GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 200

TO BE ANSWERED ON MONDAY THE 24TH JUNE, 2019
ASHADHA 3, 1941 (SAKA)

"e-FILING OF INCOME-TAX"

200: DR. SUBHASH RAMRAO BHAMRE, SHRI SUNIL DATTATRAY TATKARE, DR. AMOL RAMSING KOLHE, SHRI KULDEEP RAI SHARMA, DR. HEENA GAVIT, SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a marked increase in the number of income tax filed through e-filing;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the number of income tax return processed and the quantum of refunds issued in the current fiscal;

(c) whether the Government has taken any steps to accord high priority to the issue of refunds, particularly to small taxpayers and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government has initiated steps to educate people to file their income tax return through e-filing;

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the other steps taken by the Government to process income tax return in a time-bound manner and to smoothen the process of e-filing?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF FINANCE
(SMT. NIRMALA SITHARAMAN)

(a) & (b): Yes sir. The number of e-Returns submitted for Assessment Year 2018-19 is 6,49,39,586 as against 5,47,30,304 e- Returns filed for the Assessment Year 2017-18, thereby marking an remarkable increase of 18.65% over previous Assessment Year. A total of 7.19 crore Income Tax Returns (ITRs) have been processed in the Financial Year 2018-19. The total amount of refund released in Financial Year 2018-19 is Rs. 1,61,457.6 Crore.

(c) Yes Sir, the Government has accorded high priority to issue refunds for all taxpayers including small taxpayers. Less than 0.5% of ITRs are selected for scrutiny, the majority of ITRs are processed expeditiously and refunds are issued. With greater adoption of information technology in processing of ITRs and emphasis on less intrusive verification, the time taken to process ITRs is constantly reducing. Refunds amounting to Rs.64,700 crores have already been issued in this Financial Year till 18.06. 2019.The Government has made it mandatory from March, 2019 to issue income-tax refunds through ECS only, therefore, expediting direct credit of refunds to bank accounts. Further, all field authorities have been instructed to issue refunds up to Rs 5,000 without any adjustment against outstanding demand, if any.

(d) & (e): Yes Sir. The Government has initiated several measures to educate the tax payers to e-file their ITRs. Outreach measures, including training in e-filing, conducting workshops and awareness programmes, are being undertaken by the Income Tax Department. Aayakar Seva Kendras (ASKs) have been established in all regional offices to address tax payers' concerns and guide them in e-filing their ITRs. The official website of the Income Tax Department offers step by step guidance on how to e-file the ITRs. The Government is also utilizing print media, audio and visual media as well as social media to educate people to file their ITRs through e-filing. Regular advertisements are placed in Newspapers and News Portals in internet each year during peak e-filing periods to educate and encourage taxpayers to submit their ITRs online. A total of 26.9 crore SMS and e-mails were sent to taxpayers in Financial Year 2018-19 reminding them for timely submission of ITRs and other important requirements.

(f): Yes Sir. Recently, in January, 2019, the Government has approved Integrated E-filing & Centralized Processing Centre (CPC) 2.0 Project of the Income Tax Department. The details of the CPC 2.0 Project are:

(i) CPC 2.0 Project envisages pre-filling of ITRs by the Income-tax Department and its acceptance by the taxpayer so as to improve accuracy of information contained in the Return and drastically reduce the existing turnaround time taken in processing of Returns and issuance of refunds.

(ii) CPC 2.0 Project will process ITRs in a consistent, uniform, rule driven, identity blind manner. This would ensure fairness in tax treatment to all taxpayers irrespective of their status.

(iii) The CPC 2.0 Project would significantly improve transparency and accountability of Income-tax Department as processing of returns and issuance of refunds would take place without any interface with the Department.

(iv) CPC 2.0 Project would adhere to international best practices and standards. It would keep the taxpayer informed by providing processing status update, speedy communication using mobile app, email, SMS and through website of the Income-tax Department.

(v) CPC 2.0 Project envisages setting up of integrated contact centres for taxpayer's assistance and undertaking outreach programs involving taxpayers and other stakeholders through digital media in an effective manner.

Thus, CPC 2.0 Project besides promoting the Government objective of promoting voluntary tax-compliance culture would also smoothen the process of e-filing and processing of ITRs and will also bring about a significant enhancement in services to the taxpayers.

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