

**PRESS RELEASE**

**New Delhi: 31 January 2018**

**Ruling government boasts its intentions of transparency, India continuously does poor on indicators representing budget transparency.**

**Budgetary process in India is still non-transparent, non-participative with poor accessibility by citizenry.**

**Transparency International India demand greater transparency in Budgetary Process.**

As Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley gears up to present the Union Budget 2018-19 tomorrow, it is worth noting that on parameters of international standard on budget transparency, Indian budget is considered as less transparent as it provides “limited” budget information in the public domain.

As a part of its advocacy initiatives for **transparency in budgetary process and fiscal accountability**, Transparency India has prepared a report on International best practices after research through secondary resources, feedback with citizens and activists from diverse backgrounds. Objective of this report to highlight the process-related inadequacies and gaps in budgetary process in India and need for improvement.

India is not one of the most transparent countries. India scored 48 on 100 in the Open Budget Survey of 2017. It is interesting to see that all the major powers of the world do have better transparency in their budget processes as compared to other countries. It thus becomes clear that for a nation to emerge as a promising democracy, transparency in the system will be a key factor. India amongst its neighboring countries, fares better than all, but Bangladesh. Economically, not as sound as India, Bangladesh has better transparency than India in its system.

Despite its utmost importance, the state budget in India remains one of the most intractable of documents, incomprehensible for ordinary citizens, specialists and non-specialists alike, making it difficult for the citizenry to participate in shaping public policy.

The lack of budget transparency cannot simply be treated only as a serious violation of democratic rules and good governance. It leads to severe economic and financial problems related to the spread of corruption and waste, meaning that public spending is not rejected in the improvement of citizens’ lives. Knowledge of the state budget should thus not be limited to experts and specialists.

Its high time now for a citizen’s budget for easy understanding of the total budgetary revenue and expenditure statements, the mid-year review pre-budget statement and the audit report to be published on time, not published online or produced only for

government use. Public participation in India's budget is not more than news viewer, while oversight by the legislature on actual expenditure is very limited. Budget in India is still more or less exclusive domain of civil servant due to quite complex system and procedure.

This, however, is not an exhaustive report, Transparency India will soon publish a comprehensive paper after Union Budget 2018-19, which could be used by legislators and political parties for regular-monitoring, and by civil society groups for budgetary watch and advocacy. We shall, therefore, welcome any views or suggestion for its improvement.

Transparency International India (TII) is a leading non political, independent, non-governmental anti-corruption organisation of India. TII has extensive expertise and understanding of issues of corruption in India.

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