

ASSAM CHILD BUDGET 2014-15

Kanu Kanta Sen
Farhana Yasmin

NORTH EASTERN SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTRE, GUWAHATI
AND
HAQ : CENTRE FOR CHILD RIGHTS, NEW DELHI

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North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC)
And
HAQ : Centre for Child Rights, New Delhi

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North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC)\
Jagriti (2nd Floor)
Arunodoi Path, GMCH Road, Christian Basti
Guwahati 781005, Assam, India
Tel. +91-361-2340179
E-mail : nesrcghy@gmail.com
Website : www.nesrc.org

Or

HAQ : Centre for Child Rights
B1/2 Malviya Nagar, Ground Floor,
New Delhi-110017,
Ph.: 91-11-26674688
Fax : 91-11-26673599
Email : info@haqcrc.org
Website : www.haqcrc.org

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Assam Child Budget 2014-15

An Overview

The budget for children is an attempt to separate the allocation made for all programmes and schemes that benefit the children in a country or a state from the total Union or state budget. It seeks to monitor the extent to which the promises made by the Government are translated into policies and programmes that protect the rights and welfare of children. Governments are obliged to fulfill the rights of children mainly through the implementation of budgetary measures.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam, Mr Tarun Gogoi, placed the Budget for financial year 2014-15 in the State Legislative Assembly on 11th August, 2014 with an assurance of introducing a slew of schemes for aam aadmi (common man and woman). The State budget had focused the receipt and expenditure under the Consolidated Fund of the Government with dissemination of allocation under different development sectors. The fund flow towards children is not being reflected separately in the budget, so an attempt is being made to analyze how a segment of the budget is directed to the benefit of the children.

Status of Children in Assam - A glimpse

- Among all the states under North Eastern region, Assam is the biggest in population with a share of 39 percent in the age group of 0-18 years.¹
- Child Sex ratio in 0-6 age group in Assam is 957, which is higher than the national average.²
- Total Live Birth per thousand in the State is 22.8 which is considerably higher than the national average.³
- Infant Mortality Rate of Assam is 55, which is much higher than the national average of 44.⁴
- The Neo-Natal Mortality rate in Assam is 29.⁵
- Under 5 (Five) mortality rate in Assam is 75 in 2012.

¹Census of India 2011

²Ibid

³Ibid

⁴Annual Health Survey 2012-13 factsheet;

http://www.censusindia.gov.in/vital_statistics/AHSBulletins/AHS_Factsheets_2012-13/FACTSHEET-Assam.pdf

⁵Economic Survey of Assam 2013-2014

- As per NFHS-III, an estimated 35.8% of 0-3 year old children in Assam are underweight (low weight for age); with strong rural (36.7) urban (27.9) differences.⁶
- A substantial population belonging to Tea Garden Tribes is still to be fully covered by ICDS projects.⁷
- According to National Family Health Survey only 15.4 percent of the children of the state in the age group 1-3 years have been covered under National Program of administering Vitamin A.
- At least 5 children died and hundreds of them took seriously ill after taking Vitamin A dose as a part of UNICEF's anti-blindness program.⁸
- 77.3 % children (6-35 months) are reported as being anemic.⁹
- Approximately 67.8% percent of adolescent girls (15-19 years) are anemic in the state.¹⁰
- Existence of only one sub-centre against 5 villages & one PHC in 30 villages is quite miserable. [Number of PHC: 844, Sub-centre:4592, Total villages: 26395 (Assam statistical Hand book, 2012)].
- Reduction of Drop-out Ratio at Lower Primary Level is a remarkable achievement in Education. [Dropout: Lower Primary Level: 2009-10---35.89%; 2011-12---12.8% (Assam Statistical Hand book, 2012)].
- Gross Enrolment Ratio increased between 2009-10 & 2010-11 but decreased in 2011-12. [Gross Enrolment Ratio: Primary level: 2009-10---115.13, 2010-11—136.13, 2011-12—104.4 Upper Primary Level: 2009-10--83.58, 2010-11---90.01, 2011-12---89.5(Assam Statistical Handbook, 2012)].
- At present, there are as many as 524 pre-senior Madrassas, 164 Senior Madrassas, 5 Arabic Colleges, 14 Title Madrassas, 500 Voluntary Moktab and 700 Khariji Madrassas pursuing Madrassa education in the State.¹¹
- As per CID, Assam police – A total number of 4234 Children went missing between January 2011 and June 2013, 67% of them girls.¹²

⁶ Chief Minister's Vision for Women and Children in Assam 2016 -

<http://online.assam.gov.in/documents/218378/2d2df305-bfd4-46f5-86aa-10fcec046fa7>

⁷ http://wcd.nic.in/icds/apip/Minutes_APIP_Meeting_Assam_held%20on%2020Nov2012%20%289Nov12%29.pdf

⁸ http://www.vaccinetruth.org/vaccines_and_the_media.htm

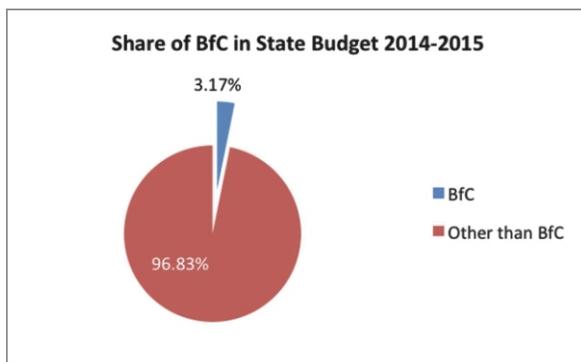
⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

- Amongst crimes against children in Assam in 2012, rape cases were the maximum at 40%, with procurement of minor girls following a close second at 31%.¹³
- There have been 333 reported cases of child rape in the state in 2012, including rape of children below 10 years of age.¹⁴
- Increase in rape cases from 9 in 2011 to 151 in 2012 in the age group of 10-14 years of age. In the age group between 14-18 the numbers went up from 27 in 2011 to 177 in 2012.¹⁵
- The percentage of children aged 5-14 who are engaged in labour is 2.8%.¹⁶

Major Highlights



*Out of every 100 rupees allocated in the State Budget of Assam only 3.17 rupees have been provided for the children in 2014-15. This shows that Government bothered little to contribute much in the basket of children.

- Despite the State Budget increase of nearly 28 percent in the year 2014-15, as compared to 2013-14, the share of Budget for Children (BfC) within the State Budget has reduced considerably to the extent of 3.17 percent in 2014-15 from 3.49 percent in 2013-14.
- Although the BfC allocation reflected an increasing trend during the last three years in actual terms, its share to the State Budget witnessed a continuous fall.

¹² As per CID, Assam police – <http://assamchildrightscommission.gov.in/pdf/Assam%20India-%20EVAC%20Consultation%20Report-%20Final.pdf>

¹³ NCRB 2012

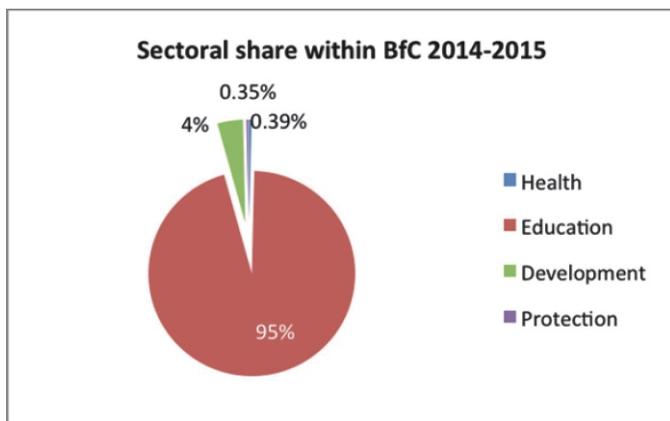
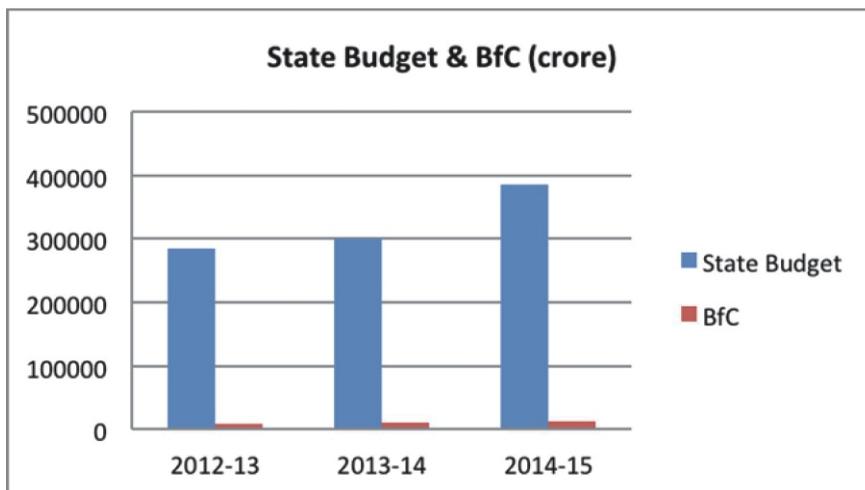
¹⁴ <http://assamchildrightscommission.gov.in/pdf/Assam%20India-%20EVAC%20Consultation%20Report-%20Final.pdf>

¹⁵ NCRB 2011&2012

¹⁶ Annual Health Survey- 2012 http://www.censusindia.gov.in/vital_statistics/AHSBulletins/AHS_Factsheets_2012-13/FACTSHEET-Assam.pdf

Table 1.1 : Allocation of BfC in the State Budget (in crore)

Year	State Budget(BE)	BfC(BE)	Percentage of BfC
2012-13	285267.63	9433.70	3.31
2013-14	300649.45	10510.98	3.49
2014-15	385755.20	12209.43	3.17



- Despite alarming concern of child protection issues in the State of Assam, allocation for the child protection sector witnessed the lowest share of 0.35 percent in BfC and 0.01 percent in State Budget in the current year.
- What is also alarming is that the share for Child Health is only 0.39 percent within BfC and 0.01 percent as against State budget in the current year.
- Both vital sectors of Health and Protection have been found to be attended with lowest priority.
- Development Sector has received a minimum share of only 4 percent within BfC and 0.13 percent as against the current year's state Budget.

- Among all the major sectors, Education has received a maximum share of 95.26 percent within BfC and 3.01 percent as against State Budget in the current financial year.
- Though the Education Sector received a higher share in 2014-15 as compared to its previous year, the share under the other sectors like Health, Development and Protection reduced considerably within this period.

Table 1.2 : Sectoral Share within BfC (in percentage)

Year	Health	Education	Development	Protection
2012-13	0.57	84.20	14.86	0.37
2013-14	0.55	80.78	18.19	0.48
2014-15	0.39	95.26	4.00	0.35

Table 1.3 Sectoral share in State Budget (in percentage)

Year	Health	Education	Development	Protection
2012-13	0.02	2.78	0.49	0.01
2013-14	0.02	2.82	0.63	0.02
2014-15	0.01	3.01	0.13	0.01

Table 1.4 : BE, RE, AE (in crore) & under-spending under different Schemes in 2012-13

Schemes/Programmes	BE	RE	AE	Under-Spending(%)
Training of Health personnel	0.43	0.43	0.25	42
Paramedical training	4.50	4.50	3.93	13
Nurse training	0.76	0.94	0.62	18
School Health	3.79	3.81	3.37	11
Immunization	24.23	24.23	18.43	24
Elementary Education	3796.00	3796.00	3162.00	17
Secondary Education	2148.00	2148.00	1886.00	12
Mid-day Meal	866.09	866.09	490.12	43

State Scholarship	0.21	0.21	0.14	33
ICDS (CSS)	739.00	739.00	284.00	62
Anganwadi	31.00	31.00	7.00	77
Destitute and Orphan Home	0.31	0.31	0.27	13
JJ Act(state share)	1.75	1.75	1.30	26

Source: Demands for Grants for the year 2014-15, Assam

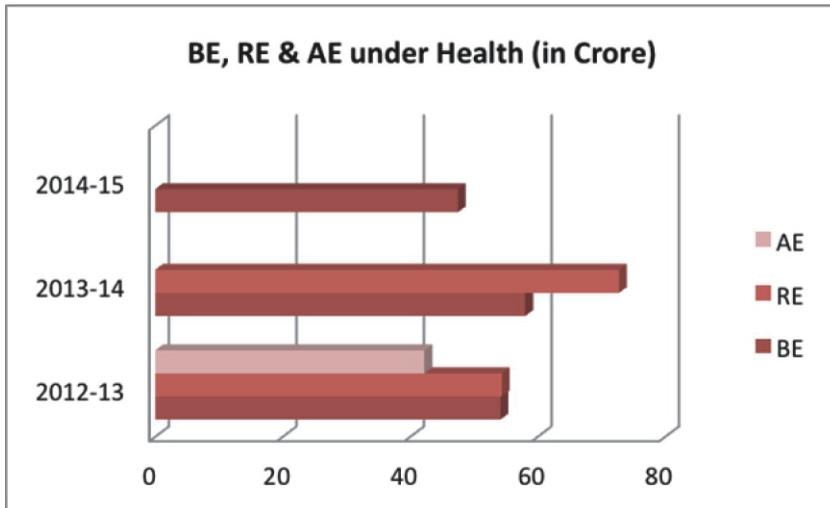
Child Health

Table 1.5 : Allocation under major schemes under Health Sector in 2014-15(in crore)

Schemes/Programmes	Allocation (BE)	Percentage to total Health BfC
1.Training of health persons	0.58	1.2
2.Paramedical training	6.50	13.7
3.Training of Nurses	1.27	2.7
4.School health scheme	5.07	10.7
5.Immunization of infants against Diphtheria, Polio, Typhoid etc	13.26	27.9
6. Post partum centre	10.13	21.3
7.Training of ANMS	7.30	15.4

Table 1.6 : Schemes received lower allocation in 2014-15 in Health sector (in crore)

Schemes/Programmes	BE (2013-14)	BE (2014-15)
Immunization of Infants against Diphtheria, Polio, Typhoid etc	25.50	13.26
Post partum centre	10.97	10.13
Training of ANMS	7.65	7.30



Despite inadequate health services and the poor health condition of children in the state, the Health Sector witnessed a reduced allocation within BfC in the current year budget.

- In the Assam budget 2014-15, Child Health received the total allocation of 47.48 crore, which is considerably lower by 18 percent as against previous year's allocation
- In the total allocation under Health sector within BfC, the autonomous provinces like Dima Hasao, Bodoland and Karbi Anglong bagged the allocation of 1.32 crore, 0.37 crore and 1.53 crore respectively in the year 2014-15 which experiences an increase of 11.6 percent, 17.1 percent and 6 percent as compared to the allocation in the previous year.
- Immunization of infants against Diphtheria, Polio and Typhoid received a total allocation of 13.26 crore in 2014-15, which shows a significant downward slide by 48 percent as compared to its previous year.
- Post-partum centres witnessed a 7.7 percent decline in the current year with an allocation of Rupees 10.13 crore. School Health Scheme got a boost in the allocation (5.07 crore) by 17.1 percent in the current year's budget as related to the previous year.

The Major Goal

Among the major goals set by "Chief Minister's Vision document for Women & Children, 2016", following are the ambitious initiatives :

- To reduce IMR to 38 per 1000 live birth.
- To drop down MMR to 210 per one lakh live birth.
- To minimize Total Fertility Rate to 2.1 percent.
- Improving Sex Ratio by 30 points to 987.
- To reduce anemia among children by 45 percent.

- The scheme “Immunization of infants against Diphtheria, Polio, Typhoid, etc.” receives the highest share of 27.9 percent within BfC under Health sector which is followed by Post Partum centres (21.3%), Training of ANMS(15.4%), Training of Paramedical Personnels (13.7%) , School Health Scheme (10.7%) and the rest 11 percent by other schemes.

Child Education

Among all priority sectors Education has been receiving special attention with special focus on universalization of Elementary Education. To achieve this goal various schemes relating to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) along with many innovative schemes like Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Scholarship to Physically Handicapped Students, and Special Scheme for appointment of 3 additional teachers for Science, Mathematics and English in 2320 number of schools were launched.

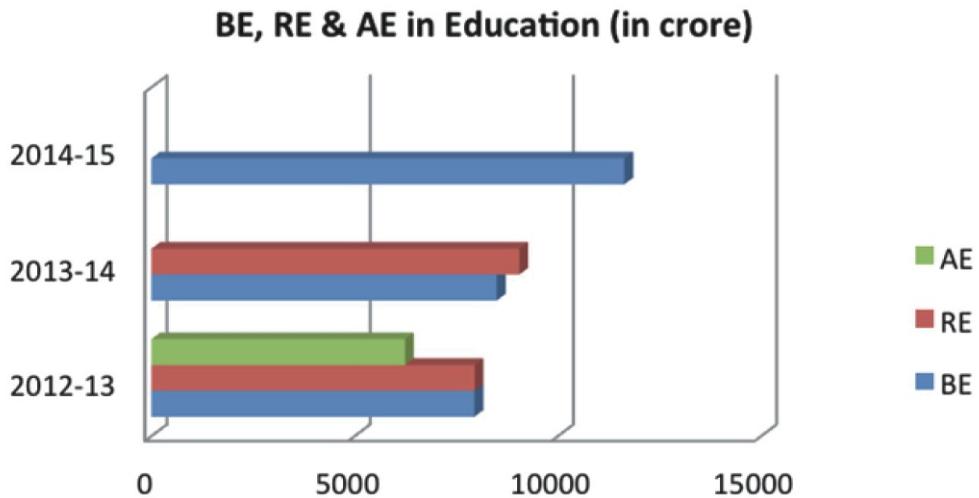
Table 1.7 : Allocation in major schemes under Education in 2014-15 (in crore)

Schemes/Programmes	Allocation (BE)	Percentage to total Education BfC
1. Elementary Education	6728.93	57.90
2. Secondary Education	3225.43	27.70
3. Mid-Day Meal (state share)	47.50	0.01
4. Scholarship to Physically handicapped students	0.41	0.003
5. State Scholarship	0.14	0.001
6. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (state share)	145.72	0.320

Children Missing in Assam in 2011-2012

(Source : NEDAN Foundation, Kokrajhar, Assam)

Male/Female	Missing	Traced	Untraced
Male Child	494	283	211
Female Child	1071	682	389
Total	1565	965	600
Adult Male	687	356	331
Adult Female	1243	668	571
Total	1930	1024	902



- With the consideration of Education as the crucial input for the development of society. It has been favoured with a highest allocation of 11630.37 crore in the year 2014-15 which witnesses nearly 37 per cent increase as compared to 2013-14 due to the increase in allocation mainly in the state share of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan by almost 27 per cent and nearly 3 times increase in allocation under Scholarship to Physically Handicapped Students. But a reduction in the state share of Mid-Day-Meal scheme by nearly 13 per cent gave a constraint in raising the overall allocation in Child Education to a better height.
- The Mid-Day Meal scheme suffered a lot with 99.7 per cent reduction in central share in the current year in contrast to the previous year's fund of Rupees 574.8 crore under the same.
- Elementary Education and Secondary Education with an allocation of 6728.93 crore and 3225.43 crore reflects an enhancing by 53 per cent and 45 per cent respectively in the current year's budget with respect to previous year.

Chief Minister's Vision document on Women & Children, 2016 focuses on only women and children of the state. Various goals as follows has been laid down for the betterment of children.

- Goal 8 broadly talks about reducing the drop-out rates by 50 per cent within 2014-15.
- Goal 9 declares on 100 per cent enrolment by 2014-15.

Project Approval Board's(PAB)meeting held on 1st May,2014 approved the annual work plan & Budget of Assam under the Education Sector and took the following decision:

- According to it approval of Finance Department has been obtained for reallocating the post of teachers from one district to another district to achieve PTR norm.
- Rationalization process would be carried out through a unified school and teacher data bank.
- A state level committee under the chairmanship of Additional Chief Seceretary(Education) has been constituted to formulate strategy.
- It has been declared that the number of "Single Teacher's school has come down from 4855 to 3343.
- Gap of common toilet and drinking water facilities among the boys and girl students are planned to be covered.
- Renewing of in-service training program is to be ensured conforming to revised curriculum.
- The state has proposed opening of 500 new primary schools and up-gradation of 176 primary schools to Upper primary schools.

Child Development

Table 1.8 : Allocation in major schemes under Development in 2014-15(in crore)

Schemes/Programmes	Allocation(BE)	Percentage to Total Development BfC
1.ICDS (State share)	51.21	10.48
2. Anganwadi	31.00	6.35
3. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Adolescent girls or SABLA (state share)	2.65	0.54
4. Nutrition	374.55	76.69
5. Intensive Child Development	0	0
6. Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY)	0	0

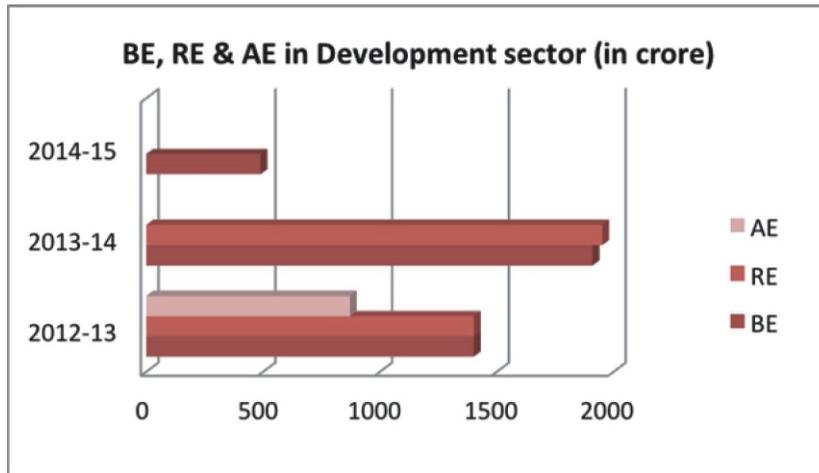


Table 1.9 : Important Schemes under which there was reduced allocation in 2014-15 in crore

Schemes/Programmes	2013-14 (BE)	2014-15 (BE)
1. Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)	1344.39	788.81
2. Family & child welfare	2.49	2.42
3. SABLA(CSS)	22.36	0
4. Kishori Shakti Yojana(KSY)	2.00	0

- Despite development being an important area for psychological, physical and social development of children, only an amount of 488.49 crore has been allocated under it during 2014-15 which is lower by almost 75 percent compared to 2013-14.

“Reduction of malnutrition among children (0-3Yrs) to 25% during 12th Five year Plan and strengthening of quality and delivery of the existing schemes” are noted as priority items that need attention.

Document submitted by Assam Government to Planning Commission.

- Centrally sponsored schemes like the Integrated Child Development Scheme faced a major setback owing to receipt of a lower allocation of rupees 788.81 crore in the current year's total share (central and state share) which depicts a downward slide by 41.3 percent in contrast to the budget provision under the same in the previous year.
- The scheme like Family & Child Welfare received an allocation of 2.42 crore in the current year which is slightly (3%) lower as compared to 2013-14.

- It is quite unfortunate that the schemes like Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Adolescent Girls(SABLA) and Kishori Shakti Yojana(KSY) failed to receive any central share under the current year budget though they got an allocation of 22.36 crore and 2 crore respectively under the same in the previous year.
- SABLA's state share also declined by almost 86 percent in 2014-15 as compared to its previous year.

Child Protection

- Though the provision of child protection is a key intervention in the Eleventh Plan, the budget for the protection of children suffers from major problems as it allocates too little money to tackle the conflicts.
- Protection Sector received an allocation of 43.09 crore only in the current year's budget which is lower by nearly 14 percent as compared to the previous year.
- The Juvenile Justice Act which covers children in need of care and protection in conflict has been provided with a minimum allocation of 0.74 crore which is almost 58 percent less than the fund released under the scheme during 2013-14.
- The Integrated Child Protection Scheme which aimed at preventing violation of child rights failed to receive any central funding this current year, though it could get an amount of Rupees 43.2 crore under the same in the previous year. However the state share under the scheme was 1.18 crore in 2014-15.
- The allocation under "State Commission for Protection of Child Rights" in 2014-15 was double of the Budget provision made in 2013-14.

Table 1.10 : Allocation in major schemes under Protection Sector in 2014-15(in crore)

Schemes/Programmes	Allocation(BE)	Percentage to total Protection BfC
1. Home for orphans	0.26	0.60
2. Juvenile Justice Act (state share)	0.74	1.72
3. State Commission for Protection of Child Right (SCPCR)	0.60	1.39
4. Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) (state share)	1.18	2.74
5. Welfare of children	0.14	0.32
6. Establishment of destitute home	0.39	0.91

Conclusion

The share for children in the state budget observed a major dip over the years. It is quite unfortunate that the allocation for children remained very low all the times despite the budget experiencing a major annual increase. The priority sector like health, which aims at developing the children's growth, has been left uncared for as it received a very minimum share of 0.39 percent within BfC and only 0.01 percent of the total State Budget in the current year. It is also surprising that despite receiving such reduced allocation, most of the funds under different schemes witnessed major under-spending. It is very regrettable to conclude that the Child Protection Sector consistently has been receiving the least share of allocation over the years. Though major flagship programmes under centrally sponsored schemes have been launched time with great fanfare from to time, these have visibly failed to contribute a major impact due to underutilization or non-utilization of funds. Despite receipt of the highest share among all the priority sector Education Budget of Assam failed to draw any synchrony between the aspiration, effort and realities. Commitment that has been made for the overall welfare of children has not been translated into action in many cases.

Recommendation

- Looking at the aspect of constant rise in child population in the state and also owing to the failure in the successful implementation of many schemes due to reduced allocation in the current year, there is an increasing need of creating proper infrastructure and ensuring an optimum level of financial flow towards the schemes.
- Distribution of funds under the schemes must be done with due care and judicious planning as it appears that in some lower priority schemes, a more than required amount has been allocated, while in some priority schemes either insufficient or no funding has been provided.
- Due to the limitation of financial resources there is always much dependence of the state on central funds. A constant, regular and sufficient flow of fund from the Centre is to be ensured.
- A major focus is to be given on children belonging to Dalit, tea garden family, physically handicapped and underprivileged sections while allocating fund under the schemes.
- Under-spending or non-utilization of limited resources under various schemes must not be encouraged in any way so as to ensure proper justice towards children. Follow-up-action on implementation of schemes as well as proper monitoring and routine vigilance is a sine-qua-non.

North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC), Guwahati, is a centre of research, documentation and networking in North East India, Its mandate is to combine serious research with involvement with groups and organization working for social transformation in North East India and to provide a platform for civil society groups to meet and search for solutions to the ethnic and other problem of the region. NESRC has done research on gender and livelihood issues and on peace initiatives in the region. Among its major areas of study are development-induced-displacement 1947-2010 and the gender implication of modernization and the customary law.

HAQ : Centre for Child Rights, formed in 1998, works towards the recognition, promotion and protection of rights of all children. It aims at contributing to the building of an environment where every child's rights are recognised and promoted without discrimination and in an integrated manner. In India, HAQ pioneered the Budget for children analysis in 2001. Over the years, it has developed skills for quick and incisive scanning of law and policy documents and commenting on them. HAQ works on children and governance, violence and abuse of children, child trafficking and juvenile justice. It provides legal support to children in need, particularly those who are victims of abuse and exploitation or are in conflict with the law.

HAQ:Centre for Child Rights

B1/2 Malviya Nagar, Ground Floor
New Delhi- 110017,
Ph: 91-11-26674688
Fax: 91-11-26673599
Website: www.haqcrc.org
Email: info@haqcrc.org

NESRC

Jagriti (2nd Floor)
GMCH Road, Christian Basti
Guwahati 781005, Assam, India
Tel: +91-361-2340179
Email: nesrcghy@gmail.com
Website: www.nesrc.org

