

THE ANNUAL SURVEY OF STATE LAWS IN INDIA

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PUDUCHERRY

CHARAN TEJ*

Introduction

The Constitution (Fourteenth Amendment) Act, 1962 empowered Parliament to establish a Legislature or Council of Ministers or both for Union Territories, including Pondicherry.¹ Accordingly, a Legislative Assembly for the Union Territory of Puducherry was constituted under Article 239A of the Constitution of India.² Pondicherry was also allotted one seat in the Rajya Sabha and one seat in the Lok Sabha, as outlined in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution.³ Following the elections in 2021, the 15th Legislative Assembly of the union territory was constituted.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this survey, Extraordinary Gazette-II has been chosen as the most appropriate source as it specifically publishes legislative matters including delegated legislation/Executive Legislations. In addition to the Gazette of Pondicherry, online news sources were also surveyed to identify any significant legislative developments that cannot be discerned from the gazette or to corroborate information published in the Gazette.

Quantitative Analysis

In the 12 monthly issues published in Extraordinary Gazette Part-II in 2023 the survey identified 102 entries and shortlisted 78 notifications after excluding duplicate entries and notifications not directly related to legislative matters. These notifications were categorised

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¹ The Constitution (Fourteenth Amendment) Act, 1962, §4.

² Parliament enacted the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, which provided for the establishment of a 30-member Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers for the Union Territory of Puducherry.

³ The Constitution (Fourteenth Amendment) Act, 1962, §6.

into distinct sectors, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the legislative priorities and focus areas of the government during this period.

Legislative Assembly

In 2023, the Puducherry Assembly experienced limited activity, as only four bills were introduced and passed. Among these two were appropriation Acts. In addition, changes were made to the Puducherry Members of the Legislative Assembly (Prevention of Disqualification) Amendment Bill, 2023. And the Puducherry Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

Further, two significant resolutions were passed in the Puducherry Assembly: the first being a demand for statehood and the second sought the declaration of 'Thirukural' as the national book.

Delegated Legislation

The Lieutenant Governor who heads the executive plays a significant role in creating and amending the rules, guidelines, bye-laws etc. 2023 witnessed a flurry of activity in this regard. The 72 notifications have been categorised by sector and by the nature of the legislation. This dual categorization provides a multi-dimensional view of the legislative process, highlighting both the thematic areas of governance and the specific legal instruments used to address issues within those sectors.

Sectoral Breakdown

The notifications are categorized into distinct sectors reflecting the thematic areas of governance and public policy addressed by the government as follows:

Sector	Number	Percentage
Primary Sector (Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Fisheries)	25	34.72%
Welfare (Social Welfare, Adi Dravidar, STs, Housing)	17	23.61%
Development (Education, Health, Environment, Transport, Civil Supplies)	8	11.12%
Industry and Labour	6	8.33%
Administration and Governance (Revenue, Municipality, Local Administration, Home, Finance, Law, Legislative Assembly, Chief Secretariat)	15	20.84%
Art and Culture	1	1.39%

Nature Of Notification

The following breakdown provides insights into the specific nature of actions undertaken.

Type of Update	Number	Percentage
Guidelines/Rules	18	25%

Type of Update	Number	Percentage
Amendments to existing schemes, rules etc.	31	43.06%
Mandating Aadhaar for accessing benefits and services	6	8.33%
Central Schemes	5	6.94%
Bye Laws	2	2.78%

Qualitative Analysis

Legislative Assembly

The Puducherry Members of the Legislative Assembly (Prevention of Disqualification) Amendment Act, 2023

The Principal Act protected the holders of certain offices of profit to be chosen as Members of the Legislative Assembly. According to Section 3 of the Act, a list of offices specified in the Schedule are exempted from disqualification for Legislative Assembly membership. Over time, amendments have been made to include additional offices within the Schedule as and when the need arose. The 2023 Amendment, to the Schedule includes members of the "Union Territory of Puducherry Animal Welfare Board"⁴ in this list.

The Puducherry Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023

Pursuant to the amendments prescribed vide Central Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023 and Integrated Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023, the Puducherry Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023 was enacted.⁵ The amendments introduced are notably focused on the realm of online gaming. These amendments bring about specific rules for the determination of the value of the supply of specified actionable claims in the context of online gaming. This indicates a targeted effort to regulate any tax transactions involving actionable claims in the online gaming sector. The imposition of mandatory registration for overseas online money gaming service providers is reflective of the government's intention to bring foreign operators within the regulatory ambit, ensuring that they comply with local tax laws and contribute to the tax base.

Statehood for the Union Territory of Puducherry

The demand for statehood for Puducherry has been a longstanding issue, evidenced by the fact that this is the fourteenth time that a statehood resolution has been passed. Though

⁴ The Puducherry Members of The Legislative Assembly (Prevention of Disqualification) Amendment Act, 2023 (Act no 5 of 2023).

⁵ Puducherry Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Act,2023 (Act 4 of 2023).

this resolution was tabled by a private member and Leader of Opposition, it was passed unanimously.⁶

The Chief Minister of Puducherry saw statehood as the only solution to deal with the stress caused by the attitude of officers towards the government. However, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs reiterated its stand of retaining the status of a union territory for Puducherry.⁷

'Thirukural' As National Book

A resolution was passed urging the Centre to declare 'Thirukural' as the national book. Thirukural is a collection of moral couplets, penned by the revered saint-poet Thiruvalluvar. This resolution seeks to acknowledge the universal appeal and enduring wisdom of 'Thirukural', making it a symbol of India's cultural diversity and moral values.

Delegated Legislation

In stark contrast to the modest number of bills passed by the Assembly, executive legislation dominated the legislative landscape covering a wide range of issues across different sectors, from agriculture and welfare to administration and industry. The delegated legislation in Puducherry reveals certain clear patterns that reflect the government's evolving approach towards welfare delivery, governance, and regulatory reforms.

A trend towards 'Aadhaarisation'

This reflects a broader national movement toward integrating Aadhaar as a central mechanism for delivering public welfare benefits and services. Six notifications were issued to mandate Aadhaar authentication across numerous welfare programs targeting marginalised and disabled individuals. These initiatives include financial incentives for specific life events, scholarships, and essential aid to promote accessibility and well-being. Programs supporting the elderly and vulnerable communities, such as distribution of basic necessities and assistance to NGOs running care facilities, also require Aadhaar authentication.⁸ The Department of Women and Child Development mandated Aadhaar to ensure targeted delivery of benefits to vulnerable women and children of two prominent

⁶“Resolution seeking statehood passed in Puducherry Assembly,” ANI News available at: <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/resolution-seeking-statehood-passed-in-puducherry-assembly20230401000707/> (last visited December 28, 2024).

⁷ The Hindu Bureau, *Puducherry's Status as Union Territory to Continue for Now: Union Ministry of Home Affairs*, THE HINDU, Oct. 9, 2023, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/puducherry/puducherrys-status-as-ut-to-continue-for-now-says-mha/article67399129.ece> (last visited Dec 30, 2024).

⁸ Directorate of Social Welfare, *Aadhaar as Identity Document for Delivery of Services or Benefits* (G.O. Ms. No. 11/SWS/2023-24/7401, Puducherry, Dated 18th September 2023); Social Welfare Department, *Aadhaar as Identity Document for Delivery of Benefits* (G.O. Ms. No. 01/SWS/2022-23/5615, Puducherry, Dated 2nd January 2023).

schemes—the Monthly Financial Assistance for Women Heads of BPL Families and the Chief Minister Cares Scheme for the Empowerment of Newborn Girl Children.⁹

To streamline subsidies related to energy consumption, targeting low-income domestic users and agricultural consumers Aadhaar has been made mandatory.¹⁰ Programs supporting education and skill enhancement for backward classes and minorities also require Aadhaar verification. These include financial aid for students at various educational levels, skill development support for artisans, and other measures aimed at improving educational outcomes.¹¹ The Revenue and Disaster Management Department made Aadhaar mandatory for the two schemes viz., the Monthly Financial Assistance for BPL Women Heads of Families and the Chief Minister Cares Scheme for the Girl Child.¹²

Trend of Amending

A notable trend in Puducherry's delegated legislation is the focus on amending existing schemes, guidelines, rules, and byelaws, comprising nearly 43% of all executive legislation. These amendments aim to enhance benefits for vulnerable groups, modernize schemes, and ensure inclusivity.

Several amendments have substantially increased financial assistance and benefits for marginalized groups. Incentives for marriages between disabled and non-disabled persons have been quadrupled, ostensibly to encourage inclusion.¹³ Financial assistance for funeral expenses of deceased fishermen pensioners¹⁴ and subsidies for aquaculture have also been significantly enhanced.¹⁵

⁹ Women And Child Development Secretariat, Aadhaar as an Identity Document for Delivery of Services or Benefits or Subsidies [G.O. Ms. No. 10/2023-WCD(SW-IV)/1205, Puducherry, Dated 7th August 2023].

¹⁰ Industrial Development (Power) Department, Aadhaar as an Identity Document for Subsidies (G.O. Ms. No. 07, Puducherry, Dated 31st January 2023).

¹¹ Directorate For The Welfare Of Backward Classes And Minorities, Aadhaar as an Identity Document for Delivery of Services or Benefits (G.O. Ms. No. 15/SWS/2023-24/429, Puducherry, Dated 28th November 2023).

¹² Department Of Revenue And Disaster Management, Aadhaar as an Identity Document for Applying for Online Certificates(G.O. Ms. No. 11/31523/DRDM/DPA/CENTAC Software/2023/4958, Puducherry, Dated 14th July 2023).

¹³ Directorate of Social Welfare, Amendment to the Rules for the Grant of Incentive for the Marriage between Disabled and Normal Persons, 1986. [G.O. Ms. No. 04/2022/Wel.(SW)/5641, Puducherry, Dated 29th December 2022], <https://styandptg.py.gov.in/2023/exordinarylljan23.html>.

¹⁴ Chief Secretariat, Enhancement of Financial Assistance for Funeral Expenses of the Deceased Fishermen Pensioners (G.O. Ms. No. 10/FY, Puducherry, Dated 29th March 2023).

¹⁵ Chief Secretariat, Enhancement of Grant of Input Subsidy to Fish Farmers in the Union Territory of Puducherry (G.O. Ms. No. 06/FY., Puducherry, Dated 19th September 2023).

Trend towards Modernisation

Many sector-specific schemes have been revised to include modern components, reflecting a focus on safety, technological advancement, and efficiency. Notable examples include the addition of life-saving appliances and communication devices in fisheries schemes.¹⁶ Additionally, rural property ownership cards have been introduced, allowing beneficiaries to use these as financial assets, improving their access to loans and other financial services.¹⁷

Trend towards Inclusiveness

Inclusivity and social justice are at the core of many amendments. Age limits for financial assistance to Scheduled Caste and Tribe members suffering from prolonged diseases have been eliminated, extending support to all age groups.¹⁸ Gender-neutral language has been introduced in municipal election rules, ensuring equal recognition and inclusivity for all genders in civic processes.¹⁹ Funeral assistance for Scheduled Caste beneficiaries has been increased.²⁰

To streamline benefit delivery, several schemes now employ Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanisms. Financial assistance for Scheduled Caste and Tribe students pursuing education in private schools and higher education institutions is transferred directly to bank accounts, reducing delays and ensuring accountability.²¹ Increased budgets for school events further enhance educational opportunities and experiences for students.²²

¹⁶ Chief Secretariat, Supply of Subsidized Fishery Requisites and Life Saving Appliances and Communication Devices Including Transponder Scheme, 2023 (G.O. Ms. No. 12/FY/378, Puducherry, Dated 31st March 2023).

¹⁷ Chief Secretariat, The Puducherry House Sites/Houses Allotment (Under The Scheme Of Provision Of House Sites/ Houses to Scheduled Castes) (Amendment) Rules, 2022 [G.O. Ms. No. 07/2023/Wel(SCW), Puducherry, Dated 27th June 2023].

¹⁸ Chief Secretariat, Grant of Financial Assistance to Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe Patients Suffering from Prolonged Diseases, Rules 2001 [G.O. Ms. No. 12/2023/Wel.(SCW), Puducherry, Dated 02nd November 2023].

¹⁹ Local Administration Secretariat, Puducherry Municipalities (Registration of Electors) (Amendments) Rules, 2023 (G.O. Ms. No. 20/LAS/A1/2023, Puducherry, Dated 17th March 2023).

²⁰ Adi Dravidar Welfare And Scheduled Tribes Welfare Secretariat, The Pondicherry Grant of Financial Assistance to Scheduled Caste for Funeral Rites, 1982. [G.O. Ms. No. 01/2023/Wel.(SCW)/1344, Puducherry, Dated 09th January 2023].

²¹ Chief Secretariat, Scheme for the Grant of Full Fees to the Eligible Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Students, Irrespective of Their Family Income Studying in Any Government/Government Aided/Private School Recognized by Government and to Pursue Higher/Professional Courses in Colleges and Universities Anywhere in India (Amendment) Rules, 2023 [G.O. Ms. No. 11/2023/Wel(SCW), Puducherry, Dated 09th October 2023].

²² Chief Secretariat, Quantum of Expenditure Applicable (G.O. Ms. No. 45, Puducherry, Dated 18th November 2023).

Sectoral View

In this part, significant legislative measures introduced through delegated legislation across various sectors are analyzed. While legislative measures span a wide range of areas, only prominent reforms having significant impact have been considered for this analysis.

Primary Sector

A major reform in this sector is the introduction of new/revised guidelines²³ for regulating groundwater extraction, aligned with the Puducherry Ground Water (Control and Regulation) Act, 2002. These guidelines, implemented in accordance with the directives of the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA), aim to control over-extraction of groundwater. Under these provisions, users must obtain permits before sinking tubewells in notified areas. Exemptions for agriculture, however, are granted, provided tubewells are registered with the Puducherry Ground Water Authority. Further, strict restrictions are imposed in the Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ), prohibiting the construction of tubewells within 500 meters of the high-tide line to protect coastal water resources.

Another significant initiative in this sector is the “*En Veedu En Nalam*” scheme²⁴, which promotes rooftop and backyard cultivation of vegetables and fruits. This scheme, launched on a pilot basis in urban and rural areas, focuses on improving household nutritional security by distributing horticultural inputs worth ₹5,000 per beneficiary. The scheme adopts a cluster-based approach, encouraging community participation with groups of 15–20 members per cluster. This initiative not only supports urban agriculture but also promotes self-sufficiency in food production for families across Puducherry.

Social Welfare

Much of the delegated legislation in the social welfare sector focused on targeted financial support for vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. A notable legislative reform is the “*Monthly Financial Assistance to Women Heads of Families Living Below Poverty Line (BPL) Rules, 2023*”²⁵, which provides monthly financial assistance of ₹1,000 to eligible women aged between 21 and 55 years. This scheme aims to reduce gender-based financial disparities and enhance women’s economic participation. The assistance is disbursed

²³ Chief Secretariat, Regulations of Ground Water Usage(G.O. Ms. No. 2/Ag., Puducherry, Dated 12th April 2023).

²⁴ En Veedu En Nalam (G.O. Ms. No. 19/Ag., Puducherry, dated 18th January 2023).

²⁵ Women And Child Development Secretariat, Grant of Monthly Financial Assistance to Women Who Are Heads of Families Living Below Poverty Line (BPL) (G.O. Ms. No. 01/2023-WCD(SW-IV)/203, Puducherry, Dated 13th January 2023).

directly to beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) into Aadhaar-linked bank accounts, ensuring transparency and efficiency in payment.

Additionally, the “CM Cares Scheme for the Empowerment of the Newborn Girl Child”²⁶ seeks to improve the financial security of girl children by depositing ₹50,000 in a Sukanya Samridhi Account for every eligible girl born on or after March 17, 2023. The account matures when the child attains the age of 21, providing a substantial corpus for higher education or other financial needs. This scheme symbolizes a long-term commitment to promoting gender equality by addressing socio-economic challenges faced by girl children and their families.

In a bid to ensure fair opportunities for students from government schools, the Puducherry administration has announced a 10% horizontal reservation²⁷ for government school students in medical admissions under the government quota. The reservation applies to MBBS, BDS, and BAMS courses in both government and private self-financing medical colleges across the Union Territory, starting from the 2023-24 academic year. The decision by the Government was on account of mounting public demand for equitable treatment of students studying in government institutions, who have struggled to secure seats in medical colleges since the introduction of NEET. By the State’s own admission, the data from the last five years indicated that only a small number of government school students managed to gain admission in medical courses, as they often could not compete with students from private schools who had access to specialized coaching.²⁸ The Puducherry Council of Ministers resolved to implement a 10% reservation policy for local government school students qualifying NEET and following the approval by the Lieutenant Governor and consultations with the Ministry of Home Affairs, the same has been notified.

Development

These schemes are intended to improve the quality of life for the residents of Puducherry, particularly vulnerable groups, by enhancing access to healthcare, ensuring cleaner cooking alternatives, improving road safety, and providing nutritious food to students.

The Puducherry State Health Agency²⁹ was established to improve access to quality healthcare and reduce the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by families for secondary and

²⁶ Women And Child Development Secretariat, CM Cares Scheme for the Empowerment of New Born Girl Child of the Union Territory of Puducherry Rules, 2023 [G.O. Ms. No. 08/2023-WCD(SW-IV)/1056, Puducherry, Dated 06th July 2023].

²⁷ Chief Secretariat (Health), Horizontal Reservation (G.O. Ms. No. 52).

²⁸ Id.

²⁹ Health Secretariat, The Memorandum of Association, Rules and Regulations and Bye-Laws for the Puducherry State Health Agency (G.O. Ms. No. 39, Puducherry, Dated 08th June 2023).

tertiary health services. It aims to provide trauma and critical illness care, as well as specialty and super-specialty treatments for all sections of the population, including Below the Poverty Line (BPL) families. This initiative reflects the government's commitment to reducing catastrophic health expenditures and ensuring healthcare coverage for the vulnerable population.

To promote the use of clean cooking "*Chief Minister's Scheme for LPG Subsidy Scheme*"³⁰ was enacted whereby subsidies will be provided for LPG cylinders to BPL and APL ration cardholders. The subsidy, which is credited directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), is intended to facilitate the adoption of LPG and support the goal of smokeless cooking, reducing reliance on traditional, polluting fuels. The scheme, which provides a subsidy of ₹300 per LPG cylinder for Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) ration card holders, and ₹150 for Above Poverty Line (APL) card holders, is capped at 12 cylinders of 14.2 kg per year. However, on implementation, it has been reported that only 52% of families have benefitted.³¹

Further, "*The Provision of Millet Snacks Scheme*"³² aims to provide healthy and nutritious millet-based snacks to students in government and government-aided schools across Puducherry. This initiative, which targets students from Pre-KG to 12th standard, seeks to improve student enrolment, reduce dropouts, and promote better nutritional habits. By providing millet cookies or chikkies twice a week, the scheme enhances student well-being and supports their overall development.

The Puducherry Energy Conservation Fund³³ was established to meet the financial requirements for promoting energy efficiency across various sectors within the Union Territory. Funded by grants and loans from the Government of Puducherry, the Central Government, and other organizations, the fund is managed by a State Level Steering Committee. It supports energy-saving projects in public buildings, street lighting, water pumping stations, and industrial sectors, focusing on reducing energy consumption and

³⁰ Department Of Civil Supplies And Consumer Affairs, Grant of Subsidy for LPG Cylinder" to All the BPL and APL Ration Cardholders Excluding Honorary/Green Ration Cards of Union Territory of Puducherry Rules, 2023. (G.O. Ms. No. 1, Puducherry, Dated 06th July 2023).

³¹ Debjani Dutta, *Only 52 per Cent Families Benefit from LPG Subsidy Scheme in Puducherry*, THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS (2024), <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2024/Aug/27/only-52-per-cent-families-benefit-from-lpg-subsidy-scheme-in-puducherry> (last visited Jan 3, 2025).

³² Directorate Of School Education, Provision of Millet Snacks Scheme (G.O. Ms. No. 41, Puducherry, Dated 16th November 2023).

³³ Chief Secretariat, Puducherry Energy Conservation Fund Rules, 2023 (G.O. Ms. No. 13/2023-Env., Puducherry, Dated 03rd November 2023).

costs. The fund operates on a revolving investment model, where savings from energy efficiency projects are reinvested into future initiatives.

The Puducherry Employees' State Insurance Society was established to manage healthcare services under the Employees State Insurance (ESI) Act 1948.³⁴ It operates and maintains various medical facilities, including dispensaries, hospitals, and emergency services, ensuring that ESI beneficiaries receive quality care. The Society aims to encourage employer and employee participation in the scheme, thus expanding coverage and benefits. Additionally, the Society is responsible for formulating policies to efficiently manage ESI medical establishments, including the admission process, charges, and services provided. It also focuses on capacity building through training programs and workshops, enhancing the skills of healthcare professionals and beneficiaries alike. This contributes to the overall well-being of the workforce in Puducherry by providing accessible and effective healthcare services.

Puducherry has seen a significant increase in the number of registered vehicles, with over 13 lakh vehicles as of 2023. As a response to concerns over road accidents, which have been on the rise due to increased urbanization, vehicle ownership, and traffic congestion Puducherry Road Safety Policy and Action Plan 2023-2028³⁵ was enacted. The road safety policy addresses the urgent need for a systematic approach to reducing accidents and fatalities, with a specific focus on the highest-risk areas, including urban roads. The policy has set ambitious goals to reduce road accidents by at least 10% over the next five years, aiming for zero growth in accident rates thereafter. It lays out a comprehensive strategy based on the six E's of road safety: Education, Enforcement, Engineering (infrastructure), Engineering (safer vehicles), Emergency care, and Enactment (strengthening institutional mechanisms). These measures will be implemented through coordinated efforts across various government departments, and the use of advanced technologies will be central to improving enforcement and road user behaviour. Additionally, the post-accident management aspect of the policy ensures that trauma care and social security systems are in place to reduce fatalities and improve recovery outcomes for accident victims.

The Puducherry Child and Adolescent Labour Rehabilitation Fund Scheme³⁶ provides financial assistance to children or adolescents rescued from labour in violation of the Child

³⁴ Labour Department, Puducherry Employee's State Insurance Society (G.O. Ms. No. 5/AIL/Lab./G/2023, Puducherry, Dated 10th April 2023).

³⁵ Transport Secretariat, Road Safety Policy and Action Plan 2023-2028 (g.o. Ms. No. 07/Tr.Sectt./2023, Puducherry, Dated 19th October 2023).

³⁶ Labour Department, Puducherry Child and Adolescent Labour Rehabilitation Fund Scheme (G.O. Ms. No. 07/Lab./LO(WS)/AIL/2023, Puducherry, Dated 16th May 2023).

and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. Eligibility for the fund requires the child to have been employed illegally, rescued, and enrolled in a school or training centre under the Right to Education Act, 2009. The rescued child must continue their education, and their personal details, including bank account information, must be collected.

The Puducherry City Gas Distribution (CGD) Policy 2023³⁷ aims to promote the use of natural gas as a cleaner, greener fuel in the Union Territory of Puducherry. This policy supports the Government of India's goal to increase the share of natural gas in the country's energy mix. It focuses on the development of natural gas infrastructure, including Piped Natural Gas (PNG) for households and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) for vehicles. The policy aims to ensure safe operations, reliable supply, and timely permissions for CGD projects, with a focus on industrial, commercial, transportation, and household use. Additionally, it encourages CNG/LNG use in transportation and aims to provide value-added services and employment opportunities.

The Government enacted the “*Integrated Logistics Infrastructure, Multi-Modal Logistics Park, and Warehouse Policy*,”³⁸ recognizing the critical role logistics plays in economic growth. With the region’s unique geography, comprising four coastal enclaves, this policy aims to streamline logistics by addressing challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, unorganized operations, and a lack of skilled workers. The goal is to position Puducherry as a global logistics hub, connecting seamlessly with neighboring states and enhancing its role in both domestic and international trade. By creating state-of-the-art logistics parks and warehouses, the policy promotes the use of green energy, cost-effective solutions, and modern technologies. It also focuses on fostering public-private partnerships, boosting investment, and developing a skilled workforce through targeted training programs for the logistics sector.

Other Significant Events

Green Budgeting

In a progressive step towards integrating environmental consciousness into government initiatives, Puducherry has introduced Green Budgeting as a strategic tool to promote sustainability. This policy innovation focuses on embedding environmental and climate

³⁷ Directorate Of Industries and Commerce, PUDUCHERRY CITY GAS DISTRIBUTION POLICY, 2023 (G.O. Ms. No. 7/Ind&Com/Tech/U-I/T10/2023-24, Puducherry, Dated 09th October 2023).

³⁸ Directorate Of Industries and Commerce, *Puducherry Integrated Logistics Infrastructure, Multi-Modal Logistics Park and Warehouse Policy, 2023* (g.o. Ms. No. 12/Ind&com/T10/Logistic Policy/2023-24, Puducherry, Dated 10th November 2023)).

sensitivity across departmental goals, schemes, and policies. By fostering a system-wide approach, it aims to align government actions with global sustainability efforts. The report highlights five baseline indicators, including the total green budget, the proportion of green allocations within identified schemes, and the percentage of green expenditure relative to the total budget.³⁹ Additionally, it tracks departmental contributions and the number of budget line items featuring green components.

With the 2022-23 baseline indicators in place, Puducherry's green budgeting initiative marks a significant move towards achieving sustainable development and enhancing environmental accountability in governance. The government hopes this will inspire more departments to innovate and invest in green components, ensuring a sustainable future for the region.

The Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2023⁴⁰

It was introduced in the Lok Sabha with the aim to provide one-third reservation for women in the Legislative Assembly of Puducherry. The proposed amendment to the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 seeks to enhance women's representation and participation in the legislative process. This is in pursuant to the Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023 enacted by the Parliament to pave way for reservation of one-third of the total number of seats for women in the House of the People, Legislative Assembly of every State and the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The reservation will come into effect after the publication of the next census, following which delimitation will be carried out to allocate reserved seats for women. The provision is intended to be in place for 15 years, with scope for extension as determined by future parliamentary legislation. Additionally, the Bill mandates rotation of reserved seats after each delimitation exercise, ensuring equitable representation over time.

Conclusion

The Assembly of Puducherry in 2023 witnessed a relatively low level of legislative activity, with the passage of only four acts and two resolutions. This limited legislative output raises concerns about the effectiveness of the Assembly in addressing crucial issues and fulfilling its role as the representative body of the people.

³⁹ THE ENERGY AND RESOURCES INSTITUTE: SHAILLY KEDIA, PALAK KHANNA, & DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT: SAGAYA ALFRED, KALAMEGAM K AND BALAJI T, *Puducherry Green Budget Report 2023*.

⁴⁰ Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill 2023.

Two of the Acts passed were appropriation acts, which primarily focus on budgetary allocations and financial matters. While essential, the preponderance of such Acts may indicate a lack of diversity in legislative initiatives and a possible oversight in addressing pressing non-financial issues. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Amendment, was a mere reiteration of changes prescribed by the Centre.

However, the executive legislation was significant, with several significant policy measures introduced to address administrative priorities and socio-economic challenges. This highlights the dominating role of executive actions in shaping the governance landscape of Puducherry. While delegated legislation is crucial for effective administration, it cannot substitute the broader legislative mandate of debate, discussion, and lawmaking on diverse issues impacting citizens' lives. Fostering a more dynamic legislative environment, encouraging comprehensive deliberations, and expanding the scope of legislative activity will be vital to ensuring that the Assembly of Puducherry fulfils its democratic role effectively.