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Only minor savings due to cut in legislators' pay, says study

Several States had reduced allowances in view of pandemic

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The reduction in salaries and allowances of legislators of six States, effected with the intention of supplementing the States' resources in tackling the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, is likely to lead to only "negligible savings" in the annual budgeted expenditure of the States, according to a study.

Carried out by the PRS Legislative Research, a New Delhi-based think tank, the study has covered Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Himachal Pradesh. After the outbreak of the pandemic in late March, the States had promulgated ordinances, envisaging cut in salaries

and certain allowances ranging from 15% to 30%.

The reduction, which came into effect from April, touched upon several components such as basic or fixed salary and sumptuary allowance. In Gujarat, the basic salary of ₹98,500 for Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Leader of the Opposition, has been reduced to ₹68,950.

In Karnataka, this has been lowered from ₹50,000 to ₹35,000, which is for Chief Minister and presiding officers of the legislature. In Himachal Pradesh, the fixed salary of Chief Minister is now ₹66,500 from ₹95,000. In Kerala, even the constituency allowance has not

been spared – from ₹40,000 it is down to ₹28,000.

As for the total amount of annual savings, it has been assessed as ₹2.1 crore for Bihar; ₹5.8 crore for Gujarat; ₹4.3 crore for Himachal Pradesh; ₹15.9 crore for Karnataka; ₹3.1 crore for Kerala and ₹17.4 crore for Uttar Pradesh. In terms of proportion of the total budgeted expenditure of the States, this ranges from 0.001% for Bihar to 0.002% for Kerala to 0.003% each for Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh to 0.007% for Karnataka to 0.009% for Himachal Pradesh.

The study also referred to the practice of some countries in appointing independent authorities to determine the pay of legislators.