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### GST@7: An insight into the seventh year of GST

June 2024

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#### Introduction



- Comprehend the industry's viewpoint on the seven-year journey of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India
- Understand the status of GST implementation, assess the progress made so far and gather feedback for the next stage of reforms



- Online surveys conducted with C-suite and C-1 level seniors across different industries and company size
- Survey entails 40 questions eliciting responses on different aspects of GST with multiple select and single-select questions
- A total of 760 responses were obtained from 6 industries





# **Survey findings**

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### Industry Testimonials How has the seven-year GST journey been for your company, starting from the transition to date?

We have been able to expand our product offerings due to the simplification of taxation and reduction of compliance burden under GST. Our company expanded its market presence, opening new stores and expanding its online retail operations, facilitated by the simplified tax regime. Our company has leveraged the GST regime to invest in technology and R&D. With the operational efficiencies gained from GST, the company has been able to allocate more resources to innovation.

Banking industry



Consumer industry



Government and public services

Due to GST's financial stability and growth, our company is better equipped to promote social welfare and economic advancement by increasing its contributions to community development programmes. The introduction of GST has encouraged the growth of domestic manufacturing by providing a fair competition. The GST journey benefits our business in number of ways. One of the major changes has been the subsuming of entertainment tax under GST. Earlier, the rate of entertainment tax varied from state to state, ranging from 15 percent to 110 percent. It has also established the rate variance and provides a uniform market.

Lifesciences and Healthcare



Energy, resources and industrials



Technology, media and telecommunications



# **Survey findings**

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- Streamlining the GST framework: A focus on MSMEs

### Growing confidence: Positive perception of GST on the rise



An impressive 84 percent responded positively to GST, a notable improvement over 72 percent displaying the same sentiment in 2023



#### Key drivers for positive sentiments

- 1. Adoption of a robust tax technology framework
- 2. Enhanced financial and supply chain efficiencies
- 3. Removal of ambiguities through the issuance of clarifications
- 4. Enhanced stakeholder consultation by the government
- 5. Clarity around regulatory guidelines

Overall operational impact of GST: Indicative of an efficient tax environment About 73 percent identified competitive pricing as the greatest positive impact of GST.



#### The survey highlights the following as key GST impact areas:

- 1. Competitive pricing of goods/services
- 2. Supply chain optimisation
- 3. Cost reduction
- 4. Digitisation of compliance

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#### GST implementation: Top performance areas of government

Tax compliance automation, e-invoicing and timely issuance of circulars/instructions on contentious tax issues emerge as top performance areas for government



#### Priority areas for GST 2.0: Trade recommendations

The need to rationalise rates, streamline dispute resolution and embrace faceless assessments remains a key demand



### Priority areas for GST 2.0: Key initiatives for boosting sectoral growth

About 86 percent of the respondents sought the removal of credit restrictions, while 70 percent emphasised export rules liberalisation



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Priority areas for GST 2.0: Enhancing operational efficiency by unlocking liquidity Uniform responses across industries and sizes indicate the need for measures to unlock working capital. However, large corporates show a stronger preference for such measures to improve liquidity



# **Survey findings**

- Road to GST 2.0: Charting the next phase of GST reform
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#### Ease of doing business: Challenges and opportunities



Nearly 88 percent report ease of doing business challenges during an audit, indicating an opportunity for simplification, technology integration, capacity building and collaboration



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#### GST dispute resolution: Need for reforms in GST 2.0

Adapting to evolving tax regulations and reporting demands emerges as the top challenge across sectors





#### GST dispute resolution

The responses indicate the continued need for clarifications on interpretational, revenue-neutral issues to reduce disputes during audits





GST dispute resolution: Continued importance issuance of clarifications/instructions Nearly 55 percent of respondents agree that the clarifications in a timely manner help resolve on-ground disputes; however, they emphasise that implementation challenges persist



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Audit timeline extension: Industry perception 91% support extension; 54% urge optimal usage for notice reduction



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GST appeal pre-deposit and interest rates: Industry feedback Overwhelming response for re-visiting quantum of pre-deposit under GST



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#### GST amnesty scheme: Need of the hour

Crucial need for one-time resolution of disputes arising from initial years of GST implementation



# **Survey findings**

- Road to GST 2.0: Charting the next phase of GST reform
- Striving for excellence: Improving ease of doing business and effective dispute resolution in GST 2.0
- Maximising impact: Leveraging GST data and optimising facilitation/compliance
- Streamlining the GST framework: A focus on MSMEs

# Tax technology: Increased adoption of tax technology indicating operational efficiencies and reduced compliance cost

Respondents' satisfaction with IT systems increased from 44 percent in 2022 to 81 percent in 2024 across industries

Satisfaction with the IT systems to comply with GST regulations



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#### GSTN portal: Useful features Filing of GST returns emerged as the top-most user-friendly feature among other existing features of the GST common portal



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### GST compliance rating system: Incentivising compliance

Need for immediate implementation for better vendor management and reduction in GST costs



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### GSTN of the future: Facilitating business analytics and data security Role of GSTN in optimising capabilities and trust



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### GST data analytics: Unlocking business insights Comparison of benefits to large versus smaller businesses



Simplifying GST registration process: Embracing new-age businesses Embracing efficiency and clarity through uniform documentation and virtual visits



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### GSTN features: Strategic initiatives and measures against tax evasion API-based notice retrieval, bulk filing and integrated systems are key industry requirements



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E-invoice: Threshold reduction for increased compliance, data accuracy and future-readiness Overall support for lower threshold limits is positive and encouraging

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Need to reduce the threshold limit for generating e-invoices



Yes, to a large extent

Partially agree; however, there are MSME vendors who are not complying with the changes
Neutral



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#### Paperless invoicing: Facilitator for MSME growth

Paperless invoicing is perceived as effective in streamlining vendor compliance





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#### Focus on MSMEs: Relief measures

Availing ITC and quarterly payments with monthly invoice upload are the top-ranked relief measures for MSMEs





#### GSTN features: Automation of loan processes

Using GST data received strong approval across industries and business sizes; this is attributable to the potential benefits of automation that includes improved efficiency and reduced processing time





## **Executive summary**

### India GST @7 | Survey | Executive summary

#### Enhanced positive sentiment on GST implementation

- Growing confidence in GST: About 84 percent of respondents recognised GST's positive perception (up from 59 percent in GST@5 and 72 percent in GST@6) paving the way for reforms in GST 2.0.
- **Operational impact:** 73 percent cited competitive pricing as GST's greatest business operational benefit (up from 56 percent in GST @5 and 61 percent in GST@6).
- **Top performance areas**: Automation of tax compliances and e-invoicing/e-way bill initiatives continue to be voted as top performance areas, followed by issuance of circulars/instructions.

#### Key structural recommendations

- **GST 2.0 priorities**: Rationalising GST rates, enhancing dispute resolution and resolving legal ambiguities
- Measures to boost sectoral growth: High emphasis on removing input tax credit restrictions (very large: 87 percent, large: 83 percent, MSMEs: 88 percent)
- Unlocking liquidity: Unanimous response across sectors on the need for cross-utilisation of CGST credit for multi-state businesses




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#### Ease of doing business

- Need for increased focus on EoDB: 88 percent report ease of doing business challenges during an audit, indicating an
  opportunity for simplification, technology integration, capacity building and collaboration. Nearly 79 percent faced multiple
  audits by both central and state authorities, while 78 percent reported tax recovery initiated before their appeal period
  ended.
- Key challenges: Adapting to evolving tax regulations and reporting demands emerge as the top challenge across sectors.
- **Reforms in GST 2.0:** The need for redressal of challenges around parallel/multiple audits, long-drawn audits and expansive legal interpretations continues.

#### Dispute resolution •-

- **Specific clarifications**: Respondents indicated the need for clarification on related party corporate guarantees, export of services (intermediary and performance-based), deemed import transactions and credit eligibility, including for past periods.
- Extension of audit timelines: About 91 percent support extending audit timelines to resolve issues and enhance compliance.
- Alignment of pre-deposit percentages with the pre-GST regime-central tax laws: Over 70 percent emphasize aligning predeposit requirements for GST appeals with the pre-GST regime.
- Faceless assessments: Nearly 88 percent support faceless assessments in GST 2.0.
- Amnesty scheme: It is viewed as crucial for resolving procedural disputes for initial years under GST.
- API-based notice retrieval: About 84 percent support an API-based notice retrieval system as a top priority for the GSTN portal.

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## Adoption of robust tax technology aided in improved compliance • • IT system readiness: Nearly 81 percent of respondents feel their IT systems are GST-ready and capable of meeting compliance requirements (up from 44 percent in 2022). • **Government efforts**: Close to 67 percent appreciated government efforts in compliance digitisation. • Top performance areas: Tax compliance automation, e-invoicing and e-way bills continue to top the charts on key Ø\_\_\_\_ • E-invoicing benefits: Nearly 92 percent expressed satisfaction with e-invoicing.

• **MSME Support**: About 69 percent of MSMEs support e-invoicing and e-way bills (higher than large and very large businesses).

### Leveraging GST data 🗸

performance areas.

- Compliance rating system: Strong support with over 95 percent of respondents across sectors and business sizes rooting for the implementation of compliance rating systems.
- Top-ranked benefits of insights from GST data: Sales trends, customer behaviour, market dynamics and customisable analytics dashboard.
- Additional features on GSTN: API-based notice retrieval system, API-based system for bulk filing and uploading on a PAN level,

end-to-end dispute resolution management online and complete integration (of the IRP, SEZ online system and GST system) receive more than 50%.

• **Curbing tax evasion**: About 39 percent believe data analytics helps identify missing links in the supply chain.

## India GST @7 | Survey | Executive summary

#### Optimising facilitation and MSME measures

- E-invoicing expansion: About 92% of respondents acknowledge the benefits of e-invoicing and agree that a further reduction in threshold would enhance data accuracy and future-readiness.
- **Paperless invoicing:** About 90 percent support the introduction of B2C e-invoicing although, 42 percent of these acknowledge the need for MSME to embrace the initiative for its success.
- **Simplification of registration process**: PAN India-level uniform list for GST registrations followed by virtual visits for on-site verification and clear guidelines for co-working spaces emerge as key initiatives to be implemented for simplification of registration processes.
- **Relief measures for MSMEs:** Nearly 70 percent of respondents continue to believe that the quarterly filing mechanism for MSMEs is beneficial and improves compliance.



Growing confidence: Perception of GST on the rise as we move towards GST 2.0 Sectoral insights





- Very large and large businesses expressed higher levels of optimism for GST than MSMEs indicating ongoing challenges in GST adoption and implementation for smaller firms.
- The positive perception is particularly stronger for the lifesciences and government industries with a significantly high majority (91 percent) of respondents conveying satisfaction.

## Operational impact Sectoral insights



MSMEs reported skewed perception of GST's impact on competitive pricing than large and very large corporates indicating the need to optimise the current GST framework for streamlining cost structures of smaller businesses

Measures	Consumer	Technology, media & telecommunication	Energy, resources & industrials	Banking & financial services	Lifesciences & healthcare	Government and & public services	MSME	Large	Very Large
Competitive pricing of goods/services	75%	69%	68%	75%	75%	75%	69%	72%	75%
Supply chain optimisation	75%	60%	73%	53%	83%	78%	70%	69%	70%
Reduction in the GST	75%	59%	72%	55%	76%	71%	66%	69%	68%
Compliance digitalisation	63%	72%	61%	72%	60%	77%	64%	67%	69%

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## Priority areas for GST 2.0: Recommendations for the government Areas for improvement

Top recommended priorities for the government



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## Boosting sector growth: Key initiatives

## Liberalising Input Tax Credits and rationalising GST rates across supply chain

Measures	Consumer	Technology media	Energy,	Banking &	Lifesciences &	Government &	MSME	Large	Very
		& telecommunication	resources & industrials	financial services	healthcare	public services			Large
Removing restrictions on input tax credits in some cases, such as in relation to employees and the set-up of commercial infrastructure	91%	93%	81%	83%	83%	82%	88%	83%	87%
Rationalising GST rates for the entire supply chain	81%	76%	83%	77%	82%	77%	79%	81%	77%
Unlocking of working capital measures, e.g., trading GST credit as scripts	72%	75%	79%	78%	80%	82%	74%	80%	76%
Promoting exports by liberalising export rules under the GST law	70%	68%	68%	61%	80%	77%	69%	64%	76%
Addressing the inverted duty structure in a holistic manner	67%	65%	74%	70%	69%	70%	73%	69%	66%
Expanding the GST net to include electricity and petroleum products	63%	57%	66%	57%	56%	65%	54%	65%	61%
Removing disparities and inconsistencies in respect of services where aggregator tax under Section 9(5) of the CGST/5(5) of the IGST Act applies	46%	54%	48%	66%	50%	48%	54%	52%	51%



# Audit and assessment proceedings: Challenges and opportunities for improvement Sectoral insights



Measures	Consumer	Technology, media & telecommunicat ion	Energy, resources & industrials	Banking & financial services	Lifesciences & healthcare	Government & public services	MSME	Large	Very Large
Audit challenges include a lack of sector- specific expertise, a pro-revenue approach, aggressive audit techniques for non-fraud cases and long-drawn proceedings	86%	88%	88%	89%	88%	94%	87%	87%	91%
Multiple/parallel proceedings by the central and state GST authorities	82%	81%	74%	79%	79%	77%	77%	82%	78%
Recovery of tax dues before the expiry of the appeal period	78%	78%	80%	84%	73%	74%	79%	81%	75%
Lack of understanding of new-age business models vis-à-vis registration provisions, including invocation of powers by GST authorities for registration suspension (without an opportunity to be heard), suo- moto credit blocking	71%	72%	75%	75%	73%	77%	74%	72%	74%
Challenges in obtaining refunds	69%	68%	65%	63%	60%	61%	70%	62%	64%
Increased reporting throughout the compliance and audit/scrutiny proceedings	58%	68%	62%	69%	65%	66%	63%	66%	64%

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Key themes	Consumer	Technology, media & telecommunication	Energy, resources & industrials	Banking & financial services	Lifesciences & healthcare	Government & public services	
Perception of GST's 7-year journey	Positive – 81% Neutral – 15%		Positive – 82% Neutral – 11%	Positive – 83% Neutral – 12%	Positive – 91% Neutral – 6%	Positive – 91% Neutral – 5%	
Positive impact areas	Competitive pricing of goods/services		Supply chain optimisation	Competitive pricing of goods/services	Supply chain optimisation	Supply chain optimisation	
Key areas of government's performance	Automation of tax compliance		Introduction of e-invoicing/e- way bill facility	Automation of tax compliance	Automation of tax compliance	Automation of tax compliance	
Key priorities of government	Rationalising the GST rates	Effective dispute resolution mechanism	Effective dispute resolution mechanism	Rationalising the GST rates	Rationalising the GST rates	Rationalising the GST rates	
Growth measures in GST 2.0	Removing input tax credit restrictions	<b>U</b>	Rationalising GST rates for entire supply chain	Removing input tax credit restrictions	Removing input tax credit restrictions	Removing input tax credit restrictions	
Challenges in ease of doing business	Audit challenges including lack of sector-specific expertise and aggressive audit techniques						
User-friendly features of GST portal	Filing GST returns, information transition from IRP to GST portal	Filing GST returns, information transition from IRP to GST portal	Filing GST returns, m information transition from IRP to GST portal	Filing GST returns, information transition from IRP to GST portal	Live and updated status of vendor GST registrations	Live and updated status of vendor GST registrations	



Key themes	Consumer	Technology, media & telecommunication	Energy, resources & industrials	Banking & financial services	Lifesciences & healthcare	Government & public services		
Key challenges in GST law compliance	Increased regulations and reporting demands	Increased regulations and reporting demands	Increased regulations and reporting demands	Increased regulations and reporting demands	Denial of refund and/or demands on export revenue	Increased regulations and reporting demands		
Key focus areas in dispute resolution mechanism	Due consideration to taxpayers' submissions	Due consideration to taxpayers' submissions	Instructions to streamline submission of documents	Instructions to streamline submission of documents	Instructions to streamline submission of documents			
GST data security concerns	No – 21% Yes – 54% Maybe – 25%	No – 45% Yes – 33% Maybe – 22%	No – 44% Yes – 31% Maybe – 24%	No – 49% Yes – 30% Maybe – 20%	No – 51% Yes – 32% Maybe – 17%	No – 61% Yes – 19% Maybe – 19%		
Measures to plug tax evasion	Use of data analytics to identify missing links in the supply chain							
GSTN portal features to improve tracking and compliance	Allow an API-based notice retrieval system to update taxpayers in real-time on applications or orders that have been issued							
Need for a GST compliance rating system in GST 2.0	Yes, implementing a GST compliance rating system would enhance transparency and accountability in the business ecosystem							



Key themes	Very large (Above INR 3,000 crore)	Large (INR 250-3,000 crore)	MSME (less than INR 250 crore)				
Perception of GST's	Positive – 88%	Positive – 85%	Positive – 78%				
7-year journey	Neutral – 9%	Neutral – 10%	Neutral – 15%				
Positive impact areas	Competitive pricing of goods/services	Competitive pricing of goods/services	Supply chain optimisation				
Key areas of government's performance	Automation of tax compliance, including filling out returns						
Key priorities of government	Rationalising the GST rate across sectors, with a focus on removing the inverted duty structure						
Growth measures in GST 2.0	Removing restrictions on input tax credits in some cases, such as in relation to employees and the set-up of commercial infrastructure						
Challenges in ease of doing business	Audit challenges including lack of sector-sp	pecific expertise and aggressive audit techniqu	les				
User-friendly features of the GST portal	Filing GST returns, information transition from IRP to GST portal	Filing GST returns, information transition from IRP to GST portal	Live and updated status of vendor GST registrations				
Key challenges in GST law compliance	Increased tax regulations and reporting demands from tax authorities						
Key focus areas in dispute resolution mechanism	Issuance of instructions streamlining the documents to be submitted during audits, assessments or any other proceedings						



Key themes	Very large (Above INR 3,000 crore)	Large (INR 250-3,000 crore)	MSME (less than INR 250 crore)				
GST data security concerns	No – 44% Yes – 36% Maybe – 20%	No – 44% Yes – 32% Maybe – 24%	No – 42% Yes – 37% Maybe – 22%				
Measures to plug tax evasion	Use of data analytics to identify missing links in the supply chain						
GSTN portal features to improve tracking and compliance	Allow an API-based notice retrieval system to update taxpayers in real-time on applications or orders that have been issued						
Need for a GST compliance rating system in GST 2.0	Yes, implementing a GST compliance rating system would enhance transparency and accountability in the business ecosystem						

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