that would empower the farmers to sell their own produce at their own price directly to the consumers.

Industries Sector

- There **should have been special plans and schemes** to boost and make use of the central sector schemes such as Make in India, PLI, PM Gati Shakti. Doing so will boost the industrial sector.
- Hyderabad, the IT hub of Telangana has been contributing to more than 95% of the service sector revenue. This **revenue from the service sector should be diversified** by establishing IT companies across the state in tier 2 & tier 3 cities as well, to develop all the various backward regions of Telangana.

Environment

- More funds to the National Parks, Urban Parks, Forests, etc., would have led to an increase in the overall biodiversity in the state.
- There has been **no mention of new strict compliance to Green Building norms** during the approval of the building plans that would lead to efficient operation of buildings by reducing the overall load on power and water supply, thus benefiting the environment.
- No schemes or propositions to increase renewable sources of energy at least for the government buildings.
- More public movements such as the 'harita haram' programs should have been announced to make the general public a part of the development. Every scheme that has proactive public participation will succeed. For instance, the Swachh Bharat abhiyaan was a massively successful scheme only because every single person was made a part of it. To tackle environmental issues, people's participation is very much needed.

Plan for Economic Revival for the state

Though the Government of Telangana claims that the state's economy is on the right track, the facts and figures show something else. While the government talks about achieving the per capita income of more than ₹ 3 lakh, the state is facing a huge debt of ₹ 2.83 lakh crore. .

Grants-in-aid from the Union Government were estimated at ₹ 41,002 crore but received ₹ 30,250 crore which is 26% less than the budget estimate in 2022-23. In the budget 2023-24, it is again estimated that ₹ 41,259 crore will be received as grants-in-aid from the Central Government. Keeping this in mind, the state government should focus on other sources of revenue in order to reduce the burden on off-budget borrowings and debts. Some of the new sources to generate revenue are -

- Tourism - Historical, Cultural & Green
- Leveraging the full potential of the IT sector
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Industrial Area Development
- Rural Area Development
- Entertainment
- Smart Metering of water usage

Focus on Tourism

With Hyderabad turning into a global city, the government should enhance and bring into light some famous tourist spots and showcase the richness of the regions in and around Hyderabad city. The telangana tourism department has a good network of hotels and resorts across the state. With proper marketing, awareness and special tourism packages that offer complete end-to-end packages to show all the attractions in the city, the tourism sector can bring in good revenue.

Rich culture of ancient Telangana, right from the Kakatiya's to be shown with the Kakatiya Circuit covering the important places and events of the Kakatiyas. Taking inspiration from the Union Government's rejuvenation projects such as the Kashi Vishwanath corridor, the government shall develop the Ramappa temple corridor, thousand pillar temple corridor, and other well-known temples with rich culture and heritage.

Eco Tourism

KBR National Park, Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary, Deer Parks, Water falls, the forests of Adilabad, the tribal areas of Telangana, can all be very well maintained sustainably without causing much disturbance to nature and still be made as tourism spots focussing on eco-friendly tourism..

Cultural Tourism

Telangana has a unique culture of its own. There are many festivals such as **Bathukamma**, Dussehra (celebrated in its own way), and festivals such as the **Medaram Jatara**, **Komuravelli Mallanna Jatara**, **Nagoba Jatara** and other cultures of the tribes living in the tribal areas of the state. These cultures can be a tourism circuit just like the Bharat darshan.

Leveraging the full potential of IT sector

The total value of exports of IT services as of 2022 is ₹ 1.83 lakh crore. Bengaluru has IT exports of ₹ 4.5 lakh crore, approximately 2.5 times the value of what is generated by Telangana. Traffic is the main concern that every IT employee and IT companies complain about Bengaluru. When better connectivity and infrastructure are provided, Hyderabad or any other city of the state can be an alternative to Bengaluru for other companies trying to establish their offices in India.

The Hitech city is connected by MMTS (Multi-Modal Transport System, like the local train) and metro rail. However, the residential areas of the city are not properly connected except with the road transport, taking a huge toll on the road traffic. Taking inspiration from cities like Chennai, the metro rail and the MMTS should spread its web wide across the city to ensure good connectivity to the Hitech city and the other IT hubs. The recent step to create another IT hub near Ghatkesar, in the part of the city other than Hitech City, is a good move to reduce the traffic jams on roads.

The recent move of the government to **spread the IT sector into tier 2 & tier 3 cities** like Mahabubnagar helps boost the revenue that is being generated from the sector while diversifying the revenue from IT sector across the geography of the state.

By providing a boost to the IT sector through investments in better transportation infrastructure, ensuring better connectivity across the state will **triple the wealth that is exported to the world from Telangana State** in the next five years.

Connecting other urban cities around Hyderabad in the state with regional rapid transit systems like how Delhi, Gurgaon, and Noida are connected with expressways and metro rail, will not only help Hyderabad but also will spread the development slowly into the interiors of Telangana. The youth can easily access the capital city and enrich their skills and contribute to the ever-growing services sector.

Sustainable Agriculture

Focussing on ZBNF (**Zero-budget Natural Farming**), & **Organic farming** will reduce the initial investment of the farmers and at the same time offer high returns due to the demand in the market.

Also, the government should provide training on horticulture crops, and best agricultural practices to increase the farmers' income.

Supporting the farmers in allied activities such as cattle rearing, livestock, etc., will make them occupied throughout the year with a regular income source.

Focussing on **building robust infrastructure for food storage & processing** can boost the overall income of the farmers by three-folds thus reducing farmer suicides. **Around 352 farmers had committed suicide in 2021.** Although rythu bandhu has **reduced the farmer suicides by 60%**, it can be fully eliminated if a certain measures are taken to uplift their lives. If post-harvest losses are contained, agriculture will be a profitable business.

Also, if the regional rapid transit system is in place, the farmers from the villages can directly come to the cities and sell fresh produce to the people in the cities. Thus, the glocal (global + local) economy will be boosted.

Industrial Area Development

Major industrial belts & corridors are concentrated only in the outskirts of Hyderabad due to the very fact that it is a well developed city. All parts of Telangana are to be developed not with equal focus but with **extra focus where there is low to no development** and less focus where there is good amount of development through establishments of special industrial belts and zones. Providing good infrastructural facilities & connectivity in these under-developed areas will automatically boost the revenues of the state.

More than 60% of the rural population depend solely on agriculture & allied activities. Although agriculture & allied activities' contribution to the GSVA (Gross State Value Added) has seen a **growth of 186% since 2014-15**, the income-expenditure remained almost stagnant.

As agriculture is seasonal and the allied activities are part-time, establishing industries in the rural areas, in the outskirts of the villages will provide good employment opportunities to the youth & elders of the villages. **The rural economy can grow by at least 3X times** if the government focuses on providing employment opportunities through industries.

Establishing industries as **1 industry for 5 villages** with radial roads to the industry from the villages will not only provide jobs to the youth but also stop them from migrating to other parts of the state/country, thus maintaining the demographics as is. The road & infrastructure facilities for the industry would also increase the same facilities for the villages surrounding it. The junction of radial roads is to be connected with the state highway. In addition to it, under the CSR activities, the industry can be mandated to **adopt one of the 5 villages** every year to undertake developmental activities.

Rural Area Development

Rural women can be skilled up through Self Help Groups (SHGs) by encashing the local resources and the demands in the nearby towns. The weavers in the Pochampally village can be upskilled with technology & knowledge from across the world.

The government must ensure easy availability of liquidity through cooperative banks for innovative ideas to start businesses right in the village by providing necessary startup hubs for each district.

This will change the idea of migrating to the city to gain exposure and knowledge. All these efforts will lead to the uplift in the rural economy contributing to the overall development of the state and will reduce the disparity in regional development.

Entertainment

The Prasad's IMax built in Hyderabad is a successful example of a PPP project. Similar projects can be taken across the state by having one such **model entertainment mall per district**. All the 33 districts should have one model mall built with international standards on PPP mode. This will **boost the economy of the district** and contribute towards the overall development including the lifestyle of the people living in those districts.

Smart Metering of water usage

Mission Bhagiratha has ensured piped water connection to every household. Now, if smart water metres are installed, the wastage of water can be contained, saving litres of water from going to waste. In addition to this, once metered, it can be billed minimally at a reasonable price and generate an additional source of revenue for the state.

Recommendations that help the state get better:

Education System Revival

The **Kothari Commission has suggested 30%³ of budget should be allocated to the educational sector** and the allocation of Telangana State government is nowhere near to it. The national average allocation is around 15% and the state's budget allocation is less than half of it. This causes a serious concern as it may lead to a gap in skills to meet the demand of the industry as the students do not get the required resources to study and make themselves employable.

Sustainable Development

With growing electric vehicles on the streets of the state, the government must focus on proper implementation of the EV policy & make modifications in its EV policy in line with the other

³ [The Wire](#)

states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, etc., to encourage the adoption of EVs and provide sufficient infrastructure such as charging stations / battery swapping stations.

The EV policy of Government of Telangana favours the manufacturing side rather than demand and supply side by offering subsidy on capital investment, SGST, power tariff & exemption of electricity duty. For instance, the Government of Maharashtra has made 100% tax exemption for all the EV vehicles purchased & registered under its state whereas Telangana's EV policy limits the tax exemption only for a specific number of vehicles based on the category of the vehicle. For example, in the case of 2 wheeler, tax exemption is only for the first 2,00,000 electric vehicles purchased & registered within Telangana.

To increase the share of EVs, winning the trust of the public is of much importance. Maharashtra's EV policy also focuses on extended battery warranty and buyback agreement that offers assurance to the public to adapt EVs. This also is not being addressed in the Telangana's Policy.

Telangana's EV policy is defeating its own objective of 'reducing the total cost of mobility by increasing the adoption of electric vehicles in public transportation'. For example, the battery-operated shuttle services at Parade Grounds Hyderabad metro station charges ₹ 40 to Lal Bazar Mahankali Temple. There are numerous buses on this route and the fare that is charged is ₹ 20. This is the reason why the feeder shuttle services are a failure and are not operating as expected.

Instead of a shuttle service like an e-auto, an electric bus fleet could have reduced the cost of transportation by a significant amount. Maharashtra's EV policy has clear numbers to achieve by 2025. For example, to achieve 25% electrification of public transport and MSRTC to electrify 15% of its fleet by 2025. The Government of Telangana's EV policy does not mention such quantified goals to achieve in the policy implementation of 10 years (i.e., from 2020 to 2040)

All the government buildings to be covered with **roof-top solar** to bring awareness among the public to adopt roof-top solar. Provide **solar water pumps at an extra-subsidised cost** to the farmers. Thus, the demand of power reduces, bringing down the subsidy cost of the electricity for the government. Therefore, the expenditure being spent on power subsidy reduces by a significant amount.

Law & Order

The new command control centre for the police department with 9.8 Lakh CCTVs deployed, which is the largest deployment in the country will boost the security level and thus the safety in the global world. This will in turn boost the confidence of foreign companies to establish their offices in the state. However, most CCTVs are becoming out of order soon. Therefore, it is suggested that the Telangana Government to organise regular checkups, mock drills and maintenance.

The zero FIR system, wherein the case can be filed irrespective of the jurisdiction needs to be implemented in a robust manner to increase the trust & imbibe confidence in the public. Although started as a very great initiative the police have adopted back to the regular 'jurisdiction' system. An example of this is, the rape case of Hyderabad's Gandhi hospital. The hospital staff were accused of raping the patient's wife & sister-in-law. The victims have approached their native police station where the police have denied to lodge a case and suggested the victims lodge the FIR at Chilkalguda Police Station under which the hospital falls.

Such incidents can be avoided if the police implement the zero FIR system correctly. In place of this system, the government can even bring in an online complaint lodging system for all kinds of cases just like how the Tamil Nadu police has a facility to lodge the online complaint for free.

The trust in the government's law & order will push the citizens to work in the night shifts as well and the IT sector whose target countries are the west, can have better workforce working without the worry of safety & security. The foreign investors also will be more favourable in establishing their offices in places with better law & order.

Robust Fire safety system

The recent Swapnalok complex fire accident, the secunderabad godown fire accident and the recent King Koti fire accident have all pointed fingers at the fire safety measures available in the building and the nearby buildings. These fire accidents have caused huge loss to property and lives. In all these incidents although the fire brigade reached the spot in the quickest time possible, the damage has been done. In the case of the Swapnalok complex incident, the fire station is just 1 kilometre away. Yet the damage has been done and it took more than 3 hours with 10 fire fighting vehicles.

Fire incidents can be tackled by following the below:

1. Monthly checks by the fire brigadiers at 1 in 4 establishments in the commercial areas to ensure all the fire safety mechanisms are in proper working condition.
2. Regular mock drills for the fire brigade to be acquainted with the fastest route to approach every nook and corner in their jurisdiction.
3. Quarterly mock drills for school children, and people working in the offices to help them protect themselves during the incident.
4. Proper mechanism in place to ensure all the fire safety guidelines are being met and necessary procedures are implemented properly with adequate equipment working in the premises of public places.

Health Everywhere

Most government multi-speciality hospitals in the state are again concentrated in Hyderabad. The recent effort to make the Nalgonda government hospital to 700 beds is a great move. However, that

is not sufficient because the WHO norms say there must be 30 beds for 10,000 people and Nalgonda will be left with 6 beds for 10,000 people. It is recommended that the government **increase the network of government multi-speciality hospitals** throughout the state with at least 1 multi-speciality and 1 super-speciality government hospital per district so that there are 3 beds for every 1,000 people.

Lack of doctors, compounders and other health staff in the remote places of the state such as the tribal areas of Adilabad, should be tackled by providing better facilities / incentives to the doctors working in the remotest places. For instance, the WHO norms specify that there should be 10 doctors for every 10,000 people. Whereas Adilabad has only 6 doctors for 10,000 people.

There is only one ayurvedic hospital including a dispensary in Adilabad. In forest & tribal areas, some tribes are not very much favoured at allopathy. The state should promote AYUSH treatment in such remote & tribal areas through primary health care centres and hospitals with adequate staff & enough equipment to perform surgeries for certain conditions under the Ayurveda to win the trust of the tribals.

Encashing the Workforce

Every **village has a huge workforce** that can take up the jobs at industries in the off-season of agriculture. By providing basic skills required to work in the industries & factories set that will be set up as per the recommendation made in the plan for economic revival section under the industries where it is proposed to establish 1 industry for every 5 villages. This boosts the rural economy by increasing the per capita income of the household. The spoke & wheel model can be replicated to it by having one industry as a centre for a couple of villages.

There's a huge dearth of manpower in many departments of the government. The bureaucracy is overburdened with work and with the increase in the number of districts, it is in the interest of the state to fill all those 1.9 lakh vacancies in various departments with regular working staff in place of contractual and temporary staff as soon as possible and provide an opportunity to all those talented youth.

Conclusion:

If the Government of Telangana is banking on the Rythu Bandhu for the farmers (rural population), and Dalit Bandhu scheme for the dalits, it has provided necessary budgetary provisions for the Ministry of Municipal Administration & Urban Development to woo the urban population of the state as well. The 2023-24 budget caters to the needs of all sections of the society specially focusing on the direct cash distribution schemes keeping in mind the next elections. Rythu Bandhu on the rural side, Hyderabad's development & quick response from the law & order in times of crisis to the public on the urban side, offer a good stronghold for the BRS government.

The expenditure on building warehouses, cold storages, connectivity from the farm to the factories & warehouses would have proven to be effective in the long-run if the government had taken such initiatives rather than simply focussing only on providing financial support to the farmer through loan waiver and investment support.

In addition to the above, focussing on establishing special industrial areas, corridors and belts across the state would reduce the disparity among various regions of the state and provide huge sources of revenue for the state government.

Moving forward, there should be a special emphasis on increasing the revenue from capital formation in the same way the government of India has focussed on CapEx while entering into the Amrit Kaal.

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