**4. EDUCATION**

**Highlights**

The Ministry of Human Resource Development budget remains stagnant at 3.7 percent of the total Union budget in the financial year 2017-18

There is no major announcement for school education. The National Education Mission (NEM) has received an additional allocation of Rs. 1,226 crore from 2016-17(BE), primarily on account of an increase in the SSA budget by Rs. 1,000 crore

Allocation for National Means cum Merit scholarship scheme has increased from Rs. 35 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 282 crore in 2017-18 (BE)

The Budget for the National Scheme for Incentive to Girl Child for Secondary Education has increased from Rs. 45 crore in 2016-17(BE) to Rs. 320 crore in 2017-18(BE)

The budget for ‘Pre Matric Scholarship for SC’ has declined from Rs. 495 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 45 crore in 2017-18 (BE)

​The allocation for RUSA remains unchanged at Rs. 1,300 crore

6. The allocation for Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikash Yojana, a major scheme for skill development hav witnessed a 60 percent increase between 2016-17(BE) and 2017-18(BE).

The last year’s budget ‘Education, Skill Development and Job Creation’ was hailed as one of the distinct ‘pillars’ that will transform India. This year, education, skill development and job creation have been presented merely as the proposal for ‘Youth’. The budget does not make any major announcements for the education sector as a whole. Surprisingly, the Budget speech overlooked any discussion on the financing of ‘Right to Education’ and elementary education despite widely shared concerns on low learning levels and scope for much needed improvement.

In 2017-18 (BE), MHRD has been allocated with Rs. 79,686 crore, 58 percent of which is allocated for Dept. of School Education and Literacy and 42 percent for Dept. of Higher Education. The distribution of MHRD budget shows clear signs of re-prioritisation towards higher education (Figure 4.1).

Though, the budgetary provision for the sector has shown a 10 percent increase in 2017-18 (BE), the budgetary allocation as compared to GDP has decreased from 0.48 percent in 2016-17 (BE) to 0.47 percent in 2017-18 (BE). The share of education in total Union Budget remains stagnant at 3.7 percent as was in 2016-17 Budget Estimates.

Many of the promises made in the 2016-17 (BE) for the education sector do not get substantial resource support in this budget. The promises for setting up of 62 *‘Navodaya Vidyalaya’* in uncovered districts has been supported only by an additional allocation of Rs. 229 crore (Table 4.1).

**Figure 4.1:** **Composition of** **MHRD Budget by Departments (Rs. crore)**

*Notes*: BE-Budget Estimates, RE-Revised Estimates, A- Actuals

*Source*: Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget, Expenditure Budget, Volume II, for various years.

**Table 4.1: Budgetary Allocation for Select Schemes in Education (Rs. crore)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Schemes | 2013-14 (A) | 2014-15 (A) | 2015-16 (A) | 2016-17 (BE) | 2016-17 (RE) | 2017-18 (BE) |
| NEM-SSA | 24802 | 24097 | 21661 | 22500 | 22500 | 23500 |
| NEM-RMSA | 2679 | 3398 | 3563 | 3700 | 3700 | 3830 |
| NEM-Teacher Training and *Saakshar Bharat* | 1090 | 1158 | 916 | 830 | 751 | 926 |
| *Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan* | 2827 | 3243 | 3278 | 3795 | 3987 | 4300 |
| *Navodaya Vidyalaya Sanghatan* | 1746 | 2013 | 2285 | 2471 | 2615 | 2700 |
| Mid Day Meal (MDM) | 10918 | 10523 | 9145 | 9700 | 9700 | 10000 |

*Notes*: NEM-National Education Mission; BE-Budget Estimates, RE-Revised Estimates, A- Actuals

*Source*: Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget, Expenditure Budget, Volume II, for various years

**Right to Education (RTE): A Distant Dream?**

*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), received Rs. 23,500 crore in 2017-18 (BE). As compared to last year’s allocation, there has been an increase of Rs. 1,000 crore. However, this increase is insufficient to address the gaps in resource requirement in financing RTE. For the last six years, the allocation of Union Government for SSA acutely falls short of the Central Share approved by MHRD based on the annual work plan and budgets prepared by the districts and submitted to the Ministry by the States (Table 4.1). This clearly indicates that the Ministry of Finance has not been able to fulfil the commitments made by the MHRD.

**Table 4.2: Approved outlay for SSA vis-à-vis allocation**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | MHRD approval for SSA (Central Share)  (Rs. crore) | Budgetary allocation (BE) for SSA by Ministry of Finance  (Rs. crore) | Allocation as % of approved outlay |
| 2012-13 | 45419 | 25555 | 56.3 |
| 2013-14 | 31016 | 27258 | 87.9 |
| 2014-15 | 36391 | 28258 | 77.7 |
| 2015-16 | 40200 | 22000 | 54.7 |
| 2016-17 | 46702 | 22500 | 48.2 |
| 2017-18 | 55000 | 23500 | 42.7 |

*Notes*: PAB-Project Approval Board; Rs. 55,000 crore has been proposed for SSA in 2017-18(BE)

*Source*: Compiled by CBGA from Parliamentary Standing Committee Report (no. 283) and Union Budget, Expenditure Budget, Volume II, for various years.

**A Promise of ‘Quality Education’ Without Financial Support?**

The ASER 2016 report[[1]](#footnote-1) pointed out that after the implementation of the RTE Act, the learning levels outcomes of children going to government schools had actually deteriorated, though marginal improvement over last year was observed in the latest survey. Towards, the improvement of quality, the budget proposes an introduction of a system for measuring annual learning outcomes in schools.

The only announcement made regarding secondary education is about an ‘Innovation Fund’ to encourage local innovation for ensuring universal access, gender parity and quality improvement with a focus on ICT enabled learning transformation. It seems GoI has been moving its focus from inputs towards outcomes. However, still, the government has not been able to fulfil the pre-requisites for quality education like school infrastructure, adequate professionally qualified teachers, and curricular reforms etc., to name a few.

The government has allocated Rs. 480 crore for strengthening teacher training institutions, same as in 2016-17 (BE). The allocation for language teachers has increased from Rs. 25 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 125 crore in 2017-18(BE). At the same time, the School Assessment Programme has witnessed a sharp budget cut from Rs. 5 crore to Rs. 0.67 crore. The budget for *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA) has increased from Rs. 3,700 crore to Rs. 3,830 crore i.e. only, a meager increase of 3.5 percent.

**Whether Education Budget is Inclusive?**

MHRD has increased its allocation for development of education schemes in North Easter Region from 4.9 percent in 2016-17 (BE) to 7.9 percent in 2017-18 (BE). As recommended by Parliamentary Standing committee of Human Resource Development, Union Government has increased its allocation for National Means cum Merit scholarship scheme from Rs.35 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 282 crore in 2017-18 (BE). The budget for National scheme for Incentive to Girl child for Secondary Education has witnessed a seven fold increase from previous year’s budget estimates. Though the budget for *‘Beti Bachao Beti Padhao’* has increased from Rs. 100 crore to Rs. 200 crore in 2017-18 (BE), only Rs. 43 crore increased according to the 2016-17 (RE), indicating under-performance of the scheme.

Budget for ‘Education Schemes for *Madrasas* and Minorities’ under MHRD has remained unchanged at Rs. 120 crore. There is a substantial decrease in the budget of Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for school education. The budget for ‘Pre Matric Scholarship for SC’ has been reduced from Rs. 495 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs.45 crore in 2017-18 (BE).

Parliamentary Standing Committee has pointed out the scarcity of Girls’ Hostels as one of the major reasons for high drop out rates. The Committee had pointed out that under RMSA, out of 2,225 girls’ hostels, only 802 have been made functional. This problem is even more severe for children in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs). The budget has approved only Rs. 15 crore for Girls’ hostels for SC children.

**Shifting Focus from School Education to Higher Education and Skill Education?**

In 2017-18 (BE), Rs. 33,330 crore has been allocated for the Higher Education Department, which is 15.6 percent higher than 2016-17 (BE). This increase in allocation is on the account of higher budgetary provision for technical education over general education. The cabinet has approved the IIM Bill, 2017 and IIMS are declared as institution of national importance. Prime minister has also given its approval for introduction of The Indian Institutes of Information Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2017 in Parliament. This has been reflected in the sharp increase in allocation for supporting and setting up of new IITs and IIMs in 2017-18 (BE) (Table 4.2).

**Table 4. 3:** **Budgetary Allocation for Select Components of Higher Education (Rs. crore)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Components | 2015-16 (A) | 2016-17(BE) | 2016-17 (RE) | 2017-18(BE) |
| University Grants Commission (UGC) | 4186 | 4492 | 4492 | 4692 |
| Grants to Central Universities | 5600 | 6356 | 6356 | 6486 |
| Students financial aid | 2177 | 2221 | 2135 | 2380 |
| Indian Institute of Technologies (IITs) and Indian Institute of Managements (IIMs) | 4829 | 5714 | 6246 | 8886 |
| NEM- RUSA | 926 | 1300 | 1300 | 1300 |

*Notes*: BE-Budget Estimates, RE-Revised Estimates, A- Actuals

*Source*: Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget, Expenditure Budget, Volume II, for various years

However, *The Rashtriya Uchchatar Siksha Abhiyan* (RUSA), which was designed to provide strategic funding to state higher educational institutions and also was brought under the ambit of NEM in the last financial year, received no attention in this budget. The scheme has received an allocation of Rs. 1,300 crore, as was in the previous year. The allocation for ‘Improvement in salary scale of university and college teachers’ has also witnessed a cut from Rs. 1,237 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 700 crore in 2017-18 (BE).

The budget speech primarily emphasised on skill development and new job creation. The budget has also proposed for an extension of the *Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras* in more than 600 districts across the country. The allocation for *Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikash Yojana*, has increased from Rs. 1,804 crore to Rs. 3,026 crore, with a 60 percent increase between 2016-17 (BE) and 2017-18 (BE).

1. Annual Status of Education Report (Rural), (2016) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)