

# A STUDY ON INDIRECT TAXES IN INDIA – A POST REFORM APPROACH

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#### **ABSTRACT**

"A study on Indirect tax in India – A Post reform approach" is a study analyses the growth trend of indirect taxes in India. It is a positive and time series study and it is based on secondary data. The main objective of this study is to find out the growth trend of indirect tax and its components. Also this study finds out the tax buoyancy of Indian taxes. Moreover this study proves that "Tax buoyancy is less than unity". This study concludes that the share of excise duty in tax revenue has moderately decreased and the share of customs duty in tax revenue has sharply decreased during the study period.

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#### **Introduction:**

In modern days, the expenditure of the Government increasing day by day for which the Government forced to raise their revenue through tax and non – tax sources. Tax revenue is always elastic, certain and lump sum but the non – tax revenue is meager, uncertain and inelastic in nature. There are some pros and cons for direct and indirect tax. This study analyses the growth trend of indirect taxes and its components from 1991 - 1992 to 2018 - 2019.

#### **Statement of the Problem:**

The main aim of economic reforms in 1991 is to reduce the fiscal deficit at the level of 3.5 % in National income. There are two possibilities to reduce the fiscal deficit. First one is to reduce the expenditure but this is impossible because most of the expenditures are committed in nature. The second one is to raise the revenue. Direct taxes are progressive and reduce the disparity of income and it affects the willingness to work and save. Indirect taxes are highly elastic and regressive in nature and also it will create a disparity of income in the economy. Therefore the problem of Indian Government is whether they prefer direct tax or indirect tax because both taxes have merits and demerits. This study analyses the growth trend of Indirect taxes in India. This study gives an answer to the following questions.

- 1. What is the growth trend of indirect tax in India?
- 2. Whether the indirect tax grows faster than the direct tax or not?
- 3. Which tax gives more revenue to the Government of India?
- 4. Is the excise duty grows faster than the customs duty in India?
- 5. How far the indirect tax increases when National income increases?

# **Objectives:**

The general objective of this study is to find out the growth trend of indirect tax of India. The specific objectives are

- 1. To analyses the growth trend of tax revenue in India.
- 2. To find out the growth rate of indirect tax in India.
- 3. To compare the indirect tax with direct tax in India.
- 4. To compare the excise duty with customs duty in India.
- 5. To calculate the tax buoyancy of India.

# **Hypotheses:**

This study is based on the following three hypotheses.

- 1. Direct tax grows faster than the indirect tax
- 2. Excise duty grows faster than the customs duty.
- 3. Tax buoyancy is less than unity.

#### **Methodology:**

This study comes under the positive theory of public finance and it is based upon the secondary data and data can be collected from the Handbook of statistics on Indian Economy published by RBI. For assessing the variations in the revenue levels of the central government of India, we have made use of the per capita revenue / per capita tax. For calculating per capita taxes, population data from the year 1991 to 2019 are needed and the growth rate of population were collected from census reports for the year 1991, 2001 and 2011. Population figures for individual years were estimated by the researcher with the help of the growth rate.

To know the trend of tax revenues on various sources for the period from 1991 - 1992 to 2018 - 2019 growth rate has been estimated. In order to compute growth rate, the compound annual growth rate has been estimated. The formula for compound annual growth rate is

$$Y = ab^x$$

Where x = year and y = value

To find out the buoyancy of the tax revenue, regression co-efficient has been calculated on the basis of exponential type of relationship between the dependent variable of per capita tax revenue and independent variable of per capita National income.

The formula used is  $\log y = a + b \log x$ 

The regression co-efficient 'b' becomes the buoyancy of tax revenue.

#### TAX REVENUE IN INDIA:

The sum of all receipts from the taxes and all other duties under the Government of India are referred to as tax revenue. Tax revenue is a compulsory payment to the Government by the households, firms or any other institutional units. It is the main source of regular receipts of the Government and is categorized into direct taxes and indirect taxes.

TABLE - 1
TAX REVENUE OF INDIA AT CURRENT PRICE

YEAR	<b>Absolute Amount</b>	Per Capita	Percentage to Total
	(Rs. in Crores)	Amount (in Rs.)	Revenue Receipts
1991 – 1992	50069	591.55	75.83
1992 – 1993	54044	625.08	72.91
1993 – 1994	53449	605.45	70.84
1994 – 1995	67454	748.57	74.06
1995 – 1996	81939	891.32	74.40
1996 – 1997	93701	999.48	74.20
1997 – 1998	95672	1000.96	71.46
1998 – 1999	104652	1074.46	70.01
1999 – 2000	128271	1292.79	70.68
2000 - 2001	136658	1352.38	70.95
2001 – 2002	133532	1298.07	66.33
2002 – 2003	158544	1514.56	68.68
2003 – 2004	186982	1755.70	70.88
2004 – 2005	224798	2075.51	73.47
2005 – 2006	270264	2454.05	77.87
2006 – 2007	351182	3137.23	80.85
2007 – 2008	439547	3863.81	81.12
2008 – 2009	443319	3835.93	82.06
2009 – 2010	456536	3889.05	79.70
2010 – 2011	569868	4780.77	72.28
2011 – 2012	629764	5204.23	83.81
2012 – 2013	741877	6014.41	84.38
2013 – 2014	815854	6527.88	80.40
2014 – 2015	903615	7136.43	82.04
2015 – 2016	943765	7356.50	78.97

2016 – 2017	1101372	8473.40	80.15
2017 – 2018	1242488	9558.34	86.57
2018 – 2019	1317211	10131.61	84.82
CAGR	13.77	11.85	

**Note:** CAGR – Compound Annual Growth rate

Source: 1. Absolute amount – Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy

2. Per Capita amount – Computed by the Researcher

From table -1, we know that the tax revenue at current price has increased from Rs.50069 crores in 1991 - 1992 to Rs.1317211 crores in 2018 - 2019 at the compound annual growth rate of 13.77 per cent. The per capita tax revenue also increased from Rs.591.55 in 1991 - 1992 to Rs.10131.61 in 2018 - 2019 at the compound annual growth rate of 11.85 per cent. The percentage of tax revenue to total revenue receipts has increased from 75.83 percent in 1991 - 1992 to 84.82 per cent in 2018 - 2019.

This table conveys that the tax revenue increases rapidly during the study period because of increase in direct and indirect taxes.

TABLE - 2
SHARE OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT TAXES IN TAX REVENUE

YEAR	Direct Tax % to	Indirect Tax % to
	Tax Revenue	Tax Revenue
1991 – 1992	20.18	79.82
1992 – 1993	22.34	77.66
1993 – 1994	23.43	76.57
1994 – 1995	27.29	72.71
1995 – 1996	27.20	72.80
1996 – 1997	27.08	72.92
1997 – 1998	28.40	71.60
1998 – 1999	30.69	71.89
1999 – 2000	32.30	67.70
2000 - 2001	36.33	63.67
2001 - 2002	35.72	64.28
2002 - 2003	38.86	61.14
2003 – 2004	40.96	59.04
2004 – 2005	42.68	57.32
2005 – 2006	44.66	55.34
2006 – 2007	48.33	51.67
2007 - 2008	52.68	47.32
2008 - 2009	55.98	44.02
2009 – 2010	59.50	40.50
2010 - 2011	55.01	44.99
2011 – 2012	54.51	45.49
2012 – 2013	53.46	46.54

2013 – 2014	55.87	44.13
2014 – 2015	55.39	44.61
2015 – 2016	47.61	52.39
2016 – 2017	47.33	52.67
2017 – 2018	48.79	51.21
2018 – 2019	54.93	45.07

Source:

1. Direct tax percentage to tax revenue

Computed by the

2. Indirect tax percentage to tax revenue

Researcher

The share of direct and indirect taxes in tax revenue shown in Table -5. The share of direct tax percentage to tax revenue has increased from 20.18 per cent in 1991 - 1992 to 54.93 per cent in 2018 - 2019. The share in indirect tax percentage to tax revenue has decreased from 79.82 per cent in 1991 - 1992 to 45.07 per cent in 2018 - 2019. The share of direct tax increases three times during the study period.

Hence our first hypothesis "Direct tax grows faster than the indirect tax" is proved.

## **INDIRECT TAX REVENUE IN INDIA:**

Indirect tax is the tax levied on the consumption of goods and services. It is not directly levied on the income of a person. Instead, he / she has to pay the tax along with the price of goods or services bought by the seller. Indirect tax is a tax can be passed on to another individual or entity. Indirect tax is generally imposed on suppliers or manufacturers who pass it on to the final consumer.

TABLE - 3
INDIRECT TAX AT CURRENT PRICE

YEAR	<b>Absolute Amount</b>	Per Capita	Percentage to tax
	(Rs. in Crores)	Amount (in Rs.)	Revenue
1991 – 1992	39966	472.19	79.82
1992 – 1993	41969	485.42	77.66
1993 – 1994	40927	463.60	76.57
1994 – 1995	49045	544.28	72.71
1995 – 1996	59652	648.89	72.80
1996 – 1997	68326	728.81	72.92
1997 – 1998	68500	716.68	71.60
1998 – 1999	75232	772.40	71.89
1999 – 2000	86836	875.19	67.70
2000 - 2001	87007	861.03	63.67
2001 – 2002	85828	834.33	64.28

2002 - 2003	96932	925.98	61.14
2003 - 2004	110392	1036.54	59.04
2004 - 2005	128854	1189.68	57.32
2005 - 2006	149572	1358.14	55.34
2006 - 2007	181444	1620.90	51.67
2007 - 2008	207972	1828.16	47.32
2008 - 2009	195169	1688.75	44.02
2009 - 2010	184913	1575.20	40.50
2010 - 2011	256367	2150.73	44.99
2011 – 2012	286454	2367.19	45.49
2012 – 2013	345292	2799.29	46.54
2013 – 2014	360025	2880.66	44.13
2014 - 2015	403085	3183.42	44.61
2015 – 2016	494469	3854.31	52.39
2016 - 2017	580085	4462.88	52.67
2017 - 2018	636272	4894.78	51.21
2018 - 2019	593719	4566.72	45.07
CAGR	11.18	9.31	

**Note:** CAGR – Compound Annual Growth rate

Source: 1. Absolute amount – Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy

2. Per Capita amount - Computed by the Researcher

Table -3 illustrates the indirect tax revenue in India. In absolute terms, it has increased from Rs.39966 crores in 1991 - 1992 to Rs.593719 crores in 2018 - 2019 at the compound annual growth rate of 11.18 per cent. In per capita terms, the indirect tax has raised from Rs.472.19 in 1991 - 1992 to Rs.4566.72 in 2018 - 2019 at the compound annual growth rate of 9.31 per cent. During the study period, the percentage of Indirect tax to tax revenue has decreased from 79.82 per cent in 1991 - 1992 to 45.07 percent in 2018 - 2019. Hence this table conveys that during the study period the share of indirect tax in total tax revenue tends o fall. It is due to higher growth rate of direct tax during the study period.

### **EXCISE DUTIES IN INDIA:**

An excise duty is an important type of indirect tax which is charged on goods produced within the country. It is a tax on the production or sale of a good. This tax is now known as the central value Added Tax (CENVAT)

TABLE - 4
EXCISE DUTIES AT CURRENT PRICE

YEAR	Absolute	Per Capita	Percentage to
	Amount	Amount	indirect tax
	(Rs. in Crores)	(in Rs.)	

1991 – 1992	16017	189.24	40.08
1992 – 1993	16367	189.30	39.00
1993 – 1994	17224	195.11	42.08
1994 – 1995	21064	233.76	42.95
1995 – 1996	22176	241.23	37.18
1996 – 1997	23463	250.27	34.34
1997 – 1998	25516	266.96	37.25
1998 – 1999	28581	293.44	37.99
1999 – 2000	34944	352.19	40.24
2000 - 2001	49758	492.41	57.19
2001 - 2002	54469	529.49	63.46
2002 – 2003	62388	595.99	64.36
2003 – 2004	70245	659.58	63.63
2004 – 2005	77241	713.15	59.94
2005 – 2006	86642	786.72	57.93
2006 – 2007	92651	827.68	51.06
2007 - 2008	96178	845.45	46.25
2008 - 2009	81872	708.42	41.95
2009 - 2010	84383	718.83	45.63
2010 - 2011	110222	924.68	42.99
2011 - 2012	116226	960.47	40.57
2012 – 2013	141245	1145.07	40.91
2013 – 2014	137975	1103.98	38.32
2014 – 2015	153709	1213.94	38.13
2015 – 2016	220473	1718.55	44.59
2016 - 2017	286088	2201.02	49.32
2017 - 2018	211393	1626.23	33.22
2018 - 2019	204021	1569.27	34.36
CAGR	10.96	9.19	

**Note:** CAGR – Compound Annual Growth Rate

Source: 1. Absolute amount – Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy

2. Per Capita amount - Computed by the Researcher

Table -4 shows the excise duties in India and it has increased from Rs.16017 crores in 1991 - 1992 to Rs.204021 crores in 2018 - 2019 at the compound annual growth rate of 10.96 per cent. The per capita amount of excise duty has increased from Rs.189.24 in 1991 - 1992 to Rs.1569.27 in 2018 - 2019 at the compound annual growth rate of 9.19 per cent. The percentage of excise duty to tax revenue has decreased from 31.99 per cent in 1991 - 1992 to 15.49 per cent in 2018 - 2019.

During the study period, the share of excise duty in tax revenue has decreased sharply because of increasing the growth rate of direct tax like income tax and corporation tax.

## **CUSTOMS DUTIES IN INDIA:**

Customs duty is an another important type of indirect tax which is imposed on imports and exports of goods. Customs duties are charges levied on goods when they cross international borders.

TABLE - 5
CUSTOMS DUTIES AT CURRENT PRICE

YEAR	Absolute	Per Capita	Percentage to
	Amount	Amount	indirect tax
	(Rs. in Crores)	(in Rs.)	
1991 – 1992	22257	262.96	55.69
1992 – 1993	23776	274.99	56.65
1993 – 1994	22193	251.39	54.23
1994 – 1995	26789	297.29	54.62
1995 – 1996	35757	388.96	59.94
1996 – 1997	42851	457.08	62.72
1997 – 1998	40193	420.52	58.68
1998 – 1999	40668	417.54	54.06
1999 – 2000	48419	488.00	55.76
2000 - 2001	34163	338.08	39.26
2001 – 2002	28340	275.49	33.02
2002 - 2003	31898	304.72	32.91
2003 – 2004	34586	324.75	31.33
2004 – 2005	41811	386.03	32.45
2005 - 2006	46645	423.54	31.19
2006 - 2007	62819	561.18	34.62
2007 - 2008	75382	662.64	36.25
2008 - 2009	69217	598.92	35.47
2009 – 2010	60223	513.02	32.57
2010 – 2011	97598	818.78	38.07
2011 – 2012	105614	872.77	36.87
2012 – 2013	115890	939.52	33.56
2013 – 2014	121059	968.63	33.63
2014 – 2015	127994	1010.85	31.75
2015 – 2016	128829	1004.20	26.05
2016 – 2017	135372	1041.48	23.34
2017 – 2018	78601	604.67	12.35
2018 – 2019	75231	578.66	12.67
CAGR	6.61	4.81	

Note: CAGR – Compound Annual Growth Rate

Source: 1. Absolute amount – Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy

2. Per Capita amount - Computed by the Researcher

Table -5 reveals the growth trend of customs duty in India. The absolute amount of customs duty has increased from Rs.22257 crores in 1991-1992 to Rs.75231 crores in 2018-2019 at the compound annual growth rate of 6.61 per cent. The per capita amount of customs duty has increased from Rs.262.96 in 1991-1992 to Rs.578.66 in 2018-2019 at the compound annual growth rate of 4.81 per cent. The percentage of customs duties to tax revenue has decreased nearly nine times from 44.45 per cent in 1991-1992 to 5.71 per cent in 2018-2019.

Therefore it is interpreted that while comparing excise duty with customs duty, the later decreased very sharply than the former. In absolute terms, the compound annual growth rate of excise duty is 10.96 and the customs duty is 6.61 whereas in per capita terms, the compound annual growth rate of excise duty is 9.19 and the customs duty is 4.81. Hence our second hypothesis "Excise duty grows faster than customs duty" is proved.

TABLE - 6
SHARE OF EXCISE DUTIES AND CUSTOMS DUTIES IN TOTAL REVENUE

YEAR	<b>Excise Duties % to</b>	<b>Customs Duties</b>
	tax revenue	% to tax revenue
1991 – 1992	31.99	44.45
1992 – 1993	30.28	43.99
1993 – 1994	32.23	41.52
1994 – 1995	31.23	39.71
1995 – 1996	27.06	43.64
1996 – 1997	25.04	45.73
1997 – 1998	26.67	42.01
1998 – 1999	27.31	38.86
1999 – 2000	27.24	37.75
2000 – 2001	36.41	25.00
2001 – 2002	40.79	21.22
2002 – 2003	39.35	20.12
2003 – 2004	37.57	18.50
2004 – 2005	34.36	18.60
2005 – 2006	32.06	17.26
2006 – 2007	26.38	17.89
2007 – 2008	21.88	17.15
2008 – 2009	18.47	15.61
2009 – 2010	18.48	13.19

2010 – 2011	19.34	17.13
2011 – 2012	18.46	16.77
2012 – 2013	19.04	15.62
2013 – 2014	16.91	14.84
2014 – 2015	17.01	14.16
2015 – 2016	23.36	13.65
2016 – 2017	25.98	12,29
2017 – 2018	17.01	6.33
2018 – 2019	15.49	5.71

Source : Percentage of excise duties to tax revenue Percentage of customs duties to tax revenue

Computed by the Researcher

Table -6 compares the share of excise duty and customs duty in tax revenue. The percentage of excise duty tax revenue slightly decreases from 31.99 per cent in 1991 - 1992 to 15.49 per cent in 2018 - 2019. The percentage of customs duty in indirect tax has rapidly decreased from 44.45 per cent in 1991 - 1992 to 5.71 per cent in 2018 - 2019.

#### TAX BUOYANCY:

Tax Buoyancy explains the relationship between the changes in the governments' tax revenue and the changes in GDP. When a tax is buoyant, its revenue increases without increasing the tax rate.

TABLE - 7
TAX BUOYANCY (1991 – 92 TO 2017 – 2018)

YEAR	Indirect Tax	GDP
	(Rs. in Crores)	(Rs. in Crores)
1991 – 1992	39966	613528
1992 – 1993	41969	703723
1993 – 1994	40927	817961
1994 – 1995	49045	955385
1995 – 1996	59652	1118586
1996 – 1997	68326	1301788
1997 – 1998	68500	1447613
1998 – 1999	75232	1668739
1999 – 2000	86836	1858205
2000 - 2001	87007	2000743
2001 - 2002	85828	2175260
2002 - 2003	96932	2343864
2003 – 2004	110392	2625819
2004 - 2005	128854	2971464
2005 – 2006	149572	3390503
2006 – 2007	181444	3953276

2007 - 2008	207972	4582086
2008 - 2009	195169	5303567
2009 – 2010	184913	6108903
2010 - 2011	256367	7248860
2011 – 2012	286454	8391691
2012 – 2013	345292	9388876
2013 – 2014	360025	10472807
2014 – 2015	403085	11504279
2015 – 2016	494469	12574499
2016 – 2017	580085	13965200
2017 – 2018	636272	15505665
2018 – 2019	593719	17161213

Source: 1. Absolute amount – Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy

- 2. GDP Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy
- 3. Tax Buoyancy Estimated by the researcher

The formula for Tax Buoyancy is 
$$=\frac{(T_1-T_0)/T_0}{(Y_1-Y_0)/Y_0}$$

Tax Buoyancy 
$$= 0.51$$

Tax buoyancy means that if National income increases by one rupee, the tax amount increases to 0.51 paise. So the buoyancy is less than unity.

Hence our third hypothesis "Tax Buoyancy is less than unity" is proved.

TABLE - 8
TAX BUOYANCY OF INDIA FROM 1991 – 92 TO 2018 – 2019

S.No.	Taxes	Buoyancy *
1	Tax Revenue	0.94
2	Direct Tax	2.62
3	Indirect Tax	0.51
4	Excise Duties	0.44
5	Customs Duties	0.09

Source: Computed by the Researcher.

In India tax buoyancy on indirect tax, excise duty and customs duty is less than unity. i.e) 0.94, 0.51, 0.44 and 0.09 respectively whereas Tax buoyancy of direct tax is greater than unity i.e) 2.62

#### **CONCLUSION:**

In India, a study on indirect taxes during the post reform period found that the excise duty grows faster than the customs duty, the direct tax increased more rapidly than the indirect tax and the tax buoyancy is less than unity.

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