

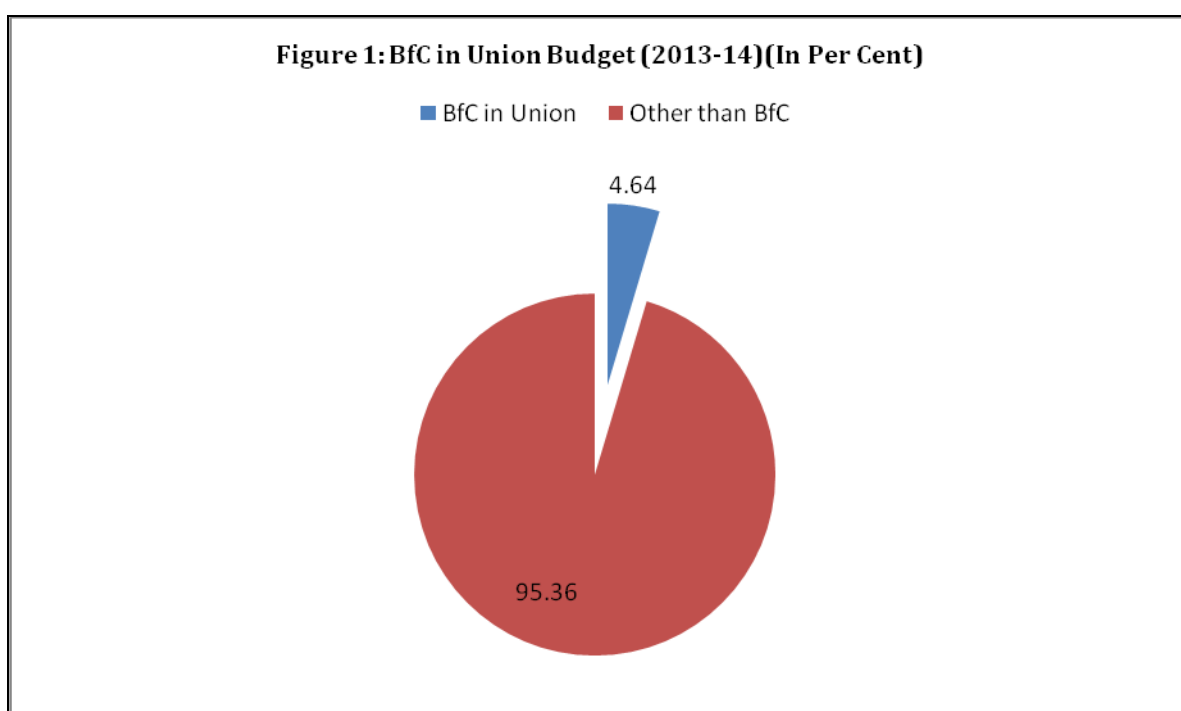
Much ado about nothing... Budget for Children a mere lip service!



India fails to protect its children once again

Share of Budget for Children in the Union Budget

4.64 per cent of the total Union Budget 2013-14 goes to children.



In 2012-13, the percentage share of budget for children in the union budget was 4.76%. This has reduced to 4.64% In 2013-14, a reduction of 0.12 percentage points.

While the total Union Budget has gone up by 11.7% in the total Union Budget, the increase in allocations for children is 8.7% with the BfC allocations rising from Rs. 71028.11 Crore in 2012-13 to Rs. 77236 Crore in 2013-14. The rate of increase is therefore not proportionate.

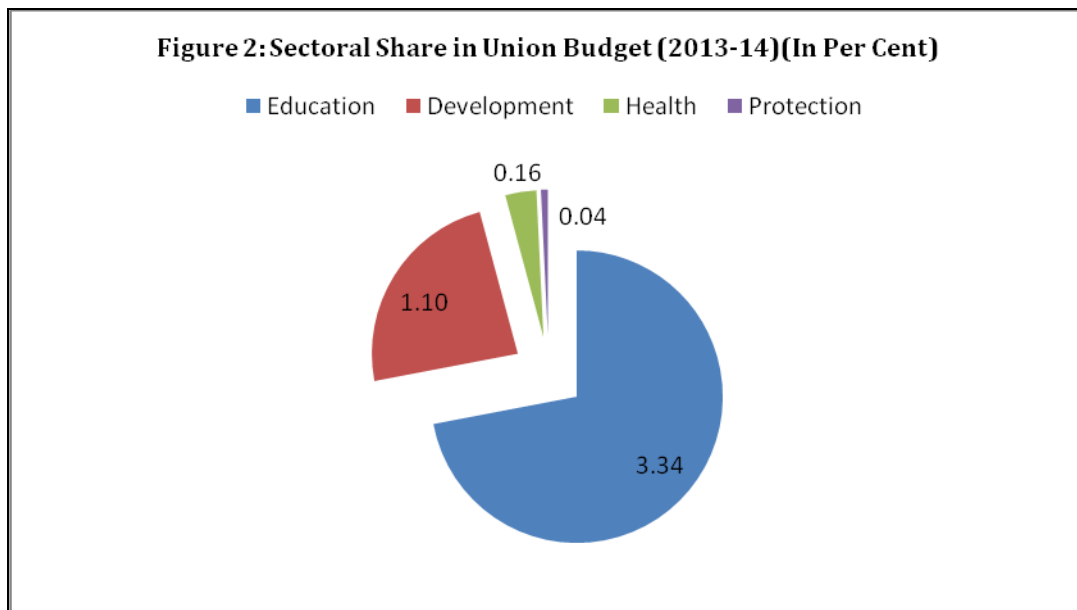
Sectoral share in the Union Budget

As percentage of the total union budget, the share of various child rights sectors is as follows:

- Child health – 0.16%
- Child Development – 1.10%
- Education – 3.34%
- Child Protection – 0.04%

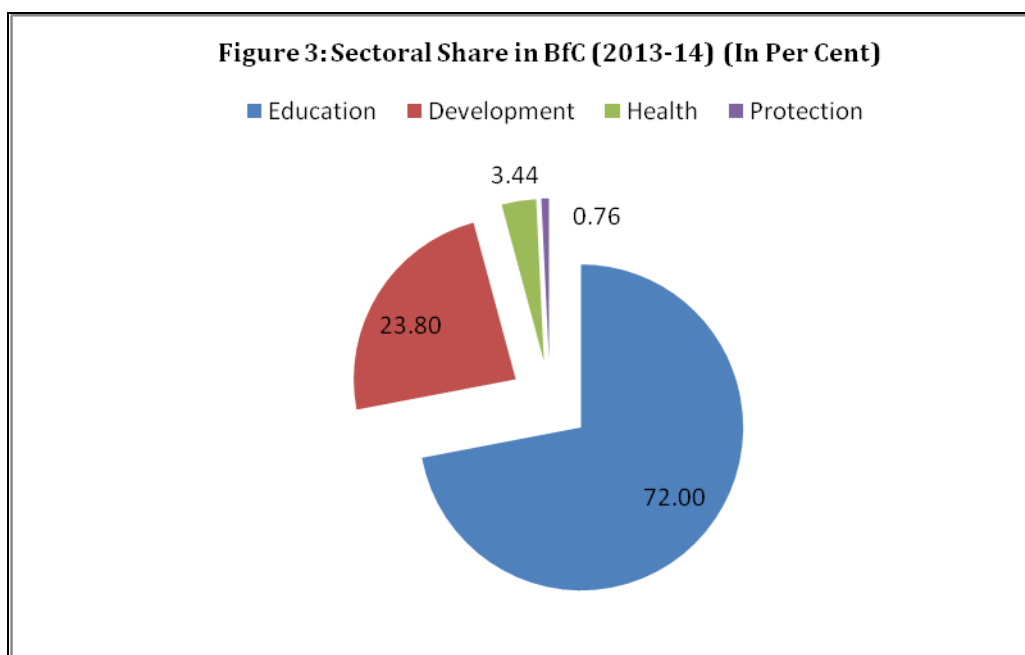


A comparison between the share of various child rights sectors in the Union budget for 2012-13 and 2013-14 shows a decline in the education sector of 0.1 percentage points and 0.02 percentage points in the health sector. In the development and protection sector it remains the same.



Within the budget for children ...

- The share of health shows a minimal decline of 0.98%. Maximum decline is in the protection sector to the tune of 7.67%.
- Development witnesses highest increase of 11.86% followed by Education, showing an 8.43% increase.



Major highlights...

CHILD HEALTH

Creation of a Flexipool to take care of critical child health programmes amongst other general health aspects.

- A Flexipool has been created to cover RCH projects and immunization programmes. Therefore, while on the face of it immunization programmes and RCH reflect a ZERO allocation, they have been covered under the flexipool. As of now there is no clarity as to how this flexipool will get implemented, but it surely calls for very close monitoring to ensure that critical issues of child health do not take a back seat. Clearly the explanation on flexipool given in the Expenditure Budget Volume II reveals that the flexipool is not only for child health and covers other aspects of general health too.
- IMR is reported to be 47 at the national level. None of the targets set under various policy documents and plans from time to time have been achieved. The National Health Policy set a target of reducing IMR to 30 per 1000.
- In 2009, nearly 8% children of the children aged 12-23 months did not receive even a single vaccine.
- According to the World Health Statistics 2012, 28% of new born babies in India are low-birth weight.
- About 75.5% of children of less than one year belonging to the highest wealth index group are fully immunized while only 47.3% from the lowest quintile are fully immunized.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- In order to universalise ICDS, a cumulative number of 7076 ICDS projects has been approved by the government along with 14 lakh Anganwadi centres/Mini Anganwadi centres.
- In ICDS, the major increase is in the World Bank component for high burden districts – an increase of 42%,

According to the State level consolidated report, a total of 1370914 Anganwadi Centres (AWC) were sanctioned by October 2012, out of which only 131982 AWCs were functioning. This yields out the non-functioning of 52002 AWCs.

At present, 22599 crèches are functional, whereas the requirement, though still not computed, is much higher.

Recent sample inspections of crèches by the ministry have revealed that several of the crèches were either non-existent or were not functioning. Even in those crèches that were functioning, gaps in provisioning of services like SNP, appropriate early childhood education, infrastructure etc., were noticed. Also, it was observed that most of the crèches were running for 4-5 hours as against the stipulated time of 8 hours. It was also observed that several of the children were not of working mothers and there were very few children of 0-3 years age group.

rising from an allocation of Rs. 102 crore in 2012-13 to Rs. 146 crore in 2013-14.

- The allocation for Rajiv Gandhi National Crèches Scheme remains the same despite the Ministry admitting the need to increase the number of crèches and improve the services.
- A multi-sector nutrition augmentation programme for mother and child was introduced in 2012-13 to cover 200 high burden districts. In 2013-14 budget, the number of districts to be covered is reduced to 100.
- Development of Children in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands receives the maximum increase of 193.55% in the child development sector. This is true for children of Andaman and Nicobar Islands even in the case of protection, where the budget for welfare of children in the islands shows a 123.68% increase.

EDUCATION

- Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) got a major push in the 2013-14 budget with an increase of 27.5 per cent in allocations.
- Mid Day Meal received an increased allocation of 13215 Crore in 2013-14 against 11937 Crore in 2012-13 (10% increase).
- Amongst children belonging to the weaker sections of the society, while allocations for certain schemes for the SC children have reduced, it has increased in the case of ST children.
- Allocation for hostels for SC boys and girls is reduced by 48% and 47% respectively, as against a 60% increase in the allocation for hostel for ST boys and girls.
- Pre-matric scholarship for OBCs is reduced by 66% but post-matric scholarship for OBCs is increased by 44%.
- Pre Matric Scholarship for ST Students also witnesses an increase of 146%.
- At the elementary level, education for disabled children has become part of the SSA. Indeed the SSA schools are yet to equip themselves with special educators and necessary infrastructure and equipments to ensure inclusive education. On the other hand, Inclusive Education for the Disabled at Secondary Education (IEDSS) has declined by 28.57%.

How does Mr. Finance Minister plan to address his concern for the youth and their employment without investing in vocational training for them?

A 19.9% decrease in the budget for vocationalisation of education is yet another cause for worry. The Finance Minister's concern for the youth, especially unemployment among the youth perhaps was only meant for the budget speech!

CHILD PROTECTION

- ICPS allocation reduced by 25 per cent from Rs. 400 crore to Rs. 300 crore. Mid-term appraisal of the Eleventh Five Year Plan suggested a requirement of Rs. 300 Crore for the year 2010-11. By the end of the XIth Five Year Plan, all the states and Union Territories except Jammu and Kashmir had signed the ICPS MoU with the centre. This is the time to increase the ICPS allocations, but there is no change.

Child Protection was never a real concern!

Who has failed children – The Ministry of Women and Child Development or the Finance Minister? What went wrong with ICPS? Is the government not aware of its own norms and legal commitments?

In 2011, the Crimes against children reported a 24% increase from the previous year with a total of 33,098 cases of crimes against Children reported in the country during 2011 as compared to 26,694 cases during 2010. A 7.67% decline in budget for child protection is only going to further worsen the situation.

An assessment of recurring costs for the following structures to be set up under the ICPS shows that even the basic structures required for implementation of ICPS cannot be set up in the current allocation of Rs. 300 Crore.

Recurring costs for a State Child Protection Society in each of the 17 states with less than 15 or less districts comes to Rs. 9,15,62,000. Similar cost for the rest 17 states with more than 15 districts comes to Rs. 17,45,22,000. The combined requirement is about Rs. 27 Crores.

If only the District Child Protection Societies were to be set up in each of the 638 districts in the country (excluding the state of Jammu and Kashmir), the budget requirement as per the ICPS norms would a little over Rs. 235 Crores.

To comply with the legal requirement of having one CWC and one JJB in every district, an additional fund of approximately Rs. 60 Crores.

There are 259 childline services across the country requiring a budget of about Rs. 42 Crore.

Going by the Ministry's figure of 698 institutions for children in 2011-12 (excluding open shelters, Specialised Adoption Agencies and specialised units for children with special needs), fund requirement as per the ICPS norms comes to approximately Rs. 141 Crores.

An addition of these five basic structural components of ICPS comes to Rs. 505 Crores.

- Other schemes under the protection sector which witness a decline are:
 - Scheme for prevention of alcoholism and substance (Drug) abuse (-23.81%)
 - Children in need of care and protection (Chandigarh) (-38.46%)
 - Institute for mentally retarded children (Chandigarh) (-21.85)
- The 8.33% increased allocation for the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is welcome given the increased role of NCPCR in monitoring some of government's flagship programmes like RTE-SSA.

Child Labour and NCLP – Duplication of Efforts and Wastage of Public Funds

Is there really a need for increasing the NCLP budget given that the provision for bridge schools under SSA?

The one and only one scheme of the Labour Ministry to deal with child labour is the NCLP programme. Once again, budget for NCLP has increased by 33.3%.

NCLP's major agenda is to educate children released from work situations, provide them education and mainstream them into the existing education system. Such bridge schooling is an integral part of SSA too. There seems no logic for the NCLP to continue in a situation when education for children aged 6-14 years has become a constitutional guarantee and provisions have been made under SSA to ensure mainstreaming of all children.

