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PUSHED & JUGGLED BEYOND THE MARGINS

BUDGET FOR CHILDREN 2022-23



A REPORT BY:

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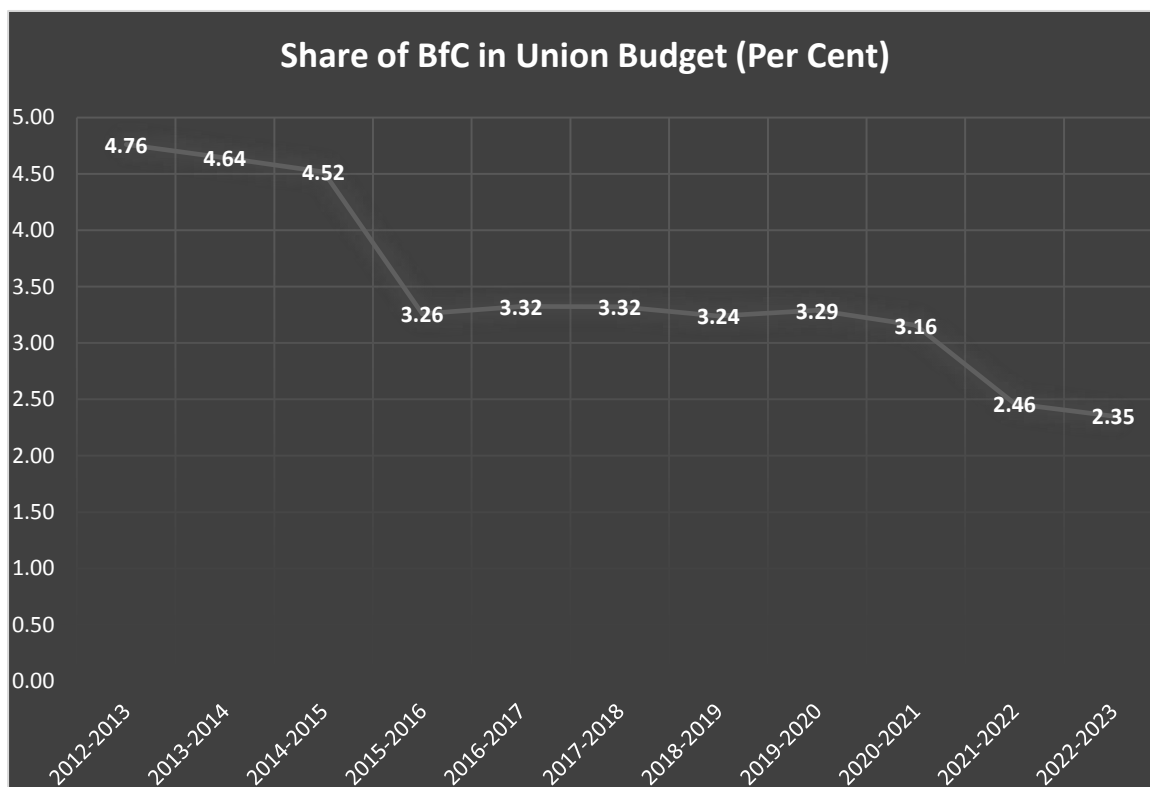
PUSHED AND JUGGLED BEYOND THE MARGINS: BUDGET FOR CHILDREN 2022-23

INTRODUCTION

As we move into the third year of the pandemic, the country has started to witness significant short-term and long-term effects of the pandemic induced challenges in all walks of lives. Needless to say, there are enough evidences coming from all corners to suggest that children have been pushed beyond the margins in the last three years. The issues vary from the longest closure of schools, children headed households, serious nutritional gaps resulting in high anaemia as well as under-5 mortality, loss of learning opportunities and a deep digital divide among many. Ideally, the Union Budget 2022-23 could have provided some respite to children by providing adequate resources and also by introducing budgetary components addressing pandemic induced challenges, but like every other year, children continue to struggle to find the answers to some of the glaring challenges they face more than ever before.

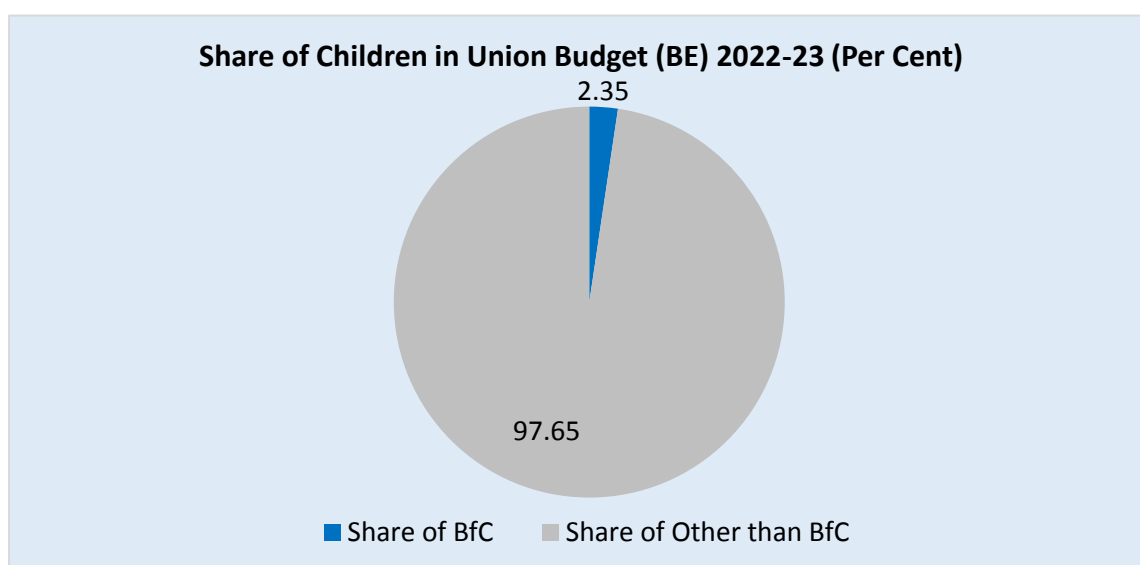
MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- Children in India receive the lowest share of financial allocations made in the last 11



years.

- As per Expenditure Budget Statement No. 12 on Allocations for Welfare of Children, the total allocation for children in Union Budget 2022-23 (BE) is INR 92736.5 Crore against an allocation of INR 85712.56 Crore in the Union Budget 2021-22 (BE). Although there is an increase of 8.19 per cent in absolute terms for the overall budget for children in 2022-23, this increase is not proportionate to the increase in the Union Budget.
- The share of Budget for Children (BfC) is a meagre 2.35 per cent of the total Union Budget 2022-2023(BE), a reduction of 0.11 percentage points from the share in 2021-22 Union Budget (BE).



- While the overall Union Budget increased by 13.25 per cent in 2022-23, a further reduction in the share of children, especially when the country is battling with COVID-19 situation, is beyond explanation.
- The sectoral share of Child Health and Development continue to receive reduced allocation in the Union Budget 2022-23. The share of child protection in the Union Budget 2022-23 observe a minimal increase of 0.01 per cent.

Sectoral Share in Union Budget (In Per Cent)					
Year	Health BE	Development BE	Education BE	Protection BE	Other than BfC
2015-2016	0.13	0.51	2.57	0.05	96.74
2016-2017	0.12	0.77	2.40	0.03	96.68
2017-2018	0.12	0.80	2.34	0.05	96.68
2018-2019	0.13	0.82	2.25	0.05	96.76
2019-2020	0.12	0.85	2.19	0.07	96.71
2020-2021	0.11	0.80	2.18	0.06	96.84
2021-2022	0.11	0.57	1.74	0.03	97.54
2022-2023	0.09	0.45	1.77	0.04	97.65

- Despite the numerous challenges posed by the COVID-19 on school education, the overall budget for child education has seen a decline this year. Similar trends can be witnessed for Child Health and Child Development as well.
- Within Budget for Children (BfC), Child Health and Child Development have seen reduced allocation, while Child Protection and Education have seen an increase. Child education continues to have the maximum share.

Sectoral Share within Budget for Children (BfC) (In Per Cent)				
Year	Health BE	Development BE	Education BE	Protection BE
2015-2016	3.93	15.73	78.95	1.38
2016-2017	3.59	23.17	72.20	1.04
2017-2018	3.76	24.21	70.54	1.49
2018-2019	3.90	25.25	69.37	1.48
2019-2020	3.51	25.90	66.72	2.11
2020-2021	3.36	25.49	69.17	1.98
2021-2022	4.35	23.26	70.83	1.27
2022-2023	3.78	19.22	75.31	1.70

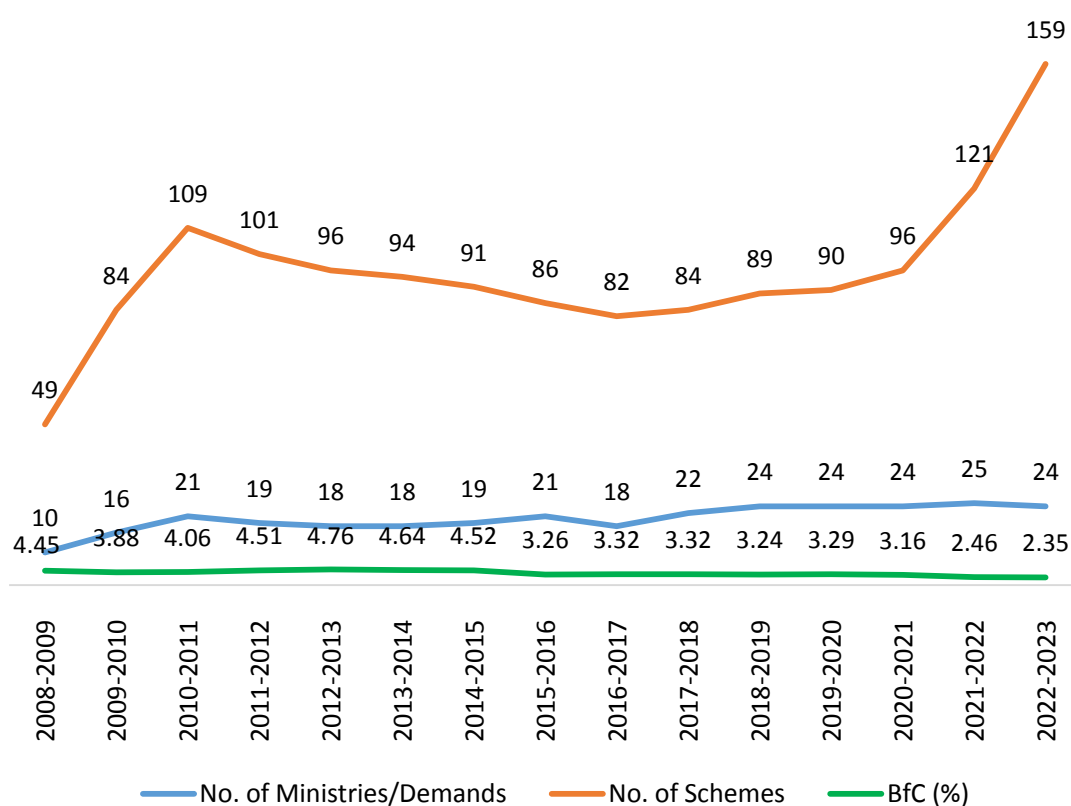
- Allocations for Welfare of Children under Statement No. 12 include contributions from various Ministries. Some of the key ministries have seen a reduced allocation in Statement No. 12, which includes the nodal ministry for major children related programmes. The Ministry of Women and Child Development has observed a reduced allocation of INR 18858.67 Crore, a significant reduction of 7.56 per cent against 2021-22.

Ministry/Department	2021-22 (BE) (Rs. Crore)	2022-23 (BE) (Rs. Crore)	Increase/ Decrease (%)
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	1818.04	2419	33.06
Ministry of Women and Child Development	20400.6	18858.67	-7.56
Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports	21	22	4.76
Department of Disabilities Affair / Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities	72	73.5	2.08
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment	2051.02	3992.5	94.66
Ministry of Minority Affairs	2514	2544.01	1.19
Ministry of Labour and Employment	120	30	-75.00
Ministry of Urban Development	260	231	-11.15
Department of School Education and Literacy	53603.2	59819.37	11.60
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting	10.26	16.71	62.87

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	54.24	54.32	0.15
Ministry of External Affairs	14.66	51.73	252.86
Department of Health and Family Welfare	3722.45	3498.58	-6.01

- Statement 12 in the 2022-23 Union Budget features a total of 159 programmes/schemes, which is a significant 31 per cent increase in the number of programmes which received attention in the previous budget. It is surprising that despite allocations for 159 programmes/schemes coming from 24 Departments/Ministries, the share of children in the Union Budget has gone down from

Budget For Children (Statement 12/22) Over the Years



2.46 per cent in 2021-22 to 2.35 per cent 2022-23.

- One of the most important schemes under child health, NRHM-RCH Flexi Pool has observed a reduced allocation of 8.22 per cent, i.e., INR 3174.57 Crore in Union Budget 2022-23 against an allocation of INR 3459 Crore at BE stage in 2020-21.
- Kalawati Saran Children’s Hospital, one of the largest children’s hospitals in India, received an unchanged allocation of INR 149.44 Crore in Union Budget 2022-23 (BE). The allocation for Kalawati Saran Children’s Hospital was reduced by 9.29 per cent at the RE stage of Union Budget 2021-22 and the same reduced amount is now allocated for it in

the 2022-23 Union Budget. This appears to be a mere accounting business, reflecting almost no planning for allocation of resources towards meeting the increased need for investment in child health budget in the times of the pandemic.

- Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 scheme too has observed a reduced allocation of 11.28 per cent with allocations going down from INR 19412.5 Crore in 2021-22 (BE) to INR 17223.61 Crore in Union Budget 2022-23 (BE).
- The National Programme for Mid-Day Meal in Schools has been discontinued and now features with a new name - Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN). The allocation for Mid-Day Meal Scheme in the Union Budget 2021-22 (BE) was INR 11500.00, which was reduced by 11.01 per cent at RE stage. The PM POSHAN scheme covers about 11.80 crore children studying in 11.20 lakh schools across the country.¹ Yet, the allocation for PM POSHAN in the Union Budget 2022-23 remains reduced at the same level as the RE for 2021-22.
- Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan has received an increased allocation of 20.40 per cent with total allocation of INR 37383.36 Crore in 2022-23 against INR 31050.16 Crore at BE stage in 2021-22 Union Budget.
- The Education Scheme for Madarasas and Minorities observed a reduced allocation of 8.04 per cent with allocations going down from INR 174 Crore in Union Budget 2021-22 (BE) to INR 160 Crore in Union Budget 2022-23 (BE).
- The budget for the National Child Labour Programme (NCLP) has been drastically reduced by 75 per cent in the Union Budget 2022-23 with a total allocation of INR 30 Crore only. This significant reduction must be seen in the light of year 2021 declared as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour by the United Nations General Assembly while acknowledging the magnitude of child labour.
- A significant increase of 63.57 per cent for Mission Vatsalya in the Union Budget 2022-23 is a welcome move. However, it is critical to highlight that the current allocation of INR 1472.17 Crore for Mission Vatsalya is still lower than the allocation of INR 1500 Crore for the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) alone in 2020-21, which has been merged under Mission Vatsalya.

¹ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1759255>

Juggling Between the Schemes

Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Finance Minister, Government of India is reported have stated that ... *“Our government has comprehensively revamped schemes of the Ministry of Women and Child Development such as Mission Shakti, Mission Vatsalya, Saksham Angawadi and Poshan 2.0 to provide benefits.”*

Reality Bytes...

- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) under SAMBAL component of Mission Shakti**

As per the 5th report of the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women dated December 2021, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has earmarked a budget of INR 50 lakh per district for implementation of BBBP, of which 50% (INR 25 lakh) is for awareness and innovation at District level. The scheme is reported to be currently implemented in 405 districts fully with multi-sectoral interventions including advocacy and media campaign, while the remaining 235 districts out of the total 640 Census districts are covered with a nationwide media campaign. Although, the Committee notes with dismay that out of Rs. 622.48 crore released to the States between 2014-15 and 2019-20, “only 25.13% of the funds, i.e. Rs. 156.46 crore have been spent by the States reflecting not up to the mark performance of the scheme,” the Committee also recommends the government to focus on planned expenditure allocation for sectoral interventions in education and health through BBBP. If this recommendation were to be followed, a budget of INR 320 Crore is required to implement BBBP in the 640 districts fully with multi-sectoral interventions, including awareness. However, the allocation for entire SAMBAL component of Mission Shakti in the Union Budget 2022-23 is INR 562 Crore, which includes schemes like One Stop Centre, Nari Adalat, Mahila Police Volunteer, Women’s Helpline besides BBBP.

- **Mission Vatsalya and Child Protection**

The erstwhile Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) was merged under Child Protection Services and Child Welfare Services in the Union Budget 2021-22 with a reduction in allocation from INR 1500 Crore in the Union Budget 2020-21 to INR 900 Crore in the Union Budget 2021-22. Subsequently, Child Protection and Child Welfare Services were merged under Mission Vatsalya. If the progress in terms of financial allocation for child protection is to be measured for the period that has witnessed the COVID pandemic, there is a clear reduction in the budget as Mission Vatsalya receives a total allocation of INR 1472.17 Crore in the Union Budget 2022-23 compared to what ICPS alone received in 2020-21.

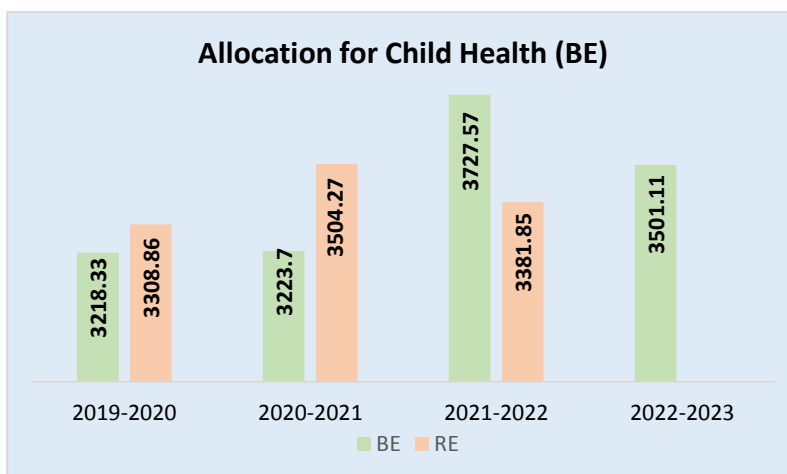
- **Saksham Angawadi and Poshan 2.0**

As per Expenditure Budget Statement No. 12 on Allocations for the Welfare of Children, the share of children under Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 scheme has observed a reduced allocation of 11.28 per cent with allocations going down from INR 19412.5 Crore in 2021-22 (BE) to INR 17223.61 Crore in Union Budget 2022-23 (BE).

Even if the entire budget for Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 as reflected in the Expenditure Budget for the Ministry of Women and Child Development is taken into account, the increase is only 0.8 per cent. Considering that the scheme includes the Umbrella ICDS, Poshan Abhiyan and Scheme for Adolescent Girls, can a miniscule increase of 0.8 per cent address the nutrition issues of children under six years, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating mothers at a time when the world has witnessed hunger and deprivation due to the pandemic?

CHILD HEALTH

- Despite the constant health risks posed due to the pandemic situation, the allocation for Child Health has decreased by 6.08 per cent with allocations going down from INR 3727.57 Crore in 2021-22 to INR 3501.11 Crore in Union Budget 2022-23.

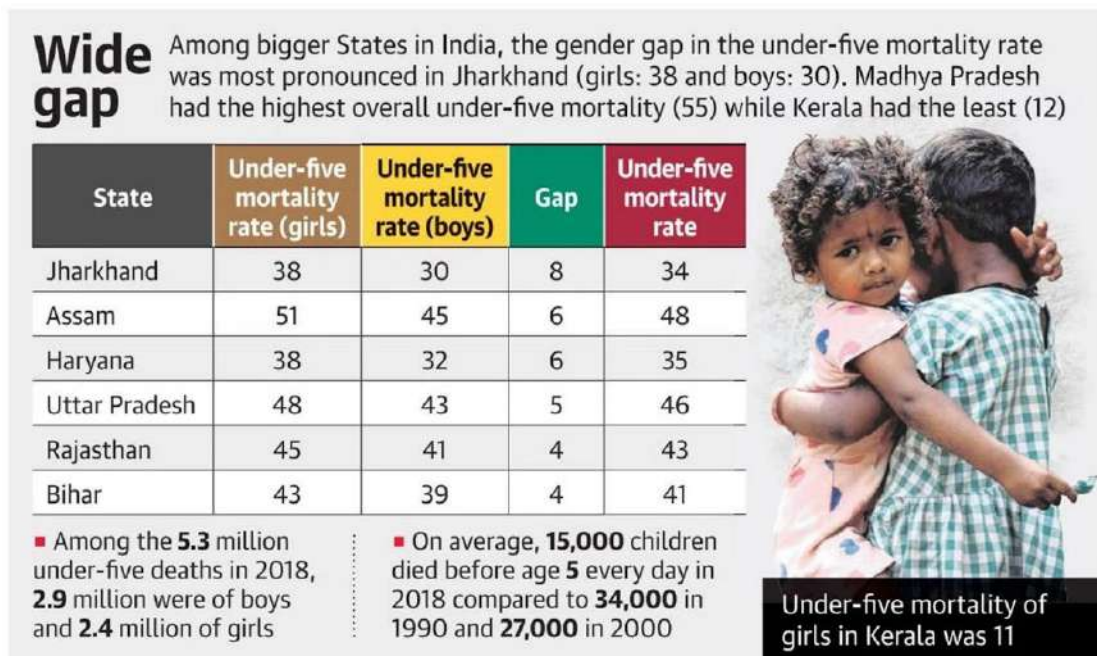


- As per Statement 12 in the Union Budget 2022-23, the overall allocation for Child Health (under the allocation for Department of Health and Family Welfare/ Demand No. 46), has gone down by 6.01 per cent. One of the important components “NRHM-RCH Flexi Pool”, has seen a major setback in terms of reduced allocations in the Union Budget 2022-23. The National Health Policy, 2017 envisaged increase in government’s health expenditure to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2025. The budgeted expenditure of the Central and State Governments on health sector has made slow progress and has reached 2.1 per cent of GDP in 2021-22, against 1.8 per cent in 2020-21.² At this juncture, attention needs to be

² Economic Survey 2021-22; <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/economicsurvey/doc/eschapter/echap10.pdf>

drawn to the fact that India's out of pocket expenditure on health continues to remain the highest in the world with almost 50% expenditure met by people themselves.³

- While there is much to applaud with respect to achievements made on certain health indicators as per the NFHS-5, there are also issues of serious concern, which can be attributed to both, decline in budgetary allocation towards children's health and nutrition schemes as well as the slowdown in economic growth.
 - There are large inter-state variations in Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR), Under-five Mortality Rate (U5MR), Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) and Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB), the four key Health Outcome indicators.
 - According to 'Levels and Trends in Child Mortality', a report by the United Nations (UN) inter-agency group for child mortality, in 2018, the under-5 mortality rate for girls exceeded that for boys.

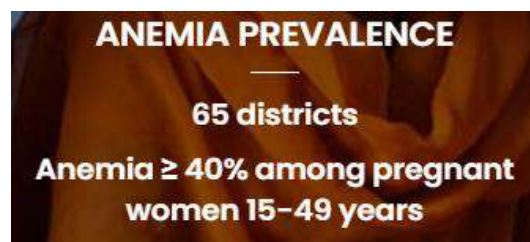
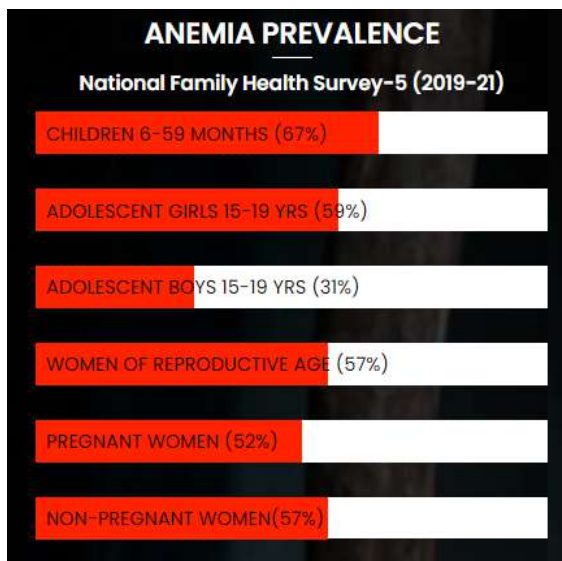


Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indias-under-5-mortality-of-girls-exceeds-that-of-boys-unlike-global-trend-says-report/article30550394.ece>

- Malnutrition is a significant factor for under-five mortality, especially for girls in India. It remains 8.3 percent higher for girls than for boys as per NFHS-5.
- The NFHS-5 data also shows that 16 out of the 22 States and Union Territories surveyed registered a rise in the percentage of under-five children who are underweight and severely wasted.

³ "Economic Survey Glosses Over 2021 COVID-19 Horror, Key Details on Health Impact"; Kaur Banjot; The Wire; <https://science.thewire.in/health/economic-survey-glosses-over-2021-covid-19-horror-key-details-on-health-impact/>

- 13 out of 22 states have witnessed a reversal in stunting outcomes, recording a rise in the percentage of children under five years who are stunted in comparison to 2015-16.
- 'Adolescents, Diets and Nutrition: Growing Well in a Changing World' a 2019 report by UNICEF and NITI Aayog based on the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) point to the multiple nutritional deprivations suffered by adolescent girls. According to the report, while more girls compared to boys suffer from shortness, anaemia affects 40% of adolescent girls, compared to 18% of boys, and worsens as they get older.



Source: anemiamuktbharat.info

- Although the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India has launched the Anemia Mukht Bharat Programme for accelerating decline in anemia prevalence and to achieve the POSHAN Abhiyaan (2018-20) target of reducing prevalence of anemia among children aged 6-59 months, adolescents and women of reproductive age 15-49 years by 3 percentage points per year,⁴ the implementation remains tardy.

⁴ Anaemia Mukht Bharat Scorecard (upto Sept. 2021);

A Glimpse into the Realities of Anaemia Mukht Bharat

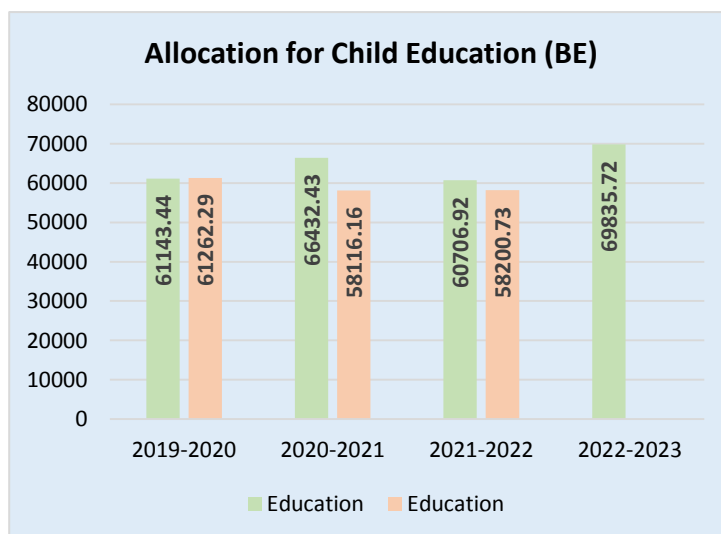
- AMB program yet to be launched in 18 States and UTs.
- Functional digital hemoglobinometers yet to be procured in 23 States.
- Printed IEC material to frontline workers yet to be distributed in 21 States.
- Conversation with fluorosis, National vector born disease control program, hemoglobinopathies division still not established in many States.
- Community Testing of water in fluorosis identification, blood testing for hemoglobinopathy still not established in many endemic districts.
- Digital platform for stock inventory like dvdms up to block level yet to be established in 21 States.
- HMIS district headquarter report (IFA coverage and stock reporting) still an issue in complete reporting, 474 districts reported out of total of 726 districts

Source: ANEMIA MUKHT BHARAT Implementation Index (Milestone Progress for All India updated up to March 2021); https://anemiamukhtbharat.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/AMB-Scorecard-Implementation-Index-All-States-March-2020-21_09-07-2021.pdf

- NFHS-5 also reveals that children's access to healthcare services, when suffering from diarrhoea and symptoms of acute respiratory infection (ARI), has remained almost the same since the NFHS-4.
- Therefore, even as the Economic Survey 2021-22 attempts to glorify and applaud the health expenditure against the GDP, it must be borne in mind that we are looking at serious issues of uniformity in achieving the SDG targets among all the States and Union Territories and reducing gender disparities. Thus, the allocation for the child health becomes much more crucial than ever before.

CHILD EDUCATION

- Allocation for child education in the Union Budget 2022-23 has increased by 15.04 per cent in absolute terms with total allocation of INR 69835.72 Crore at BE stage. However, the share of child education in the overall Union Budget 2022-23 has witnessed only a marginal increase of 0.3 percentage points (from 1.74% in 2021-22 to 1.77% in 2022-23).



- The major increase in the Education Budget can be attributed to a 20.40 per cent increase in the allocation for Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. But, it will be worthwhile to dive deeper into the allocation and release of funds towards Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SMSA) to understand the implementation gaps. Since the launch of SMSA, the scheme has faced a major setback in shortfall of funds i.e. differences between the approved budget and allocated budget.

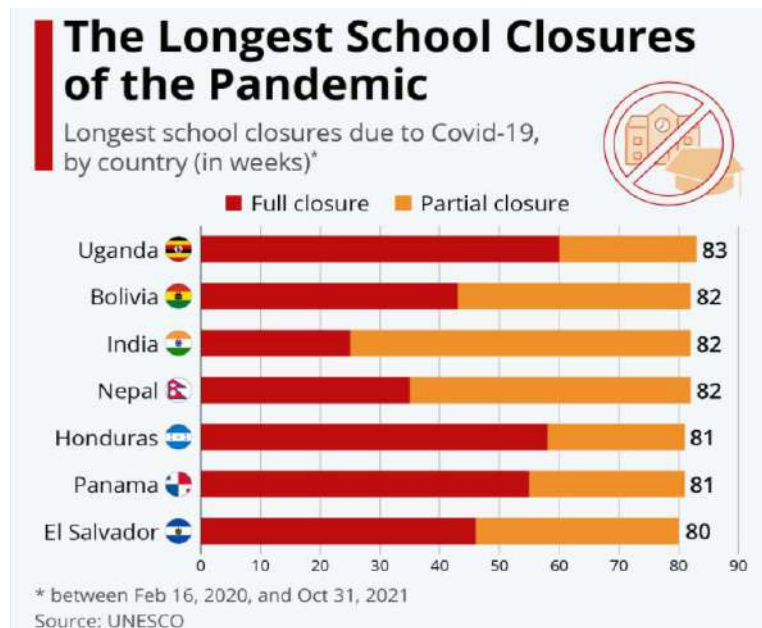
Approved Budget for SMSA by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (In Rs. Crore)			
Year	Approved Budget	Allocated Budget	Shortfall
2018-19	34000	30892	3108
2019-20	41000	36322	4678
2020-21	45934	38751	7183

Source: Budgetary Analysis of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, CBGA;
<https://www.cbgaindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Budgetary-Analysis-of-Samagra-Shiksha-Abhiyan.pdf>

- While observing that composite grants under Samagra Shiksha are provided for conducive learning environment including construction of separate girls' toilets, the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women notes that although the UDISE data claims availability of 95.4% toilets for girls in schools, their actual usability with running water and doors which can be secured from inside is what counts and not the data on paper about the existence of toilets. The Committee is of the opinion that lack of functional toilets in schools is the major reason for drop out of girls as toilets play an important role in creating safe and hygienic school environment, especially for girl students.⁵

⁵ Empowerment of Women Through Education With Special Reference to 'Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao' Scheme; Fifth Report; Committee of Empowerment of Women (2021-22); Seventeenth Lok Sabha; Empowerment of

- It is baffling to observe that the Economic Survey 2021-22 acknowledges the fact that the Ministry of Education does not have any specific data on the adverse impact of prolonged school closures on children and the digital divide created by the pandemic. In fact, India is one of the countries across the globe to have undergone the longest period of school closures.



The Indian education system also saw the largest disruption in history affecting nearly 32 Crore students' population enrolled in various schools/colleges and universities. Around 320 million children in India have not stepped into a classroom for more than a year and have lost a tenth of their entire schooling already. There was no clarity as to how long the cessation of classroom activities will continue. With passing time and continued cessation of classes, especially at school level, learning loss was widening and acquiring critical dimensions.⁶

- The Finance Minister in her Budget Speech of 2022-23 announced expansion of 'One class, one TV channel' program from 12 to 200 TV channels so as to enable all states to provide supplementary education in regional languages for classes 1 to 12. A recent report titled, "Locked Out: Emergency report on School Education"⁷ based on a survey of children and parents from 1400 households suggests that "only 1% of rural children and 8% of urban children in our sample acknowledged TV programmes as a regular or even occasional mode of study." 46% children in urban areas and 43% in rural areas find online classes/videos difficult to follow. Moreover, The Department of School Education and Literacy's own sample survey of experience of online education in KVs is self-

http://164.100.47.193/lsscommittee/Empowerment%20of%20Women/17_Empowerment_of_Women_5.pdf

⁶ Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee On Education, Women, Children, Youth And Sports; Three Hundred And Twenty Eighth Report; (Presented to the Rajya Sabha on 6th August, 2021) (Laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 6 th August, 2021); Page 16

https://rajyasabha.nic.in/rsnew/Committee_site/Committee_File/ReportFile/16/144/328_2021_8_15.pdf

⁷ "Locked Out: Emergency Report on School Education"; The SCHOOL survey took place in August 2021 in 15 states and UTs: Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, TamilNadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal;

<https://counterviewfiles.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/locked-out-emergency-report-on-school-education-6-sept-2021.pdf>

revealing. Only 33.8% students, 29.6% teachers and 27.2% parents found it joyful, whereas 26.4% students, 15.7% teachers and 25% parents found it difficult. In terms of identifying difficulties in various subjects, mathematics, sciences and social sciences emerged as the subjects of concern. In terms of use of devices, mobiles were being used by the students in highest percentage, i.e., 84 per cent followed by laptops (19.4%), television (5.5%) and radio (0.6%). The Parliamentary Standing Committee has gone ahead to make a note of the fact that almost 70% children in India go to government schools for their education, which lack even the basic infrastructure as compared to KVs and has thus suggested rethinking on the ways to reduce the learning gaps as only online medium will not be able to bridge the existing learning gaps.⁸

- An issue that Digital India has failed to address is poor connectivity. The report, “*Locked Out: Emergency report on School Education*”⁹ suggests that the only 9% of all SCHOOL children had their own smartphone and poor connectivity and lack of money for “data” are some of the challenges they face in accessing online classes. 57% children in urban areas and 65% in rural areas have reported connectivity problems.
- The Pre Matric Scholarship for SCs and Others under the aegis of Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has received a reduced allocation of 31.03 per cent (from INR 725 Crore in 2021-22 to INR 500 Crore in 2022-23) in the Union Budget 2022-23. The Education Scheme for Madarasas and Minorities too has observed a reduced allocation of 8.04 per cent with allocations going down from INR 174 Crore in Union Budget 2021-22 (BE) to INR 160 Crore in Union Budget 2022-23 (BE). Such budget cuts are bound to increase the digital divide in education in the current times besides causing a general setback to many children belonging the marginalised sections of society.
- On the other hand, there is a welcome increase of 41.03 per cent towards allocation for the Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRs) in Union Budget 2022-23. As per the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, a total of 652 EMRs have been sanctioned, out of which only 367 EMRs are functional. Moreover, EMRs have been established in 102 sub-districts having tribal population and it is targeted to establish EMRs in the remaining 462 sub-districts by the year 2022. In the Budget Speech of 2021-22, the Finance Minister had promised a target of 750 EMRs. If the remaining 285 EMRs which are yet to be made functional and the construction cost of one EMR (which is INR 20 Crore) are to be taken

⁸ Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee On Education, Women, Children, Youth And Sports; Three Hundred And Twenty Eighth Report; (Presented to the Rajya Sabha on 6th August, 2021) (Laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 6 th August, 2021); page 24

https://rajyasabha.nic.in/rsnew/Committee_site/Committee_File/ReportFile/16/144/328_2021_8_15.pdf

⁹ “*Locked Out: Emergency Report on School Education*”; The SCHOOL survey took place in August 2021 in 15 states and UTs: Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, TamilNadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal;

<https://counterviewfiles.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/locked-out-emergency-report-on-school-education-6-sept-2021.pdf>

into account, then the current allocation falls short on the actual requirement and target.¹⁰

- The National Programme for Mid-Day Meal in Schools has been discontinued and now features with a new name - Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN). The allocation for Mid-Day Meal Scheme in the Union Budget 2021-22 (BE) was INR 11500.00, which was reduced by 11.01 per cent at RE stage. The PM POSHAN scheme covers about 11.80 crore children studying in classes I-VIII in 11.20 lakh Government and Government-Aided schools across the country,¹¹ yet the allocation for PM POSHAN in the Union Budget 2022-23 remains reduced at the same level as the RE for 2021-22.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the continuation of 'National Scheme for PM POSHAN in Schools'¹² for the five-year period 2021-22 to 2025-26 with the financial outlay of INR 54061.73 Crore from the Central Government and INR 31,733.17 Crore from State Governments & UT Administrations. Central Government will also bear an additional cost of about INR 45,000 Crore on foodgrains. Therefore, the total scheme budget will amount to INR 1,30,794.90 Crore over a period of five years. Effectively, 2022-23 is the first year of PM POSHAN and what it receives in the very first year of its implementation is only 7.8 per cent of the total financial outlay, thus posing a question on the implementation and coverage of the scheme.
- The country is indeed grateful to the Finance Minister for recognising that the "Pandemic has brought to the fore the issue of mental health" and announcing the launch of "A national tele mental health programme". Children's mental health has been affected the worse during the pandemic. As per the Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India¹³ report of the NCRB, suicides by students comprise 8.2% to total suicides in the year 2020. 'Failure in Examination' accounts for 1.4% of all suicides. Of the females who committed suicides, highest number (22,372) was of house-wives followed by students (5,559). Besides, studies point to excessive screen time among children and adolescents since the pandemic, impacting their physical and mental health. Absence to spaces that children could use to share their emotions too calls for investment in mental health concerns. One hopes that the tele mental health programme will have a special focus on children and adolescents and will be specifically designed taking into account their mental health concerns.
- Clearly, the education budget 2022-23 should have budgeted for innovative ways for bringing down the loss of educational opportunities due to COVID-19, to increase the

¹⁰ Eklavya Model Residential School Guidelines; Ministry of Tribal Affairs;

<https://tribal.nic.in/downloads/EMRS/Guidelines/EMRS%20Guidelines%20November%202020.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1759255>

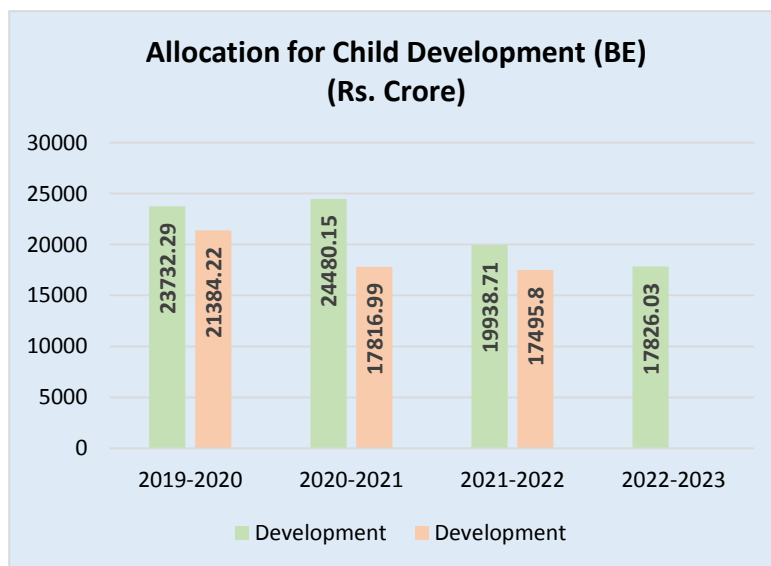
¹² <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1759255>

¹³ National Crime Records Bureau, ACCIDENTAL DEATHS & SUICIDES IN INDIA 2020, CHAPTER – 2, SUICIDES IN INDIA. Available at: https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/adsi2020_Chapter-2-Suicides.pdf

retention rate, particularly for girls, to give boost to the enrolment ratio, and remove the gender gaps, and, to use technology in a manner that makes education accessible, joyful and learning experience. The usual implementation and accounting process will not be adequate.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- The overall budget for Child Development programmes in Statement No. 12 of the Union Budget 2022-23 accounts for an allocation of INR 17826.03 Crore. Child Development programmes, which largely include nutrition and day care related programmes for children under 6 years that used to be part of the Umbrella ICDS scheme,



have seen a reduced allocation of 10.97 per cent in the 2022-23 Union Budget.

- The major allocation within Child Development programme has been towards 'Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0' with an allocation of INR 17223.61 Crore.
- The Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (erstwhile Anganwadi services) has however, received a blow with allocation reducing by 11.28 per cent against the 2021-22 budget at BE stage. The centre and State Governments and UT administrations need to be reminded of the order of the Supreme Court dated 27 March, 2020, in Suo Motu Writ Petition (C) No(s).2/2020 (In Re: Regarding Closure of Mid-Day Meal Scheme), where the court had expressed concern over large-scale malnourishment resulting from non-supply of nutritional food to children as well as lactating and nursing mothers with the schools and Anganwadis shutting down during the lockdown. The Apex Court called upon the government to ensure that such schemes are not adversely affected.
- According to World Vision's India Child Well-being Report 2020, almost 115 million children are at the risk of malnutrition due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown.¹⁴ Another study points out that five million children are at risk of falling in the wasting category of malnourishment, while an additional two million

¹⁴ World Vision India. India Child Well Being Report 2020; <https://spark.adobe.com/page/8uv0dQ33ID5tM/>

children are at risk of being pushed into the severe wasting category due to the pandemic. The study concludes that with “high concentration of children around the undernutrition threshold, any minor shock to nutritional health of the children can have major implications.”¹⁵

- At this stage, it is pertinent to deconstruct the allocations made for Saksham Anganwadi Scheme and Poshan 2.0 as both the components are crucial for eliminating malnutrition among children. The GoI is implementing POSHAN Abhiyan, earlier known as National Nutrition Mission, since 18th December 2017 to address the problem of malnutrition in the country. The Abhiyan aims to reduce malnutrition in the country in a phased manner, through a life cycle approach, by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. To ensure a holistic approach, all districts of States/UTs have been covered in the Abhiyan. Target is to bring down stunting of the children in the age group of 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by the year 2022.¹⁶
- As per the available data, a total on INR 422390.39 Crore has been released to all the States and UTs during 2017-18 to 2019-20, out of which, the States and UTs have been able to utilise only 32.47 per cent of the total released funds.¹⁷
- According to the NITI Ayog’s Report, the cumulative fund utilization under the Abhiyan is roughly around 6% of the allocated budget with some States and UTs unable to even initiate the spending process. Even where funds have been released, tardiness in initiating procurement of Smart Phones and Growth Monitoring Devices (such as Stadiometer, Infantometer etc) through the GeM portal precludes reaping the full benefit from the scheme by the frontline workers and intended beneficiaries. This needs prioritization at the level of decision makers.¹⁸ The report further outlines that the vacancies among the front line staff and even more so among the supervisory staff is a common phenomenon across States and UTs. It is one of the most potent threat factors for the success of the Abhiyan. We need to encourage State Governments to take up special drives not only to fill these vacancies, but to invest in their training and capacity building to enable them to fulfill their roles effectively.

¹⁵ Living on the edge? Sensitivity of child undernutrition prevalence to bodyweight shocks in the context of the 2020 national lockdown strategy in India; Rajpal Sunil, William Joe and S V Subramanian; Journal of Glob Health Science 2020. Published online Jul 16, 2020; <https://e-ijghs.org/DOIx.php?id=10.35500/ijghs.2020.2.e19>

¹⁶ <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1596112>

¹⁷ <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1596112>

¹⁸ TRANSFORMING NUTRITION IN INDIA: POSHAN ABHIYAAN A PROGRESS REPORT DECEMBER 2018; https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-2/POSHAN_Abhiyaan_first_progress_report_6_Feb_2019.pdf

What is Needed for Effective Implementation of the Integrated Child Development Services/ Saksham Anganwadis

An evaluation of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme was undertaken by Niti Aayog in collaboration with the Institute of Economic Growth and IIT Gandhinagar in nine States and Union Territories to understand specifically the governance and implementation mechanisms and key processes under the ICDS scheme. The evaluation report was shared with MoWCD.

Some of the key recommendations centred around:

- Streamlining the governance and monitoring mechanisms for supplementary nutrition to ensure greater efficacy and impact of the allocated resources.
- ICDS's take-home ration and hot-cooked meals should adopt a progressive view to promote dietary diversity and coverage.
- ICDS should evolve as per the changing needs and aspirations of the community, particularly in the urban areas where households are drawn towards an increasingly vibrant pre-schooling environment.
- The quality of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) is thus emerging as a major parameter to sustain the relevance of ICDS.
- Gaps and inadequacies in ICDS financing, infrastructure and human resources have detrimental effects on service delivery and require renewed attention.
- The Ministry found the objectives and broad recommendations of the evaluation in alignment with the overall vision of the scheme. They were also of the opinion that the report is 'an endorsement of the Ministry's efforts towards the concept of 'Saksham Anganwadis'.

Source: NITI Ayog Annual Report: 2020-21;

[https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-02/Annual-Report2020-2021-](https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-02/Annual-Report2020-2021-0.pdf)

[0.pdf](#)

Anganwadi workers begin indefinite strike

They are demanding a hike in salary

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Hundreds of anganwadi workers and helpers began an indefinite strike near Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence in north Delhi on Monday, demanding an increase in their monthly honorarium.

The police stopped the protesters a few hundred metres away from the CM's house.

Poll-bound States

The workers, belonging to the Delhi State Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Union, also warned that they would go to Punjab and other States, which are going to the polls. "Both the Delhi



Anganwadi workers protesting near Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence on Monday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

and Central governments have not helped us. We will send teams of workers to Punjab, Goa, U.P. and Uttarakhand to expose both AAP and the BJP, as they are the ruling parties in Delhi, and tell people not to vote for them," said Vrishali, spokesperson of the union.

"In Punjab, Arvind Kejriwal had said that he will double the honorarium of anganwadi workers and ASHA workers. He also said that in Delhi, the government has been paying ₹1 crore as compensation to families of front line workers who succumbed to COVID-19. But in

Delhi, anganwadi workers are not even given face masks, let alone face shields and PPE kits," she added.

The honorarium for anganwadi workers in Delhi was last increased in August 2017 after 58 days of strike.

The present honorariums of anganwadi workers and helpers in Delhi are ₹9,678 and ₹4,839 respectively, as per the union.

"On September 7, 2021, we had met Delhi's Women and Child Development Minister and were assured that our demands would be addressed within a week. But he never got back. On January 6 this year, we tried to meet him again at the Delhi Secretariat, but did not get an appointment," the spokesperson said.

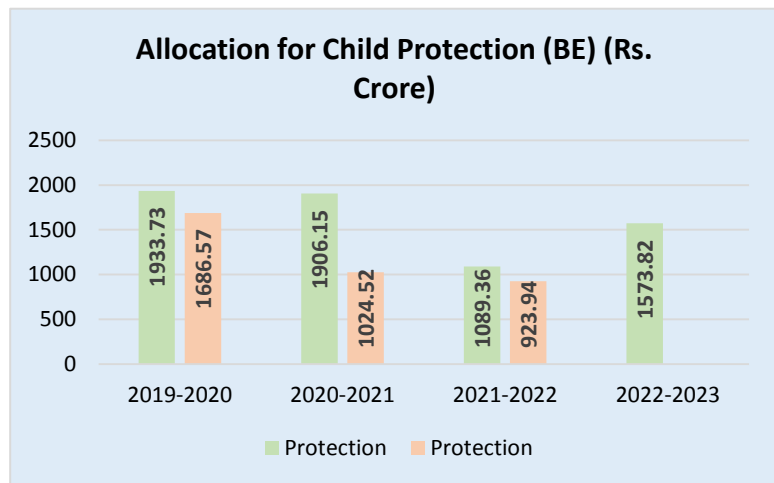
When contacted, the Delhi government spokesperson declined to comment.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/anganwadi-workers-begin-indefinite-strike/article38355694.ece>

CHILD PROTECTION

- Child protection has been one of the least prioritised sectors in terms of resource allocation over the years.

- In 2022-23, child protection has received only 0.04 per cent of the total Union Budget. The overall allocation for Child



Protection remains at INR 1573.82 Crore. Although the current allocation for child protection is an increase of 44.72 per cent in absolute terms, this increase must be examined in the context of rising child protection concerns. COVID-19 has only increased the child protection concerns.

- In order to understand the inadequateness of child protection allocations, it will be pertinent to take a look at the allocations towards some of the flagship schemes in the previous years' budget. For example, in 2019-20 Union Budget, the total allocation for the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) was INR 1500 Crore. As we moved ahead, the total allocation for the overall child protection sector is a little more than INR 1500 Crore. The question that arises at this point is if the allocation made in the Union Budget 2022-23 is sufficient to meet the growing needs of the child protection sector.
- A RTI application before the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development, which was later (on appeal) forwarded to Child line India Foundation, revealed that during the lockdown period (between the months of June to October) there had been an increase of more than 33% in the number of child marriages as compared to 2019. The month of August alone witnessed an increase of more than 88%.¹⁹
- Online trafficking for child labour and sex increased during the Covid-19 crisis. Reports from other states such as Jharkhand suggest that the number of children trafficked increased by over 600 % in April and May, 2020 during the Covid-19 lockdown, when compared to the same two months in 2019. According to Patna's Centre DIRECT, 362 children were rescued in 2020 and another 136 have been rescued so far in 2021 — all working in factories of Jaipur. The average age of these children was 10 years.

¹⁹ <https://thewire.in/rights/rise-in-child-marriages-in-the-lockdown-how-the-centre-ignored-data-of-its-own-nodal-agency>

- As per the NCRB crime statistics for 2020, among offences under the IPC, Kidnapping and Abduction of children has the highest number of cases (54,785 out of 77,382), followed by Insult to the Modesty of Women (8199 out of 77,382) and Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty (4110 out of 77,382). Within SLL crimes, the share of cases under the POCSO Act is the highest [47,221 out of 51,149 or 92.3%].
- It is now an admitted fact that child labour has seen an upward trend during the COVID times as there are enough evidences to show that many children had to drop out from school to support their families. The policy makers can also not shy away from the phenomena of witnessing children headed households. The ILO and UNICEF report warns that globally, 9 million additional children are at risk of being pushed into child labour by the end of 2022 as a result of the pandemic. A simulation model shows this number could rise to 46 million if they don't have access to critical social protection coverage.²⁰
- According to UNICEF India, more than 1.5 million children in India missed out their schooling due to COVID-19 restrictions. This has compelled children to work to support their families. Aide et Action's study in India on the impact of COVID-19 on migrant children revealed a two-fold increase in the number of children who accompanied their working parents to the brick-making industry after the first wave COVID-19 pandemic.²¹
- A CACL study in 24 districts in Tamil Nadu shows an increase in child labour during the pandemic from 28.2% to 79.6%. The study is based on a rapid survey conducted with 818 children, titled "COVID 19-Reversing the situation of child labour". Children were found working in bakery shops, book stalls, two-wheeler service workshops, newspaper distribution, ration shops, vegetable shops, domestic helpers. 94% said they are pushed to work due to economic crisis. A few are working to buy smartphones.
- And yet there is a massive reduction of 75 per cent towards the National Child Labour Programme in the Union Budget 2022-23, which cannot be justified.
- The Supreme Court of India through In Re Contagion Of Covid 19 Virus In Children Protection Homes [Suo Moto W (C) NO.4 OF 2020], has been constantly flagging the immediate steps child protection functionaries need to adhere to in order to safeguard the rights and well-being of children in the Juvenile Justice System.

²⁰ International Labour Office and United Nations Children's Fund, Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2021; https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_797515.pdf

²¹ <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/economy/covid-19-and-the-changing-face-of-child-labour-77730>

- An allocation of INR 1472.17 Crore for Mission Vatsalya, which is in fact lesser than the allocation of INR 1500 Crore for the Integrated Child Protection Services in 2019-20 Union Budget, will be nowhere near to meet the child protection challenges, especially in the times of the pandemic.

UNPACKING BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO



Launched to address the decline in Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of empowerment of girls over a life cycle continuum.



A tri-ministerial scheme of the of Ministries of Women and Child Development (as Nodal Ministry), Health & Family Welfare and the Ministry of Education (Department of School Education and Literacy)

Financing Towards Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (2014-15 to 2019-20)



Despite funds left unspent with the States in a particular year, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has been releasing additional funds.



Ministry of Women and Child Development does not have disaggregated information on the spending by the States/UTs on education, health and other interventions under BBBP



Ministry of Women and Child Development does not have disaggregated information on the spending by the States/UTs on education, health and other interventions under BBBP

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao is implemented with 100% central assistance

₹ 50 Lakh per year is earmarked per districts for utilisation under 6 components:



Out of a total of Rs. 446.72 crore released during the period 2016- 2019, a whopping 78.91% was spent only on media advocacy. Though the Committee understand the necessity to undertake media campaign to spread the message of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao among the people, they feel that it is equally important to balance the objectives of the scheme.

Source: Empowerment of Women Through Education With Special Reference to 'Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao' Scheme; Fifth Report; Committee of Empowerment of Women (2021-22); Seventeenth Lok Sabha