**6. DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION**

**Highlights**

* The total allocation for the *Swachh Bharat* Mission - Rural and Urban (SBM R+U) is Rs. 16,248 crore with SBM (R) at Rs.13,948 crore and SBM (U) at Rs. 2,300 crore in 2017-2018 (BE). This is significantly higher than the previous year’s allocation of Rs.12,800 crore in 2016-17 (RE)
* For National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), the allocation remained almost the same from Rs.6,000 crore in 2016-17 (RE) to Rs. 6,050 crore in 2017-18 (BE)
* Open Defecation Free (ODF) villages are being prioritised for piped water supply under the SBA
* As part of a sub mission of the NRDWP, it is proposed to provide safe drinking water to over 28,000 arsenic and fluoride affected habitations in the next four years

**Fig 6.1: Budgetary Allocations for Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (Rs. Crore)**

*Source:* Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget documents, various years*.*

**Table 6.1: Allocation for Schemes under Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and**  **Ministry of Urban Development (Rs. crore)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Schemes** | **2012-13 A** | **2013-14**  **A** | **2014-15**  **A** | **2015-16**  **A** | **2016-17 (BE)** | **2016-17 (RE)** | **2017-18 (BE)** |
| National Rural Drinking Water Programme | 10,490 | 9,691 | 9,242.3 | 4,369.6 | 5,000 | 6,000 | 6,050 |
| *Swachh Bharat* Mission (R) / *Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan* | 2,474 | 2,244 | 2,841 | 6,703.4 | 9,000 | 10,500 | 13,948.27 |
| *Swachh Bharat Mission* (U) | - | - | 859.5 | 765.8 | 2,300 | 2,300 | 2,300 |

*Source*: Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget documents, various years.

**Key Budgetary Observations and Developments in Drinking Water and Sanitation**

* Budget 2017-18, for the drinking water and sanitation sector in rural India has seen a significant increase of almost 43 percentage points from 2016-17 (BE) as can be seen Fig 6.1. The figure shows an upward trend from 2012-13 to 2017-18 with a decline only in 2015-16 (A). However, on further scrutiny, it is clear that except for an increase in allocations for rural sanitation, allocations for rural drinking water have remained almost the same at Rs. 6,050 crore 2017-18 (BE) for NRDWP (Table 6.1). The budget allocations for SBM (Urban) have remained stagnant at Rs. 2,300 crore 2017-18 (BE). In *Atal* Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), the allocations in 2017-18 (BE) is Rs. 5,000 crore which is marginally higher than the 2016-17 (RE) i.e. Rs.4, 883.5 crore.
* Despite growth rates being projected at 7.2 percent and the country being the sixth largest producer in the world, India’s sanitation statistics have lagged behind[[1]](#endnote-1). This has led to an increased focus on sanitation politically and since October 2014 there has been a scaling up of activities related to sanitation. This is evident not only in the increased budget but also activities related to sanitation. As per the MDWS, the sanitation coverage has gone up from 42 percent in October 2014 to 60 percent in 2017. Three states – Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim have already been declared ODF, with 85 ODF districts and 1,52,535 ODF villages[[2]](#endnote-2). These achievements have contributed to making sanitation a political priority. The Ministry has also come up with ODF Sustainability Guidelines with a view to address the issue of sustainability.
* With a view to address the problem of arsenic and fluoride contamination of water and stressing on the need to provide sustainable water supply services in rural areas, the Secretary of the Ministry announced in May 2016 that a National Sub-Mission to address Fluoride and Arsenic-affected habitations with additional Central funding has been considered and the guidelines for its implementation have been developed in consultation with NITI Aayog and the States. On the other hand, as of November 2016, at least 17 states have not submitted proposals under NRDWP for release of second installment of funds which would lead to further delay in project completion[[3]](#endnote-3).
* With regard to the formulation of policies and public spending priorities for water and sanitation, the state governments, Urban Local Bodies and Panchayat Raj Institutions are playing a key role since the recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC). The FFC grants to the tune of Rs. 2,00,292 crore are being devolved to *Gram Panchayats* (GPs) to support and strengthen the delivery of basic services which includes ‘water supply, sanitation, septic management, sewage and solid waste management, storm water drainage, maintenance of community assets, etc.’[[4]](#endnote-4) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has also written to the states with regard to utilising the FFC funds, more specifically, this calls for the preparation of *Gram Panchayat* Development Plans (GPDPs) for utilising the funds at the GP level. These developments would strengthen decentralisation in the water and sanitation sector if implemented in a timely manner.

**Challenges and Issues in Water and Sanitation:**

* The planning and budgeting process in the states for water and sanitation needs to be examined further in view of the fact that there is a problem of unspent balances lying with the states. How do incentives/subsidies from the SBM reach the targeted beneficiaries and what are the roadblocks? To what extent has decentralised planning taken place? These are some questions which need to be looked at for examining expenditure priorities for drinking water and sanitation at the level of State and district governments. Further, there is a crucial need for monitoring and evaluation of water and sanitation schemes for which the Ministry has started the *Swachh Sarvekshan* in addition to shortlisting National Level Monitors. This would ensure that sanitation goes beyond just construction of toilets.
* With the launch of SBM in 2014, government funding has increased substantially in sanitation. In addition to public financing, other private entities have also contributed for WASH. Despite the pledge for corporate support through CSR funding via the *Swachh Bharat Kosh*, the contributions have not had the desired impact. Since November 2015, the government has also levied a *Swachh Bharat* Cess of 0.5 percent. Collections through the cess have certainly created a corpus for sanitation which needs to be looked into.
* Inadequate water and sanitation facilities impact women and girls more than men and boys. Field level evidence shows that girl children drop out of school with the onset of puberty due to lack of toilets in school premises. Women have been exposed to sexual harassment and violence due to absence of safe sanitation facilities. Given that water and sanitation is not a part of the Gender Budget Statement, there is a lack of gender disaggregated data making it difficult to track spending on women and girls. The Economic Survey 2016-17 stresses on the need for women’s privacy and dignity through creation of toilets.

1. Census 2011, GoI [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. [www.sbm.gov.in](http://www.sbm.gov.in). Website accessed on 1st February 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. DO.No. W-11011/21/2015-Water-I, 9th November, 2016, MDWS, GOI. Accessed from www.mdws.gov.in [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. D.O.No: W-11042/70/2015-Water-II, 18th October, 2016, MDWS, GoI. Accessed from www.mdws.gov.in [↑](#endnote-ref-4)