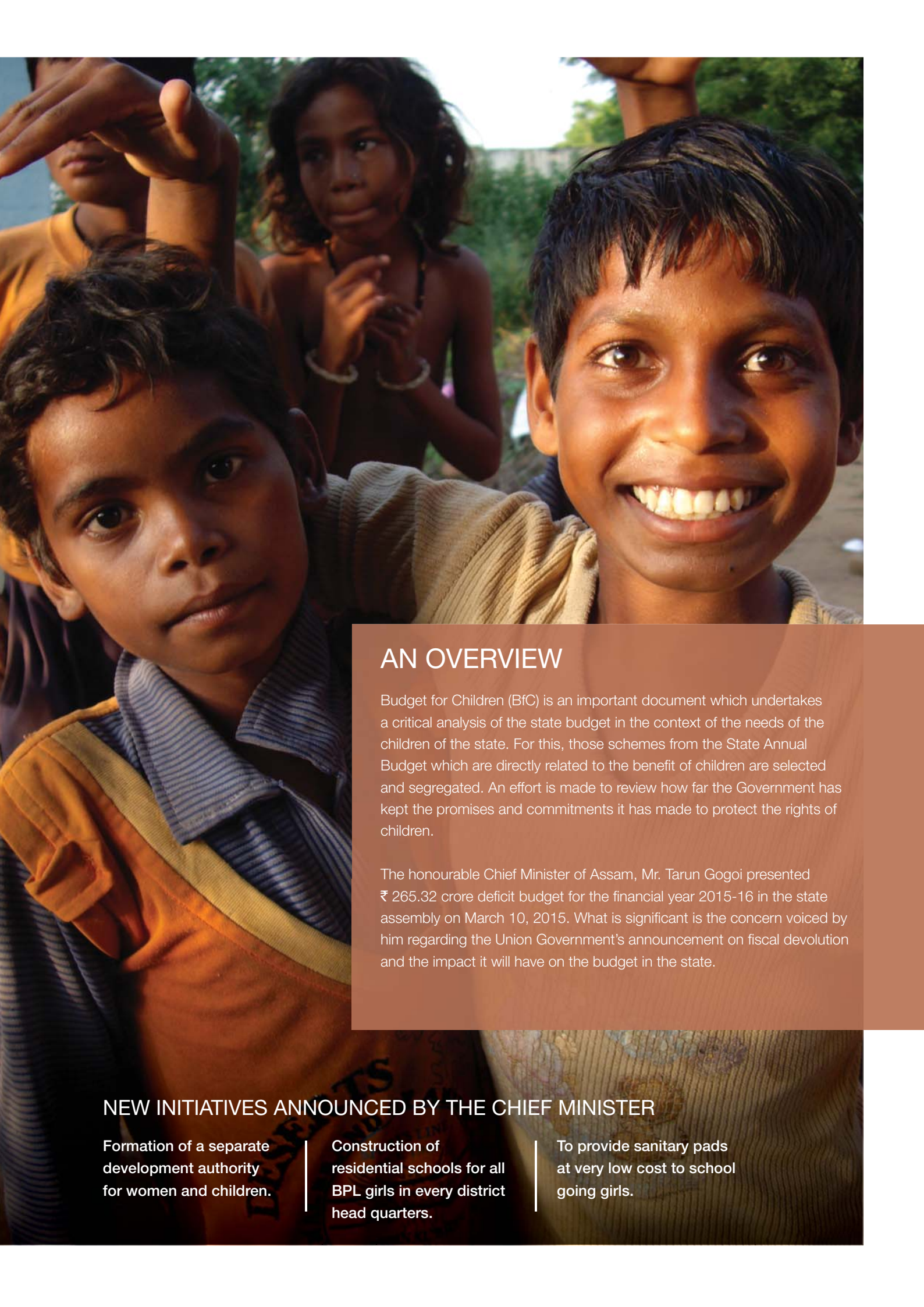


# Budget for Children in Assam: 2015-16



Prepared By: North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC) in partnership with HAQ





## AN OVERVIEW

Budget for Children (BfC) is an important document which undertakes a critical analysis of the state budget in the context of the needs of the children of the state. For this, those schemes from the State Annual Budget which are directly related to the benefit of children are selected and segregated. An effort is made to review how far the Government has kept the promises and commitments it has made to protect the rights of children.

The honourable Chief Minister of Assam, Mr. Tarun Gogoi presented ₹ 265.32 crore deficit budget for the financial year 2015-16 in the state assembly on March 10, 2015. What is significant is the concern voiced by him regarding the Union Government's announcement on fiscal devolution and the impact it will have on the budget in the state.

## NEW INITIATIVES ANNOUNCED BY THE CHIEF MINISTER

Formation of a separate development authority for women and children.

Construction of residential schools for all BPL girls in every district head quarters.

To provide sanitary pads at very low cost to school going girls.

This is a running theme in his speech. Clearly, this decision for fiscal devolution is going to have an impact on schemes and programmes for children too:

“India lives in the States of the Union. The federal structure envisaged by the Founding Fathers of our nation recognises the important role played by the States in making the Union strong and its growth and development sustainable. By reasons of geography and historical legacy, all states are not equally placed. Can an approach that leaves the States, big and small, economically developed or otherwise, to their own fate, be called Cooperative Federalism? If the Centre decides such abrupt changes in planning process without deeply consulting the Special Category States like ours who need special attention due to limited resources and without looking at their capacity to raise their own resources, the word and spirit of ‘Cooperative Federalism’ cannot be fulfilled.”

Speaker Sir, a view is being put forward that fiscal devolution to the States has been increased as per recommendations of 14th Finance Commission. However, it is also seen that there is reduction in the current budget in central share for a host of programmes including RKVY, NHM, RMSA, ICDS. I am perplexed at this version of fiscal federalism as with the reduction of the Central share, the States would have to increase spending their own funds which are now proposed to be transferred through the Finance Commission award, to sustain these on-going programmes. My Government has already apprised the august House on the scheme-wise reduction of allocations of the Central Government. In such case, there would not be much room for the States to implement their own schemes without a major disruption due to sudden cessation of many ongoing developmental programmes. Consequently the States would hardly have any scope to use the own resources for the State Specific schemes.

#### Reduction in Allocations in Schemes for Children in the Union Budget 2015-16

Scheme	Percentage Fall in Allocation
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan	-20.74
Mid- day meal Scheme	-30.11
Rashtriya Madhayamik Shiksha Abhiyaan	-28.70
Scheme for Setting up of 6000 model School at Block Level as bench mark of Excellence	-99.92
Support to Education including teacher training	-36.55
Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)	-54.19
Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme	-33.33
Manufacture of Sera Vaccine	-18.03
NRHM-RCH Flexible Pool	-21.63
National Programme for Youth and Development	-28.75
Scheme for prevention of Alcoholism and substance(drug) abuse	-66.81

Source: HAQ: Centre for Child Rights Politics, Paisa Or Priorities-Where Do Children Fit Into The 2015-16 Union Budget?

## SHARE OF CHILDREN IN THE STATE BUDGET

Despite reduction in the size of state budget of 2015-16 by almost 36 per cent as compared to its previous year, considerable upward swing has been noticed in the allocation for children related programmes this year. This is indeed a remarkable achievement.

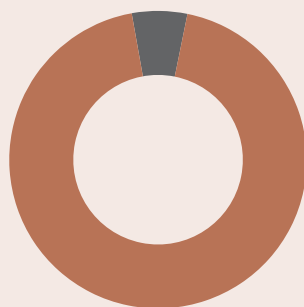
The share in the budget for children in most states has varies varied between 10 to 19 percent in the last 5 years. Hence, although the BfC in Assam witnesses a considerable increase in the current year, it is still one with the smallest share for children.

### Shri Tarun Gogoi announced some new schemes for children:

- Formation of a separate development authority for women and children.
- Construction of Residential Girls School in every district headquarters for BPL girls with private sector involvement. BPL Girls of class V to 12th Standard will be covered. In the initial phase Pilot projects in 5 districts with low literacy rates shall be taken up.
- A scheme for free healthcare for BPL students below 18 years of age is proposed to be initiated.
- In order to encourage retention of girl students in schools, Government will provide sanitary pads at very low cost to school going girls.

## Share of BfC in Assam Budget 2015-16

5.57%  
Share of BfC in Assam Budget

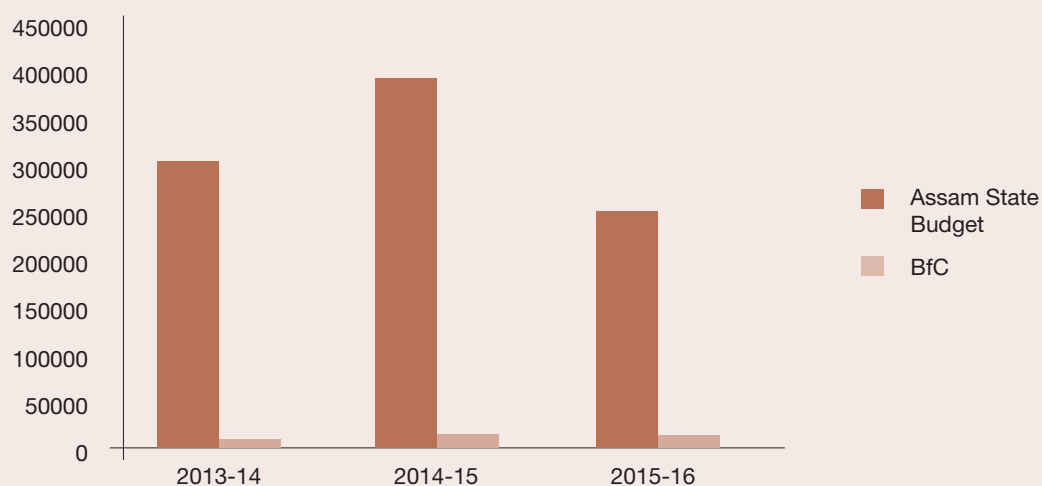


94.43%  
Other than BfC in Assam Budget

Table 1.1: BfC allocation in the State Budget (in Crore)

Year	State Budget(BE)	BfC (BE)	Share of BfC (in Per cent)
2013-14	300649.45	10510.98	3.49
2014-15	385755.19	13339.78	3.46
2015-16	248417.15	13843.64	5.57

## Assam State Budget & BfC (in crores)

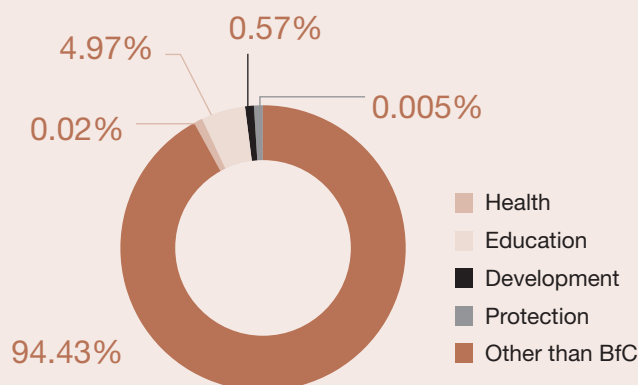


**Among the four sectors, education has always received the highest share which is followed by development, health and protection.**

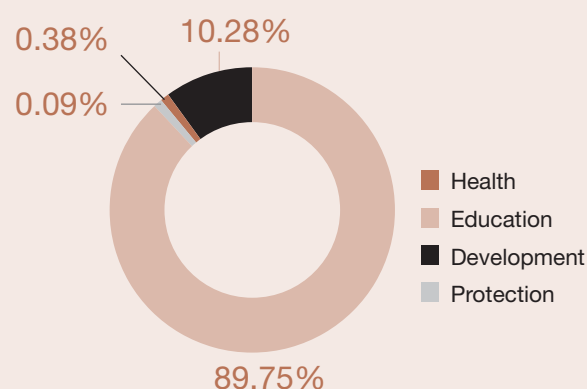
Despite the increase in the overall share of BfC from 3.46 per cent to 5.57 per cent, allocation for development, health and protection sectors has been very low both in the state budget and BfC. Health and protection have been accorded lowest priority. Despite alarming concern of child protection issues in the state of Assam, allocation in 2015-16 has continued to receive the lowest share of 0.09 per cent in BfC and 0.01 per cent in state budget. Health too is accorded very low priority only 0.38 per cent share within BfC and 0.02 per cent as against state budget in 2015-16.

Allocation under development sector though higher as compared to health and protection is also not significant as it bagged the share of 10.28 per cent within BfC and 0.57 per cent as against current year's state budget.

### Sectoral share in the state budget in 2015-2016



### Sectoral share within BfC in 2015-2016



Education sector received a maximum share of 89.25 per cent within BfC and 4.97 per cent in the current year's state budget.

What is more, while the health, development and education increased by 10.35 percent, 13.65 percent and 2.8 per cent respectively in the year 2015-16 as compared to its previous year, protection sector witnessed a fall of 27.85 per cent in the same year.

Table 1.2: Sectoral share in State Budget (in per cent)

Year	Health	Education	Development	Protection
2013-14	0.02	2.81	0.62	0.02
2014-15	0.01	3.12	0.32	0.004
2015-16	0.02	4.97	0.57	0.01

Table 1.3: Sectoral share within BfC (in per cent)

Year	Health	Education	Development	Protection
2013-14	0.55	81.05	17.91	0.48
2014-15	0.36	90.13	9.39	0.12
2015-16	0.38	89.25	10.28	0.09

### Whatever little is allocated is not spent....

Table 1.4: BE & AE (in crores) & under-spending under important Schemes in 2013-14

Schemes/Programmes	BE	AE	Under-spending (%)
School Health schemes	4.33	4.03	6.9
Immunization	25.51	10.58	58.5
Postpartum centre	10.97	7.76	29.3
Mid-day Meal	574.80	4.97	99.1
ICDS (CSS)	1300.54	626.49	51.8
Anganwadi workers/helpers	31.00	7.50	75.8
JJ Act( State share)	1.75	1.35	22.9

Table 1.4 shows that there is a major gap between funds allocated and actual spending in the year 2013-14 which has always been a cause of concern. In case of centrally sponsored scheme like Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) and Mid-day meal scheme more than 90 per cent of the fund remained unutilised in the year 2013-14.





## CHILD HEALTH

**In this year's budget there is an increase in the allocation for children health schemes by almost 10 per cent which is a positive sign.**

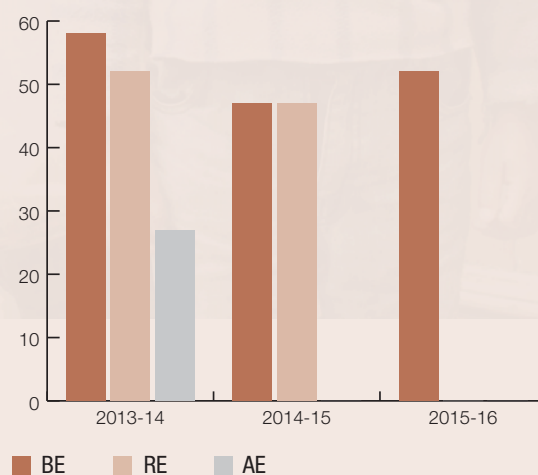
- Allocation in almost all the major schemes for children in the health sector increased within the range of 7 per cent to 49 per cent in 2015-16 as compared to 2014-15.
- In the total allocation under health sector within BfC, the autonomous provinces like Dima Hasao, Bodoland and Karbi Anglong received an allocation of ₹.1.34 crore, ₹.0.39 crore and ₹.2.1 crore respectively. This is an increase of 6.3 per cent, 6.9 per cent and 13.6 per cent respectively as compared to previous year.
- Immunisation of infants against diphtheria, polio and typhoid received an allocation of ₹.15.57 crore in 2015-16, which shows a little above 17 per cent increase as compared to the previous year.
- The central fund allocated for Training of ANMs however decreased by nearly 29 per cent in the current year as compared to its previous year.

In the Budget speech - Chief Minister focuses on the following aspects on child health.

*"..although we have been able to lower Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) by 14 points from 68 in 2005 to 54 in 2013. Yet, it is still below all India average of 40. Similarly, due to our efforts we have succeeded in reducing the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) by 180 points (from 480 in 2004-06 to 300 in 2011-13 but still it is below All India average of 178. Besides this, we have an average of 3062 persons per bed in hospital as against the all India average of 879."*

- A free health care scheme for BPL students below 18 years is proposed to be initiated.
- The State Government distributed baby-kits as a gift to the newly born babies in hospitals to encourage institutional delivery.
- The Government would like to allocate funds from the State resources and continue the Mamata programme and show love and affection to the new generation.

**BE, RE & AE under Health (in Crore)**



**Table 1.5 Allocation under major schemes under Health Sector in 2014-15 & 2015-16(in crore)**

Schemes/programmes	Allocation (BE)		Percentage increase(+)/ decrease(-)
	2014-15	2015-16	
Training of all Health Personnel	8.35	12.45	+49.1
School Health Schemes	5.08	5.42	+6.7
Immunization of Infant and children against Diphtheria, Polio & Typhoid etc	13.26	15.57	+17.42
Post partum centre	10.13	10.13	0
Training of ANMS	7.65	5.46	-28.6

## CHILD EDUCATION

To achieve the goal of Universal Elementary Education many programmes are being pursued in a mission mode in Assam as with other states of the country. Accordingly Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) as well as Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan had been launched as a step to universalise both elementary and secondary education. In this budget too special attention has been given to the education sector to address the problem of illiteracy and accordingly this sector has been favoured with an allocation of ₹.12355.78 crore in the year 2015-16 which witnesses nearly 2.8 per cent increase as compared to its previous year.

“The gross enrolment ratio for classes I to V is only 94.3 as against the all India average of 116, while for classes I to VIII, it is even less, that is 84 –as against the national average of 104.

All this requires massive, sustained investment. While we shall leave no stone unturned to bring these parameters at par with or even surpass those for the rest of India, now we are not clear who would support us in bridging this gap.”

*Shri Tarun Gogoi, Budget Speech 2015-16*

The Chief Minister's vision document for women & children 2016 has set out numerous goals towards the betterment of children. Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) bears a heavy load of targets to be achieved in the coming years. Assam has resolved to achieve 100 % GER by year 2016-17 in class IX and X.

**Table1.6: Allocation in major schemes under Education in 2015-16(in crore)**

Schemes/Programmes	Allocation ( BE)		Percentage increase(+)/decrease(-)
	2014-15	2015-16	
Elementary Education	6728.93	6925.09	2.9
Secondary Education	3225.43	3421.19	6.1
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(State Share)	145.72	165.12	13.3
Scholarship to Physically handicapped Students	0.41	0.41	0
State Scholarship	0.14	0.21	50
Mid-Day meal (State share)	47.50	59.67	25.6
Mid-Day meal (Central share)	405.00	537.15	32.6

The increase in allocation in 2015-16 is mainly attributed to almost 50 per cent increase in the fund provided under the State Scholarship scheme, nearly 25 per cent and 33 per cent enhancement respectively in state share and central share under Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

**hindustantimes**

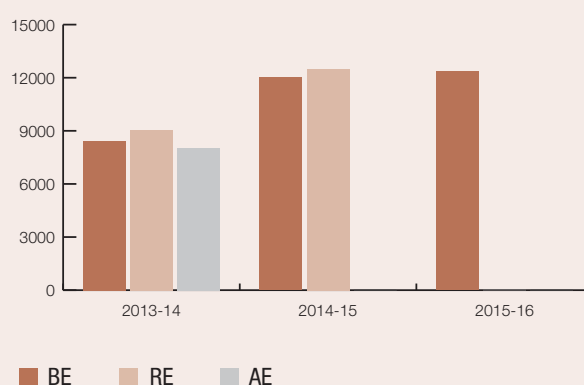
### Assam's Tea Gardens become Hunting Ground for Child Traffickers

.....children have gone missing from the gardens, feared to have been lured by traffickers active in an economically-backward region. And the tea workers have turned out to be the most vulnerable to trafficking, according to activists and the government.....

*Anasuya S Basu, Hindustan Times, Baksa / Guwahati*  
Updated: Sep 01, 2015 18:12 IST

Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/child-trafficking-menace-most-evident-in-assam-s-tea-gardens/article1-1386314.aspx>

### BE, RE & AE under Education (in Crore)



Nearly 13 per cent increase in the state share under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2015-16 over 2014-15 is also remarkable.

However there are some schemes that have also seen a cut. There is an almost 50 per cent

reduction in the allocation under the central sector scheme like Joyful Education for Pre-School Kids under Assam Vikash Yoyona in 2015-16.

In the budget speech, it had been stated that now govt. will provide residential schools and free education including hostel facility to needy and meritorious Tea Community students. But amount allocated for the Education of Tea garden & Ex- Tea garden students is reduced by nearly 57 percent in the current year as related to previous year. This is of particular concern in the light of poor indicator for education amongst the children in tea garden areas and also trafficking of children from these areas.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Early childhood care and development is an important area for which the state has to provide adequate resources.

Development sector has been receiving the mediocre share within the state budget as well as BfC over the years, despite the flagship Integrated Child Development Scheme Programme.

“Malnutrition amongst children is still a serious concern in the State. Therefore, I propose to undertake a new Mission with objectives and resources to eliminate this social malady altogether in a time bound manner.”

*Tarun Gogoi, Budget Speech 2015-16*

**Table 1.7: Allocation in major schemes under Child Development in 2015-16 (in crore)**

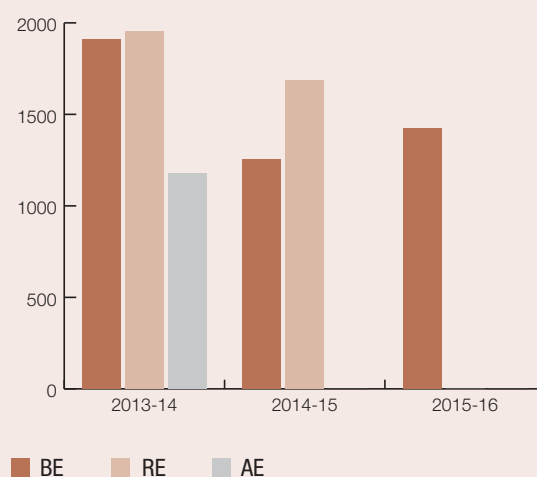
Schemes/ programmes	Allocation (BE)		Percentage increase(+)/ decrease(-)
	2014-15	2015-16	
ICDS (state share)	51.21	63.91	24.8
ICDS (central share)	737.60	779.75	5.7
Anganwadi workers/helpers enhance	31.00	90.37	191.5
SABLA (state share)	2.65	4.52	70.6
SABLA (central share)	20.52	40.69	98.3
Special Nutrition Programme	342.33	354.48	3.5
Pre- school feeding	30.00	49.78	65.9
Intensive Child Development	0	0	0
Kishori Shakti Yojana	0	0	0

An amount of ₹1423.41 crore has been allocated under development sector in 2015-16 which is nearly 13.7 per cent higher as compared to 2014-15.

However, development sector received only 0.57 percent of the state budget and 10.28 percent of the BfC. Though it is the second highest sector-wise share, question arises whether the amount of money is enough to comprehensively meet the development needs of the large number of young children in the state.

When closely looked into the allocation for all individual schemes, a higher allocation of ₹.779.75 crore was found to take place in central share under Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). There was an increase in both

**BE, RE & AE under Development (in Crore)**





state share and central share by 24.8 per cent and 5.7 per cent respectively under ICDS during 2015-16 as compared to 2014-15.

Nearly 2 times increase in allocation respectively under central share of SABLA and honorarium of Anganwadi workers in the year 2015-16 as compared to 2014-15 is a remarkable achievement.

It is quite unfortunate that the scheme like Kishori Shakti Yojana failed to receive any allocation since 2014-15.

## CHILD PROTECTION

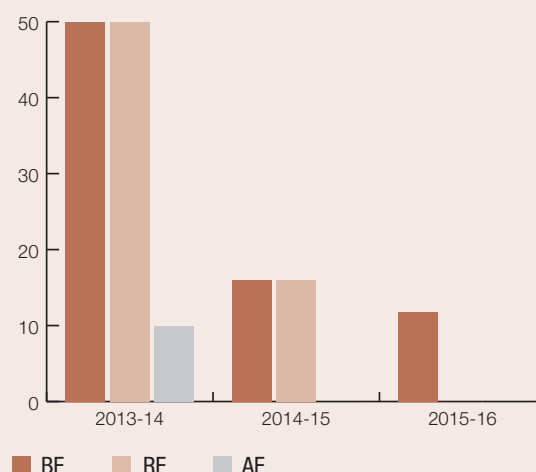
Despite the fact that countless children in Assam have been kidnapped, killed, injured and abused from time to time, the government does not seem to have woken up to the need to address protection of children.

This sector received an allocation of ₹11.79 crore in the current year's budget. One major concern is the severe cut in allocations for most of the important schemes.

“For guaranteeing proper care to the orphan children, I propose to construct special children's homes for orphan children...”

Shri Tarun Gogoi, Budget Speech 2015-16

BE, RE & AE under protection (in Crore)



### Child Protection – Assam scenario (Statistics)

- 4.7% of boys and 1.8% girls below the age of 14 years are into child labour.
- Out of 564 cases of crime committed against children, conviction has happened in only 2 cases. Pendency percentage in such cases is 92% and conviction rate is 4.4%.
- Out of 624 persons arrested for crime committed against children, 76 were released before trial, 236 were charge sheeted and 312 were under investigation at the end of the year.
- Out of 1716 reported cases of rape, 5 victims were within 10 years, 151 between 10-14 years and 177 within 14-18 years of age.

Source: Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, 5th Annual Report 2014

One example is the increase in the cases of kidnapping of children as well missing cases of children in Sivasagar district of Assam from 40 in 2013 to 69 in 2014 (Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, 5th Annual Report 2014) . There are other reports of trafficking of children from the tea gardens.

And yet protection sector has always received the least share of allocation in the Assam budget as well as within BfC.

Table 1.8 Allocation in major schemes under Protection sector in 2015-16(in crore)			
Schemes/ Programmes	Allocation(BE)		Percentage increase(+)/ decrease(-)
	2014-15	2015-16	
ICPS(State share)	1.18	0.75	-36.4
ICPS (Central share)	11.80	6.76	-42.7
Welfare of children in need &care	0.14	0.11	-21.4
SCPCR	0.60	0.60	0
Implementation of JJ Act (state share)	0.74	1.80	+143.2
Implementation of JJ Act(central share)	0	0	0
Home for orphan & destitute	0.26	0.31	+19.2

In all there is 28 per cent reduction in the share of the protection sector in 2015-16 as compared to its previous year.

It is heartening to see that the scheme for implementation of Juvenile Justice Act received ₹1.8 crore in 2015-16 from the state, which is more than double of the fund released in 2014-15. However, it failed to receive any central share during this year.

Integrated Child Protection Scheme, the flagship programme for child protection, witnessed a decline in allocation in 2015-16 by nearly 36 per cent and 43 per cent respectively in the state share and central share.

Scheme like Welfare of Children in Need & Care faced a major setback as it received 21 per cent less allocation in the current year as compared to previous year.





## CONCLUSION

Though there was a major dip in the BfC during 2013-14 and 2014-15, considerable upward swing is noticed in it during the current year. This is very welcome. Despite reduction in state budget by 36 per cent in 2015-16 as compared to 2014-15, the share of BfC rose to 5.57 per cent, an increase of 2.11 per cent. But it remained still lower as compared to the average BfC of 7.7 per cent in 2004-05 to 2008-09 as well as to its share in other major states of the country. Also, the allocation under many of the programmes remained unspent and there remained a major gap between fund allocated and actual spending.

The priority sector like health which aimed at developing children's growth, has been left uncared for as it received a very minimum share in both BfC and State Budget. Protection sector which is aimed at safeguarding the children from all evils, witnessed a lowest share in BfC. Despite education sector receiving maximum attention, it fails to address the reality on the ground. The major centrally sponsored schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhijan, Mid-Day Meal scheme, Integrated Child Development services etc failed to achieve their objective and targets significantly as there was an under-utilisation of fund in these programmes over the years.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Considering the significance of all the programmes related to child welfare and the importance of addressing all the needs and rights of the children adequately and simultaneously, it is necessary to give due weightage to all the sectors. Currently, maximum attention to the education sector only.
- Allocations of funds under the health and protection sectors need to be increased sufficiently to improve the quality of life of the children.
- Since there is a constant growth in child population in the state there is an urgent need for creating proper infrastructure for all round development of children and ensuring an optimum level of financial flow towards schemes addressing them.
- Abrupt change in policy by central government to withdraw the central share for some ongoing important schemes will create problem in implementation of the schemes. So a constant, regular and sufficient flow of fund from the centre is to be ensured. Given the new move towards fiscal devolution, there is an alarming need of the state to create and use its own resources without much dependence on central fund.
- Fund received as state share or central share must be utilised with right earnest without allowing any scope of corruption.
- Emphasis must be given to inclusive growth and development of children belonging to backward section, tea tribes, dalit, physically handicapped and under-privileged sections of society.
- Under-utilisation of fund needs to be discouraged in any way so as to ensure proper justice towards children.
- Optimum utilisation of resources without any scope of over-spending must be ensured looking to the limited flow of fund.
- Follow-up action on proper utilisation of fund, transparency in implementation as well as effective monitoring and constant vigilance etc must be accorded top priority in smooth functioning of all the child oriented schemes.

And finally it is important to take cognizance of the concern that Shri Tarun Gogoi has expressed: "At current prices, our per capita income is Rs 46354 as against the all India average of Rs 74920. This gap shall have to be bridged so that there is equitable development in the country, with all sharing in the fruits of development fairly. But, this can happen only with active support of the Centre whereby funds flow in and additional wealth and capital gets generated. With uncertainties in the pattern of assistance for many schemes and programmes, States such as Assam, whose revenue base is limited, face a bleak future.