**9. NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY**

**Highlights**

* In absolute terms allocations for nutrition related schemes in the Union Budget increased from Rs. 2,00,071 crore in 2012-13 to Rs. 2,98,316 crore in 2017-18 (BE).
* There has been a consistent growth in allocation for nutrition related schemes in the Union Budget since 2012-13.
* However, share of allocation / expenditure for nutrition related schemes in the total Union Budget declined from 14.2 percent in 2012-13 to 14.3 percent in 2015-16, declined to 13.9 percent in 2017-18 (BE).
* The share of allocation / expenditure for nutrition related schemes in the GDP declined from 2 percent in 2012-13 to 1.8 percent in 2017-18 (BE).
* The highest increase in allocation for MBP seen in the current budget compared to Union Budget allocations for earlier years.

Undernutrition has a lifelong impact on cognitive development, health, and future earnings. Investments in nutrition programmes will not only build human capital but would significantly contribute in economic growth as well. However, almost 38.7 percent children under-5 years of age in India are stunted and 73 percent women in reproductive age are anaemic (Rapid Survey on Children, 2013-14). These are not the numbers that a country like India, which is “seen as an engine of global growth”, should be willing to reckon with. The Finance Minister, while presenting the budget for 2017-18 mentioned that transformation in the quality of life of people and mobilising various sections of society, including the vulnerable communities, to realise their true potential has been on the top priority. However, no such commitment has been seen yet, if one looks at the numbers presented in the budget document for the nutrition sector.

Data presented in Table 9.1 lists the outlays and the expenditure for 20 Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) of the Union Government that directly or indirectly impact nutrition outcomes. These are spread across various sectors, viz. women and child development, household food security, health, drinking water and sanitation, food and social security and safety nets, agriculture and poverty alleviation. A few observations regarding these schemes are presented below:

1. **Nutrition and Maternity Entitlement Programmes**

Erstwhile ‘core ICDS’ is a major programme for providing supplementary nutrition to children below 6 years of age. It also provides other important services pertaining to health and education. The scheme had experienced cuts in the last two budgets, however in 2017-18 (BE) there has been an increase of 13 percent as compared to the 2016-17 (RE). However, the allocation for the scheme remains under-funded as the cost norms have not been revised in the recent period as per the current market prices. Allocations for SABLA, which is the only scheme to address the health and nutrition needs of girl child, remain unchanged and the scheme continues to be in pilot mode.

National Food Security Act, 2013 entitled pregnant women and lactating mothers a minimum maternity benefit of Rs. 6,000 per child birth. The scheme was earlier implemented through IGMSY, which has now been renamed as Maternity Benefit Programme (MBP) and has been expanded to cover all districts in the country. However, the allocated amount for MBP, although much higher than the previous year, is only a small portion of the amount required for universalising the scheme.

1. **Access to Health**

Finance Minister (FM) mentioned an action plan to eliminate number of chronic diseases in the next few years and also an action plan to reduce IMR and MMR by 2019 and 2020 respectively, from their current levels. However, we do not see translation of this plan into action as fund allocation has not seen the requisite growth. The allocation for NH M, which is the core scheme for health related interventions, although has increased by 9.5 percent this year, it constitutes only 1 percent of the total Union Budget. This is abysmally low when compared to 5.99 percent of GDP as the average public spending on health in the world (Economic Survey, 2016). The need for huge investment in health infrastructure is evident from the large shortfall in health centres and skilled human resources (doctors, nurses, ANMs) in rural areas and increasing reliance on private doctors in both rural and urban areas.

1. **Drinking Water and Sanitation facilities**

There is now increasing evidence that WASH interventions have had positive effect on nutrition outcomes. SBM has been one of the key programmes of this government and there has been a substantial increase in the budgets for the programme in the last three years. Although sanitation coverage has increased in the last few years, there remains a huge gap in the use and maintenance of the toilets. Provisioning for safe drinking water continues to be a neglected sector. The funds for NRDWP have increased only marginally this year to Rs. 6,050 crore and remain much below compared to previous level of Rs. 10,490 crore in 2012-13.

1. **Agriculture and poverty alleviation programmes**

MGNREGA is the largest scheme among agriculture and poverty alleviation programmes. Allocations for MGNREGA in 2017-18 (BE) are Rs. 48,000 crore, indicating an increase only Rs. 500 crore from 2016-17 (RE). The allocations for poverty alleviation schemes related to nutrition have seen only a modest increase of 3.3 percent. Agriculture too has not received the desired push, even though the allocations for agriculture have increased by 31 percent in 2017-18 (BE) compared to earlier year.

Overall there has been an increase of 9.2 percent in schemes related to nutrition, largely due to increased allocation for agriculture, SBM, and MBP. Rest all the schemes related to nutrition have seen only a nominal increase. Expenditure on nutrition constitutes about 13.9 percent of total Union Budget allocation and only about 1.8 percent of GDP (Figure 9.1). The expenditure on nutrition seems to have stagnated to around this level in the last few years. If we exclude the food subsidy budget (which constitutes about half the nutrition budget) then the nutrition budget would be less than 1 percent of GDP. The comprehensive vision required to address undernutrition is still lacking in the policy domain. The government may do well to recall that we cannot reap the demographic dividend unless we invest in health, education and nourishment of our people.

**Table 9.1: Union Budget Expenditure and Allocations for Schemes Related to Nutrition** (In Rs. Crore)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Schemes** | **2012-13 A** | **2013-14 A** | **2014-15 A** | **2015-16 A** | **2016-17 (BE)** | **2016-17 (RE)** | **2017-18 (BE)** | **% change between 2017-18 BE and 2016-17 RE** |
| Core ICDS / Anganwadi Servicesi, ii | 15767 | 16401 | 16684 | 15489 | 14850 | 14736 | 16745 | 13.6 |
| National Creche Scheme | 106 | 100 | 98 | 133 | 150 | 150 | 200 | 33.3 |
| IGMSY/MBPi | 82 | 232 | 343 | 233 | 400 | 634 | 2700 | 325.9 |
| SABLA | 504 | 603 | 622 | 475 | 460 | 460 | 460 | 0.0 |
| Food Subsidy | 85000 | 92000 | 117671 | 139419 | 134835 | 135173 | 145339 | 7.5 |
| NRHM + NUHMiii | 18047 | 18634 | 19752 | 18972 | 19037 | 20037 | 21941 | 9.5 |
| MDM | 10761 | 10918 | 10524 | 9145 | 9700 | 9700 | 10000 | 3.1 |
| RMSA | 3172 | 2679 | 3398 | 3563 | 3700 | 3700 | 3830 | 3.5 |
| NRDWP | 10490 | 9691 | 9243 | 4370 | 5000 | 6000 | 6050 | 0.8 |
| SBM (Rural + Urban) | 2474 | 2244 | 3701 | 7469 | 11300 | 12800 | 16248 | 26.9 |
| MGNREGA | 30273 | 32994 | 32977 | 37341 | 38500 | 47499 | 48000 | 1.1 |
| NLM (NRLM + NULM) | 2195 | 2022 | 2116 | 2783 | 3325 | 3334 | 4849 | 45.4 |
| NSAP | 7825 | 9406 | 7084 | 8616 | 9500 | 9500 | 9500 | 0.0 |
| NFSM | 1723 | 2027 | 1873 | 1162 | 1700 | 1280 | 1720 | 34.4 |
| NMSA iv | 0 | 0 | 1268 | 686 | 1063 | 880 | 1226 | 39.3 |
| NMOOP v | 399 | 556 | 316 | 306 | 503 | 376 | 403 | 7.2 |
| RKVY | 8400 | 7053 | 8443 | 3940 | 5400 | 3550 | 4750 | 33.8 |
| White Revolution | 1435 | 1449 | 1000 | 937 | 1138 | 1312 | 1634 | 24.6 |
| Blue Revolution | 330 | 348 | 388 | 200 | 247 | 392 | 401 | 2.1 |
| NHM | 1089 | 1809 | 1955 | 1697 | 1620 | 1660 | 2320 | 39.8 |
| **Total Nutrition** | 200071 | 211164 | 239454 | 256936 | 262427 | 273173 | 298316 | 9.2 |

*Notes*:

1. Name changed from FY 2017-18 onwards;
2. Includes allocations for National Nutrition Mission (NNM);
3. NHM from FY 2017-18 includes NRHM, NUHM, tertiary care programme, and Human resources for health and medical education. To ensure comparability across years we have considered only NRHM and NUHM for analysis;
4. The schemes considered for allocations from FY 2015-16 onwards are as follows: Damodar Valley Corporation, National Project on Organic Farming, Organic Value Chain Development for NE Region, National Project on Soil Health and Fertility; Rainfed Area Development and Climate Change, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, and National Project on Agro Forestry;
5. For the FY 2012-13 and 2013-14, allocations under scheme ‘Integrated oilseed, oilpalm, pulses and maize development’ is included;
6. For the FY 2012-13 and 2013-14, allocations under the following heads are included: Animal Husbandry and Dairy Vikas Abhiyan.

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

**Figure 9.1: Share of Expenditure / Outlays for Schemes Related to Nutrition in Total Union Budget and GDP (in %)**

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