POLICY BRIEF

Public Provisioning of Elementary Education in India: Some issues around public financing

ऑक्सफैम इंडिया
OXFAM
India

NO. 32 | MARCH 2018

Successive Governments in India have recognized education as a top priority for development. However, the pattern of allocation of resources to education in general and elementary education, in particular, is far from satisfactory. Even after about nine years of the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), the government has failed to fulfill the RTE mandated physical, financial and human resource requirements which in turn have adversely impacted the overall learning outcomes of the children. If the RTE compliance has to be met, it will require more financial resources which could not be achieved alone through the education cess, and thus additional funds need to be channelized through other tax revenue sources.

Education is one of the significant components of development and is one of the three constituents of UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), which measures the level of development of people across countries. Raising the educational development of people is a crucial development goal. Thus, India has often affirmed 'Education for All' as an important national goal to be achieved. Provisioning for education, both for its coverage as well as quality, requires a significant amount of financial resources. Back in 1966, the Kothari Commission suggested that India should spend at least 6 percent of its GDP on education. Since then, India has repeatedly affirmed its resolve to provide at least the recommended 6 percent of the GDP to education. In the year 2000, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Achieving universal primary education 'to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling' was one of the 8 MDGs. However, as on 2015, the year the MDGs came to an end, India failed to achieve the MDG target of universalizing primary education. In the post-MDG era, education is also a stand-alone goal among Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which India is one of the signatories to.

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROPRIATE ACTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO REVERSE THE DECLINING TREND OF EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A SHARE OF THE GDP AND TOTAL UNION BUDGET AND IT SHOULD BE INCREASED TO AT LEAST TO 6 PERCENT OF GDP FOLLOWING THE KOTHARI COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION.

THE UNION AND RESPECTIVE STATE GOVERNMENTS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE SHARE (FINANCIAL RESOURCES) MANDATED BY THE PROJECT APPROVAL BOARD (PAB) OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA) IS MET IN A JUST MANNER BY THEM.

THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES (PIA) OF SSA SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR UNDER-EXPENDITURE OF THE FUNDS APPROVED BY PAB OF SSA. TO CHECK THIS, NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS COULD BE ISSUED PERIODICALLY TO PIA TO FOLLOW THE ANNUAL WORK PLAN PREPARED BY THE PAB OF SSA.

TO MEET THE FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS OF SSA, OVER RELIANCE ON EDUCATION CESS IS NOT RECOMMENDED. THE UNION AND STATE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CHANNELIZE REQUIRED FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO FUND SSA THROUGH OTHER TAX REVENUE SOURCES.

THE UNION AND RESPECTIVE STATE GOVERNMENTS SHOULD STRICTLY ADHERE TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF PAB TO SPEND AT LEAST 30 PERCENT OF THE FUNDS UNDER SSA ON ENTITLEMENTS AND INTERVENTIONS RELATED TO QUALITY INITIATIVES.

WHILE FULFILLING THE MANDATE OF SPENDING 30 PERCENT OF SSA FUNDS ON CATEGORIES 1 AND 2 WORK, IT SHOULD BE ENSURED THAT THE EXPENDITURE ON CATEGORY 3 WORK (I.E. TEACHER'S SALARY AND CIVIL WORKS) IS NOT UNDERMINED.

THE UNION AND RESPECTIVE STATE GOVERNMENTS SHOULD EXPEDITE THE PROCESS OF RECRUITMENT FOR VACANT TEACHERS' POSITIONS, IN SERVICE TRAINING, TIMELY AVAILABILITY OF TEXTBOOKS AND CREATION OF OTHER INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES TO MEET THE RTE COMPLIANCE UNDER SSA.

It is evident from the Figure 1 that government of India has failed to implement the recommendations of Kothari Commission of spending at least 6 percent of the GDP on education. Even the little funds which have been allocated to education has declined over the period of past few years. The public expenditure on education was 3.1 percent of the total GDP in 2012-13, which has dropped to 2.4 percent in 2015-16 and then it marginally increased to 2.7 percent in 2017-18.

Also, the public spending on education as the share of GDP is the lowest in India among the BRICS countries **(See Figure 2).**

The under-expenditure on education in India has a clear implication on its literacy outcomes. Among all the BRICS countries, India has the lowest adult literacy rate at 62.7 percent.

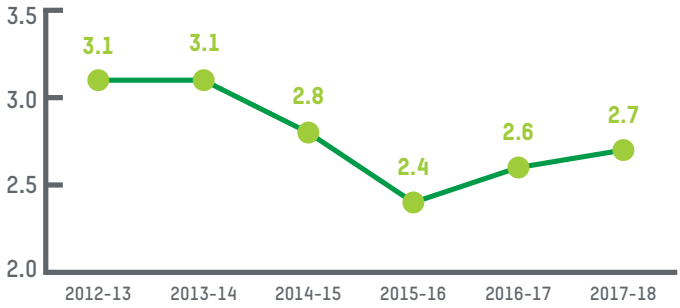
Given the importance of education in the development of a society and an economy, ensuring inclusive education is necessary and public provisioning for education has been recognized as an effective strategy for ensuring it. The Constitution of India has placed education as a concurrent subject which implies a shared responsibility of Union and State Governments towards this sector. The Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) is the nodal agency mandated for planning and implementation of various educational policies in India. Currently, the MHRD works through two departments -Department of School Education & Literacy and Department of Higher Education. The Department of School Education & Literacy has its eyes set on the 'universalization of education'. The Department of Higher Education is engaged in establishing world-class institutes of learning with ample opportunities for research and skill development to ensure that India creates the world's largest skilled workforce.[5]

In the Union Budget 2018-19, MHRD has been allocated with INR 85010 crores, 58.8 percent of which is earmarked for Dept. of School Education and Literacy and 41.2 percent for Dept. of Higher Education. Though the education budget has increased in absolute terms in the recent years, its share in total government expenditure is continuously decreasing which is a worrying trend (see **figure 4**).

The Government of India should act upon the declining expenditure on education as a share of the GDP and total Union Budget and judiciously implement the Kothari Commission recommendation to ensure quality universal school education.

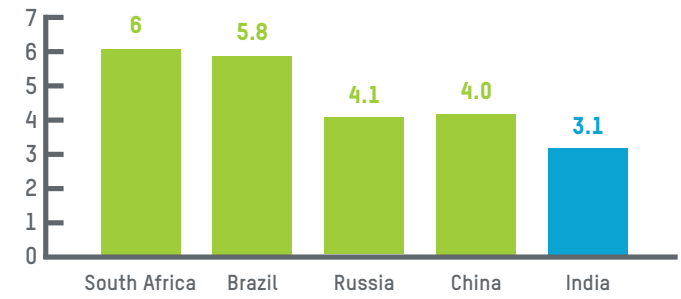
The current policy brief focusses on the trends in financing of public education at Elementary Level school education in India and its implication on the various infrastructural and learning outcomes at the school level education. The analysis in this regard will focus on some of the educationally backward states like Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha. The constitution of India through the Right to Education has made it mandatory for the state to provide free and compulsory elementary education to children of (6-14 years) age group.

FIGURE 1: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS THE PERCENTAGE OF GDP



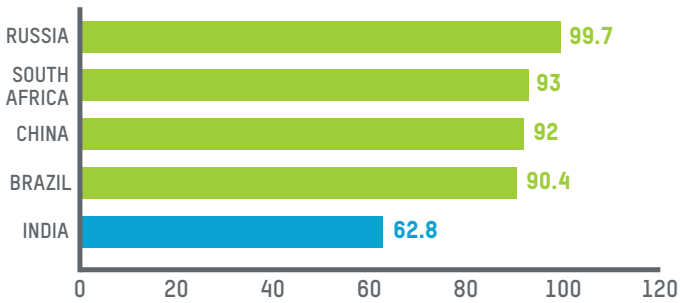
Source: Economic Survey of India, 2017-18

FIGURE 2: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS PERCENTAGE OF GDP IN BRICS COUNTRIES



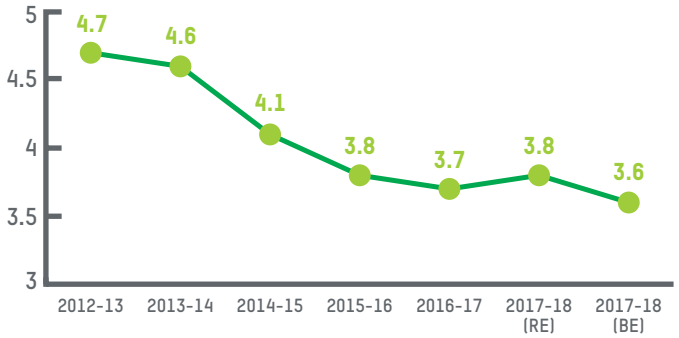
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012 [3]

FIGURE 3: ADULT LITERACY RATE FOR BRICS COUNTRY



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012 [4]

FIGURE 4: UNION GOVT. EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS % OF UNION BUDGET



Source: CBGA Union Budget Analysis, 2018-19 [6]

TABLE 1: BREAK-UP OF THE PROPOSED AND ALLOCATED BUDGET EXPENDITURE FOR 2018-19 ON KEY SCHEMES OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

SCHEME	2018-19 (INR CRORES)			
	PROPOSED	ALLOCATION	SHORTAGE	% SHORTAGE
SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAAN	37048	26128.81	10919.19	**29.5%**
MID-DAY MEALS	12147	10500	1647	**13.6%**
RASHTRIYA MADHYAMIK SHIKSHA ABHIYAAN	4213	4213	0	**0.0%**
STRENGTHENING OF TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS	685.14	550	135.14	**19.7%**
SCHOOL ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME	5	0.7	4.3	**86.0%**
NATIONAL MEANS CUM MERIT SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME	331	299.7	31.3	**9.5%**
NATIONAL SCHEME FOR INCENTIVE TO GIRL CHILD FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION	510.9	255.9	255	**49.9%**

Source: 305th Report, Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Human Resource Development [7]

The Department of School Education and Literacy of MHRD is vested with the responsibility to universalize elementary education by becoming a partner with the States and Union Territories and to reinforce the national and integrative character of education. The Department has the following major programs laid out for achieving the above objectives:

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
- National Programme of Mid-Day Meals in Schools (MDM)
- Strengthening of Teachers Training Institution
- Adult Education & Skill Development
- National Means-Cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS)
- National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE)
- Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan(KVS)
- Navodya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS)

Out of the schemes mentioned above, SSA (Elementary education I-VIII) is the key scheme through which provisions of state-led free elementary education is implemented.

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAAN

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of SSA is the designated vehicle for implementation of the RTE Act, 2009. Section 7(1) of the RTE Act, 2009, states that both the Centre and the State shall have concurrent responsibility for providing funds for carrying out the provisions of the Act. The estimates of expenditure of States and UTs concerning Section 7(2) of the RTE Act are made through the Annual Work Plan & Budget prepared by the Project Approval Board (PAB) as per the programmatic and financial norms of the scheme, which includes the share of both the Centre and state.[8] Section 7(3) of the RTE Act states that the Central Government shall provide to the State Government, as grants-in-aid of revenues, such percentage of expenditure as it may determine, while, Section 7(5) states that the State Government shall, taking into consideration the sums provided by the Central Government to a State Government, be responsible for providing funds for the implementation of the provisions of the Act.[9] The GOI-state fund sharing ratio for SSA was revised in October 2015, to 60:40 (previously 65:35).[10]

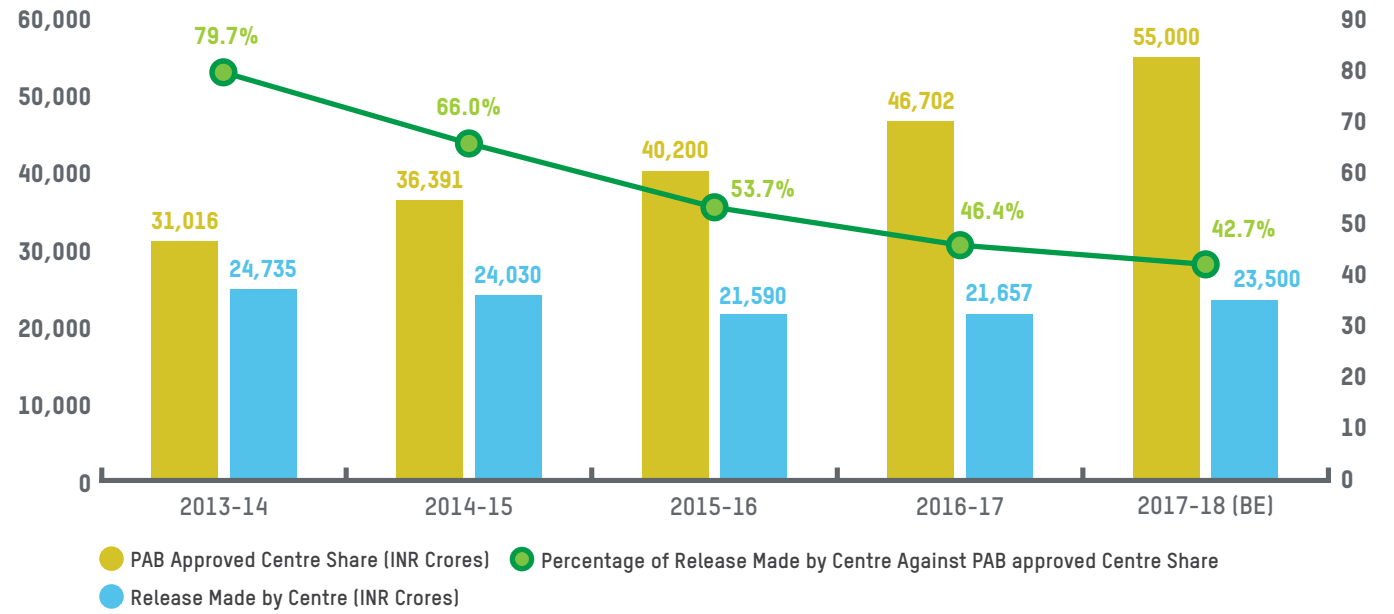
There is a significant mismatch between funds requested by the PAB of SSA for implementation of SSA and funds allocated to MHRD for SSA. In FY 2016-17, PAB of SSA estimated a resource requirement of INR 46,702 crore for SSA. However, it received only INR 21,657 crore (RE), equivalent to 46.4 percent of its demand. Similarly, in FY 2017-18 the funds requested by PAB of SSA was at INR 55,000 crore, the Government of India (GOI) SSA budget for the year was INR 23,500 crore. The analysis of the funds released by the union government in the last five years shows that the total financial outlay demanded by PAB of SSA has never been met in any year so far **(see Figure 5)**.

The mandated share to be released by the central government has not been fulfilled by the GOI, and the release made by the central government as the percentage of the PAB approved Central share has reduced from 79.7 percent in 2013-14 to just 42.7 percent in 2017-18.

The Union government should take necessary action on its declining share in the SSA and thereby ensure that the central share demanded by the PAB of SSA is met in a just manner. The union government should also issue necessary instructions in this regard to the respective state governments.

Similarly, a worrying trend is also observed in the total amount spent on SSA as a percentage of the total approved budget of SSA (GOI and state shares). The proportion of funds spent out of total approved budgets under SSA has been declining since FY 2013-14. It fell from 84 percent in FY 2013-14 to 66 percent in FY 2016-17 **(see Figure 6)**. In FY 2017-18, till 30 June 2017, INR 7157 crore, equivalent to just 9 percent of the approved budget was spent.

FIGURE 5: RELEASE MADE BY GOI FOR SSA AGAINST THE APPROVED CENTRE SHARE BY PAB OF SSA



Source: Lok Sabha, Parliament of India (Un-starred Question: 105, 150, & 310) [11]

Thus, on the one hand, the GOI is not fulfilling the resources demanded by the PAB of SSA, and on the other hand, even the amount which is finally sanctioned by the Centre and state is not being completely utilized. As a result, the scheme remains grossly underfinanced every year.

STATE LEVEL TRENDS IN ALLOCATION AND EXPENDITURES UNDER SSA

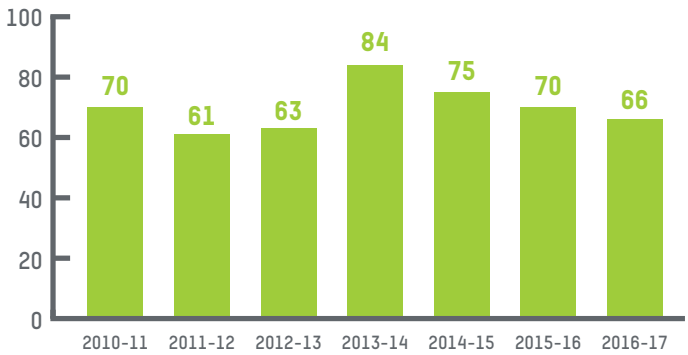
If one looks at the state level trends, there is a considerable variation among the states in the budget approved for SSA as against the budget proposed by the respective states. For Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, only 31.7 percent and 40.2 percent of the recommended amount was approved while for Jharkhand 63.8 percent of the proposed budget was approved.

Similarly, there is a significant state variation in expenditure occurred out of the approved budgets under SSA. In FY 2016-17 Jharkhand spent 84 percent of its approved budget while Bihar spent merely 66 percent of its approved budget. At all India level, there has been a decline of 4 percentage points in the expenditure on SSA as a share of the total approved SSA budget in the period 2015-16 to 2016-17 (see Figure 8).

The project implementing agencies (PIA) of SSA should be held accountable for under-expenditure of the funds approved by PAB of SSA. In this regard, necessary instructions should be issued periodically to PIA's to follow the annual work plan prepared by the PAB of SSA.

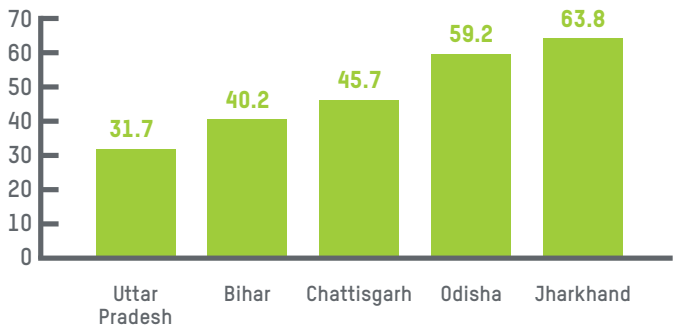
The reason for underutilization of fund under SSA is that the whole governance structure of SSA is highly deficient in infrastructure and human resource to absorb the funds under SSA. There are huge vacancies at every level and the blocks and district offices are under-resourced. The few staff available have to manually fill in hundreds of increasingly complex and

FIGURE 6: TOTAL AMOUNT SPENT ON SSA AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL APPROVALS (GOI+STATE SHARE)



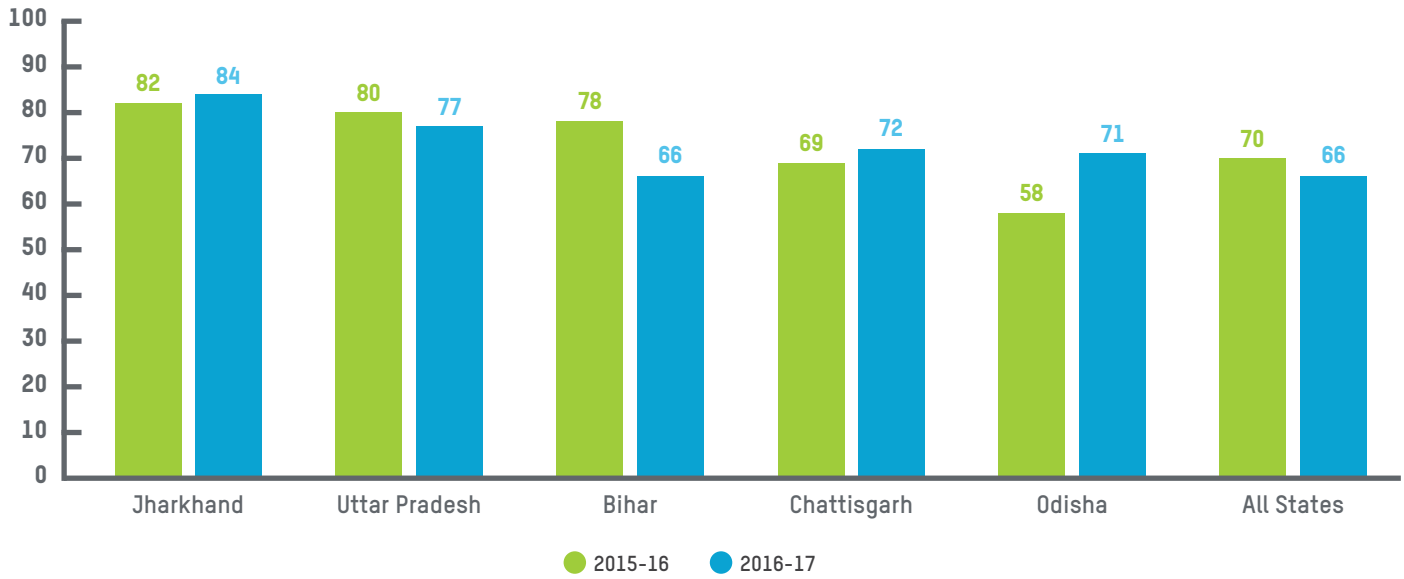
Source: Lok Sabha, Parliament of India (Un-starred Question: 105, 150, & 310)

FIGURE 7: APPROVED STATE BUDGETS FOR SSA AS A PERCENTAGE OF PROPOSED STATE SSA BUDGET, 2017-18



Source: PAB Minutes for 2017-18, SSA Portal [12]

FIGURE 8: STATE-WISE EXPENDITURE AS PERCENTAGE OF THE APPROVED SSA BUDGET OF RESPECTIVE STATES, 2016-17



Source: Un-starred Question No. 2237 for 28.07.2017, Lok Sabha, Parliament of India) [13]

detailed forms every month to get the money sanctioned by the authorities. The schools are not able to provide annual accounts in the prescribed format in time due to the existing system of manual accounting at the sub-district level. This leads to delay in submitting the required documents to MHRD for the release of funds. In some cases, due to lack of required human resource, book-keeping is left to the teachers. The proper utilization of funds, therefore, requires more human and infrastructural resources.[14]

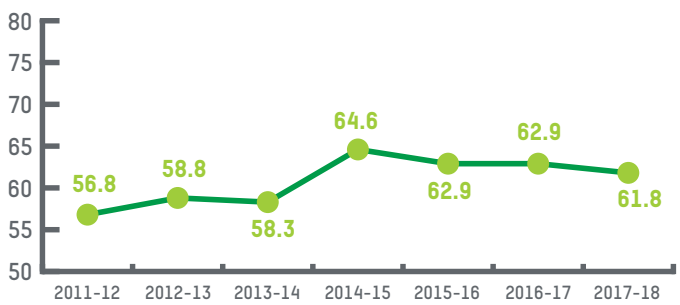
SOURCE OF FINANCE FOR SSA

Since the last few years, significant chunk of government financing of elementary education has been through education cess. The education cess comprises of 2 percent elementary education cess and 1 percent secondary and higher education cess. The Department of School Education and Literacy receives the proceeds from the cess, which the Union Government levies on all central taxes and custom duty maintained under a non-lapsable fund called the Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh (Fund Created at Union Government level to finance elementary education and provide mid-day meal). The collection of cess began as a measure to provide additional financial assistance to supplement government's support for elementary education; however, it grew to be more of a substitute.[15] Since 2011-12, there is a continuous increase in the share of Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh as part of the Union Government's financing of RTE **(see Figure 9).**

The 23rd report of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India in 2017 noted that the SSA budget for 2014-15 (Revised Estimates) had been reduced by INR 5256 crores, against the budgeted provision of INR 27,575 crores, due to lower collection of education cess. Therefore, if the financing of RTE depends on the collection of cess, the allocation for SSA would always be uncertain. Moreover, it also raises the fundamental question that why cess is necessary when tax revenues have been growing steadily over the years.[17] The elementary education cess collected from the period 2004-05 to 2016-17 is INR 1, 93,828 crores. The utilization from Prarmbhik Shiksha Kosh towards SSA during the above mentioned period is INR 1, 20,239 crores and towards mid-day meal is INR 58,083 crores. **Thus out of the total elementary education cess collected during the period 2004-05 to 2016-17, 92 percent was utilized.**[18]

With the implementation of GST, how the education cess will be used is not very clear yet. Also, following the recommendation of the 'NITI Aayog Sub-group on Rationalizing Centrally Sponsored Schemes, the Union Government has reduced its share of SSA from 65 to 60 percent, starting in FY 2016-17.[19] Thus the proper implementation of the RTE would crucially depend on the states' ability to contribute its enhanced share, which remains uncertain and is a cause for concern.

FIGURE 9: FINANCING SSA THROUGH CESS AS % OF TOTAL SSA FINANCING



Source: What DO the Numbers Tell? CBGA (2017) [16]

To meet the financial requirements of SSA, over reliance on education cess is not recommended. The union and state governments should channelize required financial resources to fund SSA through other tax revenues sources. Government can create more fiscal space by reducing the tax exemption for the corporates and introducing inheritance tax and wealth tax. The augmented revenue from these taxes could be used to finance SSA.

PER STUDENT EXPENDITURE ON SSA

There is a significant state variation in the per-student expenditure across states under SSA. Uttar Pradesh at INR 9344 has one of the highest per-student expenditure in the country while Jharkhand at INR 3074 has one of the lowest per-student expenditure (see Figure 10). A critical aspect of this variation is the fact that some states which have a low utilization rate of the total approved SSA budget have a higher per-student expenditure under SSA. The most probable explanation for this is the fact that the states with comparatively higher per-student expenditure have a correspondingly lower enrolment ratio of students in government schools (UP-45.6 percent, CG-73.6 percent, OD-79.9 percent, BH-92 percent, and JH-72.5 percent).

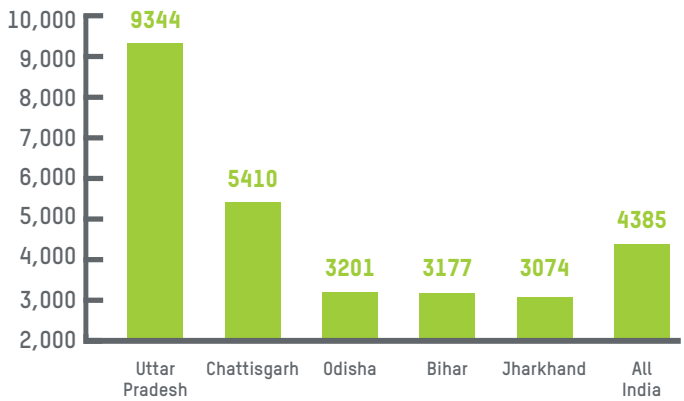
Now, a straightforward argument which can be made from Figure 10 is that the state with high per-student expenditure will have a comparatively better learning and infrastructural outcomes. The National Achievement Survey (NAS) conducted by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) tracks in-school learning achievements at the elementary level in three subjects: Reading Comprehension, Mathematics and Environmental Science (EVS). The data on state-wise learning achievements are available for the year 2017 (see Figure 11).

If we compare the data from Figures 10 and 11, it is clearly evident that mere high per-capita expenditure does not guarantee an enhanced learning level. Thus, it is necessary to understand what all constitutes the expenditure made under SSA and to explore what the states with higher learning outcomes do differently.

The allocation made for SSA is prioritized for different activities and is further divided into different components. The allocation for SSA is categorized into three categories namely:

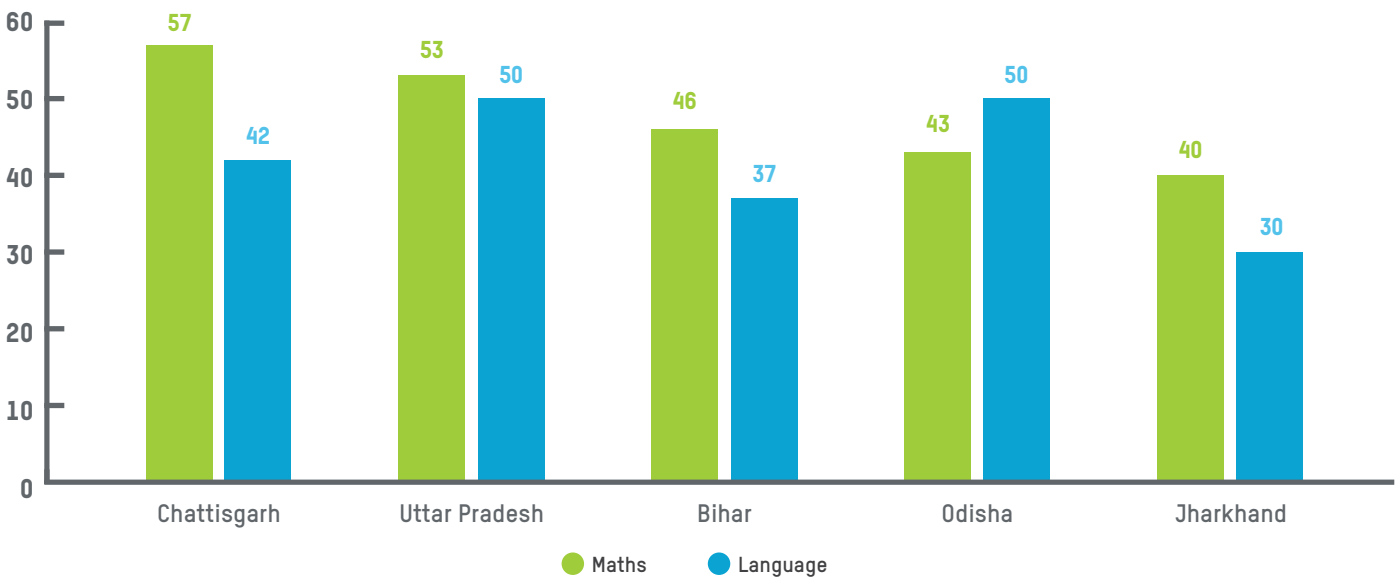
- **CATEGORY 1** includes entitlements and includes allocations for free textbooks, uniforms, school and maintenance grants, reimbursement against admission under section 12 (1) (c) of RTE Act, Residential schools/hostels, etc.

FIGURE 10: PER STUDENT EXPENDITURE UNDER SSA, 2016-17 (INR)



Source: Budget Briefs (Vol 10/Issue 1), SSA 2018-19, Accountability initiative [20]

FIGURE 11: PERCENTAGE OF CLASS V STUDENT WHO SCORED LESS THAN 50% DURING NAS, 2017



Source: State Reports, National Achievement Survey, 2017-18 [21]

- **CATEGORY 2** includes interventions related to quality initiatives and contains allocations for teacher training, innovation, community mobilization, school management training, learning enhancement program, library, Innovation Fund for Girls, SC, ST, Minority & Urban Deprived Children, Research, Evaluation, Monitoring, and Supervision (REMS), Special training for Out-of-school children, etc.
- **CATEGORY 3** includes civil works and teacher's salary respectively.

It is evident from Figure 12 that major funds under SSA are spent on category 3, i.e., civil works and teacher salaries. **In Uttar Pradesh, 88 percent of the state SSA funds were spent on civil works and teachers' salary while mere 4 percent was spent on interventions related to enhancing learning outcomes in 2016-17.**

Taking cognizance of the situation in the PAB meeting of FY 2017-18, it was mandated to the state governments that they should spend at least 30 percent of their total expenditure under SSA on category 1 and category 2 activities. However, a similar trend in FY 2017-18 is observed at all India level whereby 76 percent of the total approved budget went towards teacher salaries and civil works, 14 percent for entitlements, 10 percent for quality related interventions.

With the meagre financial resources under SSA, if channelization of funds is made towards categories 1 and 2 work, it will result in the deduction of teachers' salaries which is not recommended. This is the most significant reason for non-adherence by the state governments to the PAB recommendation of spending at least 30 percent on categories 1 and 2 work.

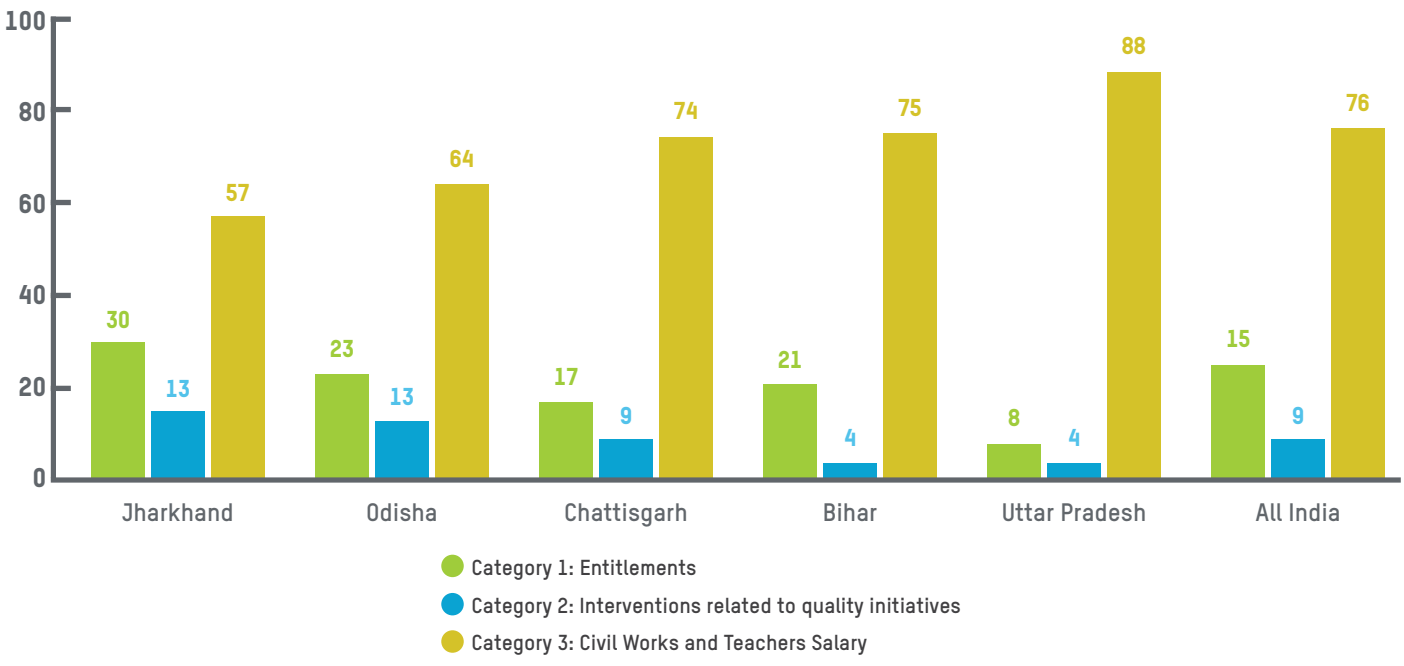
As the major chunk of the fund under SSA is spent on category 3 works, activities under category 1 and 2 get less financial support, and hence their overall implementation suffers. For example, the Learning Enhancement Program (LEP) is an important component of category 2 under SSA which is aimed at curricular reform, including the development of syllabi, textbooks and supplementary reading material keeping with the child-centric assumptions that could enhance their learning outcomes.[23] Despite an increasing focus on the quality of education, the utilization of funds for LEP has remained low over the years. In FY 2016-17 LEP accounted for only 1 percent of the total approved budget of SSA at all India level, and only 66 percent of it was spent. The CAG of India in its 23rd report of 2017 noted that, between FY 2010-11 and FY 2015-16, **48 percent of LEP funds in Jharkhand and 28 percent of LEP funds in Uttar Pradesh remained unspent.**

It is evident from Figure 13 that even though Chhattisgarh allocated 1.9 percent of its SSA budget for LEP in FY 2016-17, at the end of the FY not a single rupee was utilized from the LEP fund. In contrast, Jharkhand allocated 2 percent of its SSA budget for LEP and utilized 100 percent of the LEP budget.

If we compare the data from Figures 11 and 13, it is evident that a comparatively better expenditure on LEP in Jharkhand has a positive outcome on the learning levels in the state. Similarly, the nil expenditure on LEP in Chhattisgarh has a negative implication on the learning outcomes of the state.

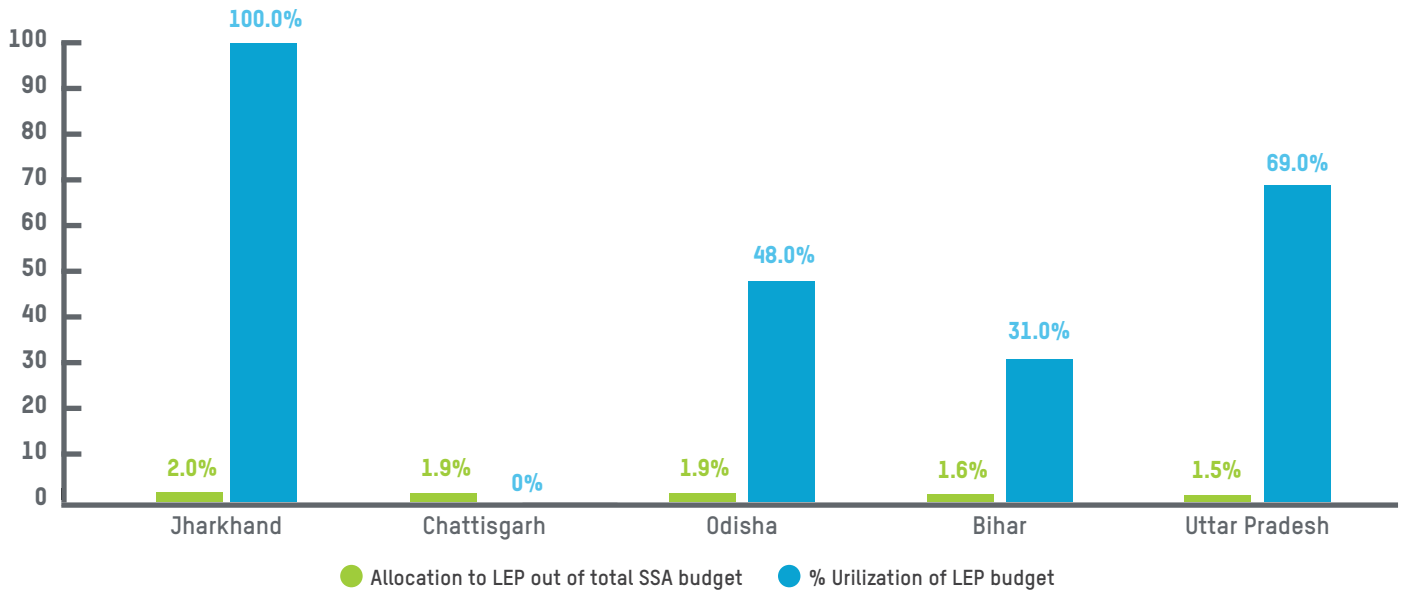
The Union and respective State governments should strictly adhere to the recommendation of PAB of SSA issued in 2017-18 which mandates that at-least 30 percent of the funds under SSA should be spent on activities under categories 1 and 2. While implementing this mandate it should be ensured that the expenditure on category 3 work is not undermined.

FIGURE 12: EXPENDITURE ON DIFFERENT CATEGORIES UNDER SSA, 2016-17



Source: PAB Minutes of SSA, 2016-17 [22]

FIGURE 13: PERCENTAGE FUNDS ALLOCATED AND UTLIZED UNDER LEP, 2016-17

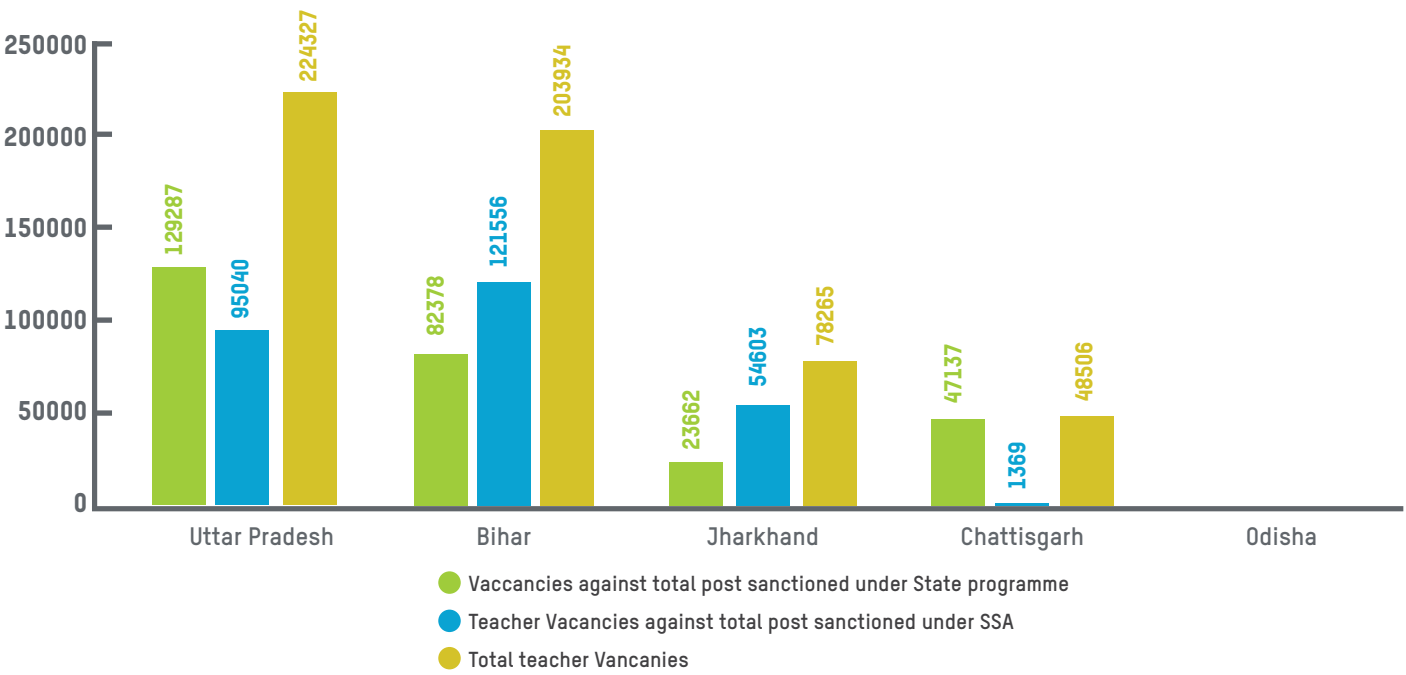


Source: PAB Minutes of SSA, 2016-17

RTE COMPLIANCE UNDER SSA

The RTE mandates the state governments to maintain an optimum infrastructure and human resource requirements for SSA as SSA is the primary vehicle for implementing the RTE Act. To ensure quality education maintaining specified Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) is required. The RTE 2009 in its schedule lays down PTR for the primary level at 30:1 and for the upper primary level at 35:1.[24] According to DISE 2016 report on Elementary Education, only 26.3 percent of government schools have PTR more than 30 at primary level, and around 14 percent of the schools have PTR more than 35 at upper primary level.[25] **There is a shortage of more than nine lakh teachers in India at the elementary level, out of which around 46.3 percent (4, 17,057) are vacant under the mandate of SSA.** At state level 30.2 percent teachers' position in Bihar and 44.5 percent in Jharkhand respectively are vacant **(see Figure 14)**.

FIGURE 14: TEACHER VACANCIES VIS-À-VIS SANCTIONED POST



Source: Un-starred Question No 2408, Lok Sabha, Parliament of India [26]

TABLE 2: RTE COMPLIANCE

STATES	%. GOVT. PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH SCR>30	% GOVT. UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH SCR>35	% SCHOOLS WITH DRINKING WATER FACILITY	% SCHOOLS WITH GIRLS' TOILET FACILITY	% SCHOOLS WITH RAMP	% SCHOOLS WITH PLAY-GROUND	% SCHOOLS WITH BOUND-ARY WALL	% SCHOOLS WITH KITCHEN SHED	% SCHOOLS WITH ELECTRIC-ITY FACILITY
BIHAR	70.9	83	94.2	89.4	62.4	35.3	53.4	62.5	36.7
CHHATTISGARH	18.2	26.7	100	99.4	74	54.6	65.4	84.7	71.8
ODISHA	23.4	33.9	99.5	98.2	64.8	30.3	68.1	73	32
UTTAR PRADESH	30.8	10.3	98.7	99.8	73	70.5	72.3	82.3	53.3
JHARKHAND	24	27	93.5	98	47	40.5	31	68.6	18.4

Source: U-DISE, MHRD 2015-16 [27]

If the shortage of the teachers under SSA is to be met, then a huge additional quantum of money would be needed to meet the teacher's salary.

If we look at the infrastructure compliance under RTE, it is mandated that at least one classroom for every teacher and an office cum-store-cum-head teacher's room, safe and adequate drinking water facility to all children, separate toilets for boys and girls and arrangements for securing the school building by boundary wall or fencing. The RTE mandated infrastructure requirements are resource intensive and government schools failed to meet these requirements even after seven years of implementation of the Act (see Table 2).

The Union and respective State governments should expedite the process of recruitment for vacant teachers' positions, creation of infrastructural facilities like classrooms, boundary walls, kitchen shed, electricity facility, etc. so as to meet the RTE compliance under SSA. If RTE compliance is to be ensured, the Union and the state governments should come in to an agreement to channelize financial resources to meet the financial resources demanded by the PAB of SSA.

The analysis presented here reveals that education (including elementary education) is hugely under-financed in India. Even though the constitution of India through the introduction of RTE has made it mandatory for the government to provide free elementary education, the various governments have failed to channelize necessary physical and financial resources required for the effective implementation of RTE. India is undergoing a historic demographic transition where the majority of the population is below the age of 30. It is increasingly being recognized that education will play a major role in the country for reaping the expected 'demographic dividend' over the next decades. The low expenditure on education and consequently low levels of literacy and learning outcomes would be the biggest hurdle in realizing India's demographic dividend.

NOTES

1 Rajya Sabha (2006), 172nd Report on University Higher Education, Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development. Retrieved on 11 April from http://164.100.47.5/newcommittee/reports/EnglishCommittees/Committee%20on%20HRD/172ndreport.htm

2 MOSPI (2017). Millennium Development Goals-Final Country Report of India. Retrieved 26 March 2018, from http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/MDG_Final_Country_report_of_India_27nov17.pdf

3 Retrieved on 23rd March 2018 from http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=UNESCO&f=series%3AXGDP_FSGOV

4 Retrieved on 23rd March 2018 from https://tellmaps.com/uis/literacy/#!/tellmap/-601865091

5 MHRD (2015), Annual Report of Ministry of Human Resource and Development, Government of India. Retrieved 2 April 2018, from http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/AR_2015-16%20ENGLISH.pdf

6 Retrieved on 28 March 2018 from http://www.cbgaindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/0f-Hits-and-Misses-An-Analysis-of-Union-Budget-2018-19-2.pdf

7 Rajya Sabha, Parliament of India (2018), 305th Report, Demands for Grants 2018-19 (Demand No. 57) of the Department of School Education & Literacy, Retrieved on 3 April 2018 from http://164.100.47.5/newcommittee/reports/EnglishCommittees/Committee%20on%20HRD/305.pdf

8 Rajya Sabha, Parliament of India (2018), Report on the Action Taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in it's Two Hundred and Ninetieth Report on Demands for Grants (2017-2018) of the Department of School Education and Literacy (Ministry of Human Resource Development). Retrieved 3 April 2018, from http://164.100.47.5/newcommittee/reports/EnglishCommittees/Committee%20on%20HRD/301.pdf

[9] Un-starred Question No. 2302, Rajya Sabha, Parliament of India, Allocation for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, ANSWERED ON 15TH MARCH, 2018. Retrieved on 3 April 2018 from, http://164.100.47.4/newrsquestion/ShowQn.aspx

[10] Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, 28 February 2015. Retrieved from http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=116152

[11] Retrieved on 2 April 2018 from http://164.100.47.190/loksabhaquestions/annex/9/AU105.pdf; http://164.100.47.190/loksabhaquestions/annex/12/AU150.pdf; http://164.100.47.193/Annexture_New/lsq16/4/au310.htm

[12] MHRD (2018), Retrieved on 3 April 2018 from http://ssashagun.nic.in/pab1718.html

[13] Retrieved on 28 March 2018 from http://164.100.47.190/loksabhaquestions/annex/12/AU2237.pdf

[14] Shreya Roy Chowdhary (2017, August 1). States are failing to spend their education budgets – because the budgets are too low. The Scroll, retrieved on 12 April 2018 from https://scroll.in/article/845258/states-are-failing-to-spend-their-education-budgets-because-the-budgets-are-too-low

[15] CBGA (2017), Is There Enough Public Resource for School Education? Examining the Available Evidences, Retrieved 7 April 2018 from http://www.cbgaindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Is-There-Enough-Public-Resource-for-School-Education.pdf

[16] Retrieved on 28 March 2018 from http://www.cbgaindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Analysis-of-Union-Budget-2017-18-4.pdf

[17] Ibid

[18] Un-starred Question No 1168, Ministry of Finance Lok Sabha, Parliament of India, Retrieved on 09 April 2018 from http://164.100.47.190/loksabhaquestions/annex/14/AU1168.pdf

[19] Niti Ayog (2015), REPORT OF THE SUB-GROUP OF CHIEF MINISTERS ON RATIONALISATION OF CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEMES, Retrieved on 8 April 2018 from http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/Final%20Report%20of%20the%20Sub-Group%20submitter%20to%20PM.pdf

[20] Retrieved on 28 March 2018 from http://www.accountabilityindia.in/budget/briefs/download/1824

[21] Retrieved on 2 April 2018 from http://www.ncert.nic.in/programmes/NAS/SRC.html

[22] MHRD (2017), Retrieved on 7 April 2018 from http://ssashagun.nic.in/pab.html

[23] Report No 23 of 2017, CAG India, Implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. Retrieved 7 April 2018 from https://cag.gov.in/sites/default/files/audit_report_files/Report_No.23_of_2017_%E2%80%93_Compliance_audit_Union_Government_Implementation_of_Right_of_Children_to_Free_and_Compulsory_Education_Act%2C_2009.pdf

[24] Press Information Bureau (2017), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Accessed on 8 April 2018 from http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158326

[25] DISE (2016), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Retrieved on 8 April 2018 from http://udise.in/Downloads/Publications/Documents/Flash_Statistics-2015-16_(Elementary).pdf

[26] UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2408, MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, Lok Sabha, ANSWERED ON 31st JULY, 2017, Retrieved on 8 April 2017 from http://164.100.47.190/loksabhaquestions/annex/12/AU2408.pdf

[27] Retrieved on 2 April 2018 from http://udise.in/Downloads/Publications/Documents/Flash_Statistics-2015-16_(Elementary).pdf

[28] Mukherjee Anit N. and Satadru Sikdar (2012). Public Expenditure on Education in India by the Union Government and Roadmap for the Future. IDFC Report. Retrieved 2 April 2018, from http://www.idfc.com/pdf/report/2012/Chapter_2.pdf

AUTHOR: KUMAR RAJESH

INPUTS: SAKTI GOLDER, SOMYA DIMRI, DIYA DUTTA

Oxfam India | 4th and 5th Floor, Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra, 1, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi 110001
Tel: +91 (0) 11 46538000 | Web: www.oxfamindia.org

Oxfam India is a member of a global confederation of 20 Oxfams and is registered as a company under section 8 of the Indian Company Law.

ऑक्सफैम इंडिया
OXFAM
India