



Viksit Bharat or Amrit Kaal: Where do Children Stand?

An Analysis of Budget for Children 2024-25

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While the NDA Government presented its first budget (and third in a row), children of India still hoped to be a part of the definition of the “Inclusive” and “Viksit” and the same to be reflected in the budgetary allocations. But, this year again, children received the Union Budget 2024-15 with a sense of disappointment.

The theme of the Union Budget 2024-25 revolves around Employment, Skilling, MSMEs and the Middle Class and therefore, children do not find any mention in the Budget Speech 2024-25 delivered by the Hon’ble Finance Minister.

Budget Priorities....

The people have given a unique opportunity to our government to take the country on the path of strong development and all-round prosperity. In the interim budget, we promised to present a detailed roadmap for our pursuit of ‘*Viksit Bharat*’. In line with the strategy set out in the interim budget, this budget envisages sustained efforts on the following 9 priorities for generating ample opportunities for all.

1. Productivity and resilience in Agriculture
2. Employment & Skilling
3. Inclusive Human Resource Development and Social Justice
4. Manufacturing & Services
5. Urban Development
6. Energy Security
7. Infrastructure
8. Innovation, Research & Development and
9. Next Generation Reforms

---Excerpts from Budget Speech 2024-25

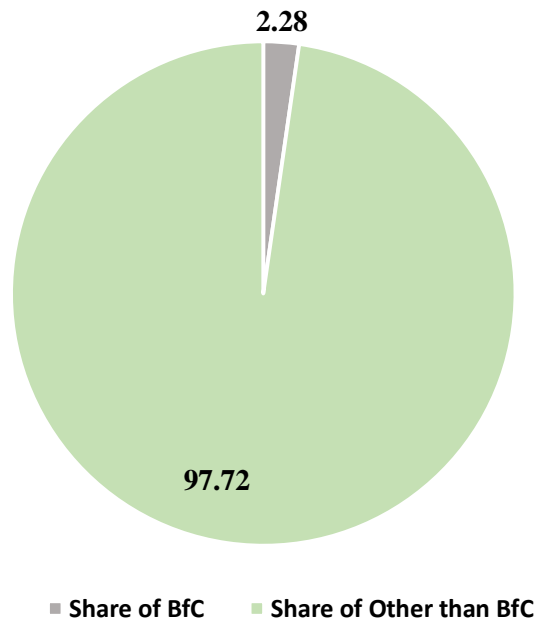
The trend of declining share of children continue as children received a mere 2.28 per cent share of the total allocation of the Union Budget 2024-25. In the Union Budget 2023-24, the share of children was 2.30 per cent. In the Interim Budget 2024-25, which was presented just a few months ago, the share of children was higher than that of what children received this year in the full-fledged Budget. The share of children in the Interim Budget 2024-25 stood at 2.30 per cent.

The actual allocation for children (as per Statement 12) stands at **INR 109920.95 Crore** in the Union Budget 2024-25, which is 5.51 per cent increase than that of previous year i.e. 2023-24 in actual terms. However, the share of children has decreased as compared to the Union Budget 2023-24.

While the Union Budget observed an increase of 7.05 per cent against the previous year, the Budget of children observed an increase of 5.51 per cent in Union Budget 2024-25.

The volume of total Union Budget 2024-25 stands at **INR 4820512 Crore**.

Share of Children in Union Budget 2024-25 (Per Cent)

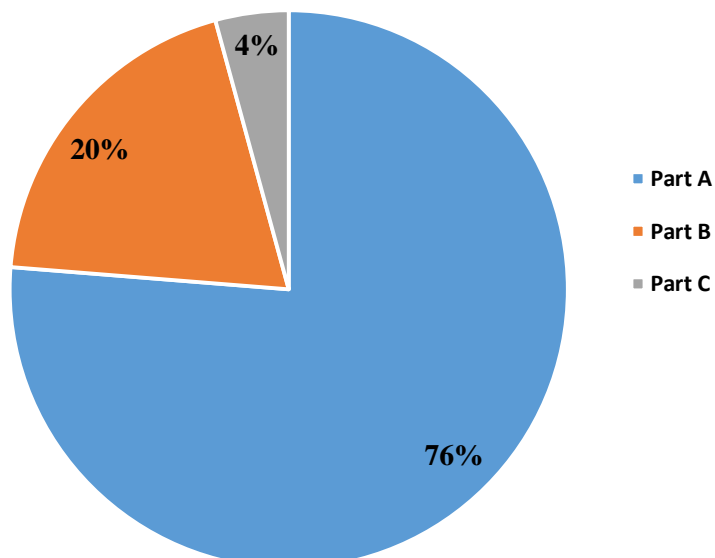


The Statement 12 of 2024-25 presents a new arrangement of scheme structure. The schemes have been divided in three broad categories:

- i. Schemes with 100% provision for children (**Part A**)
- ii. Schemes with 30- 99% allocations for children (**Part B**) and
- iii. Schemes with allocations for children up to 30% of the provision (**Part C**)

While there is no guidance note provided on this kind of segregation, a closer look at the allocations reveal that Part A has received maximum share.

Distribution of Financial Resources within BfC (2024-25)

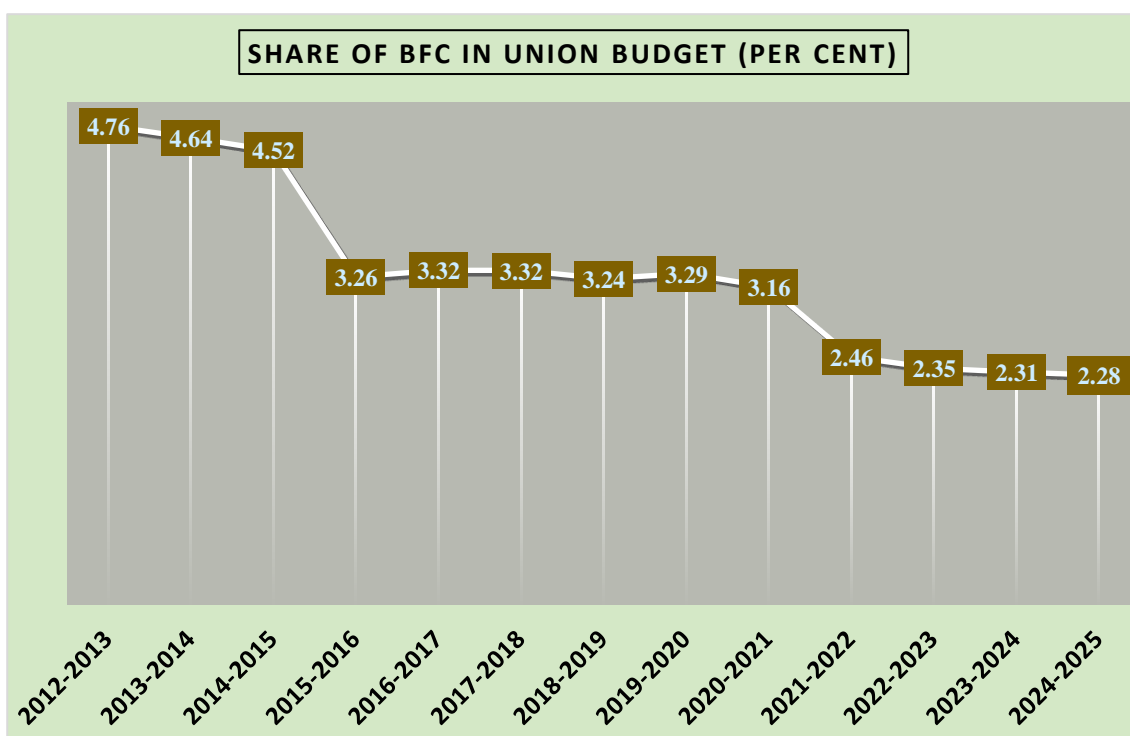


Budget for Children (BfC) Over the years

This year, the share of children in the total Union Budget has touched the bottom in last 13 years. This needs to be noted especially in the context that in the year 2012, the UN Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in its Concluding Observation for India had highlighted the need of increasing the financing towards children. Yet, now when the Govt. is about to submit its fourth and fifth joint Report to the UN Committee, will there be any scope to justify such decreasing trend. Needless to mention, India is also committed to achieve the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and with such declining trend, the path to glory remains blurry.

“The Committee notes the State party’s efforts to improve the planning and budgetary processes and to increase the budget allocated to schemes and programmes for children. However, the Committee is concerned that budget allocations do not adequately take into consideration child protection needs. It is also concerned at the mismanagement of allocated resources, which is exacerbated by a high level of corruption, and the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems.”

---Concluding Observation by the UN Committee on the Convention of the Rights of the Child



Further, the sectoral share in the Union Budget as well as within the Budget for Children (BfC) do not provide very promising picture. Child Education received the maximum share of resources in the Union Budget, whereas, child protection, like every year, remains under resourced with the least share in the Union Budget as well as BfC. While share of child health related schemes observed a marginal increase in the share (both in the Union Budget 2024-25 as well as within BfC 2024-25), child development, child education and child protection received reduced share as compared to the previous year.

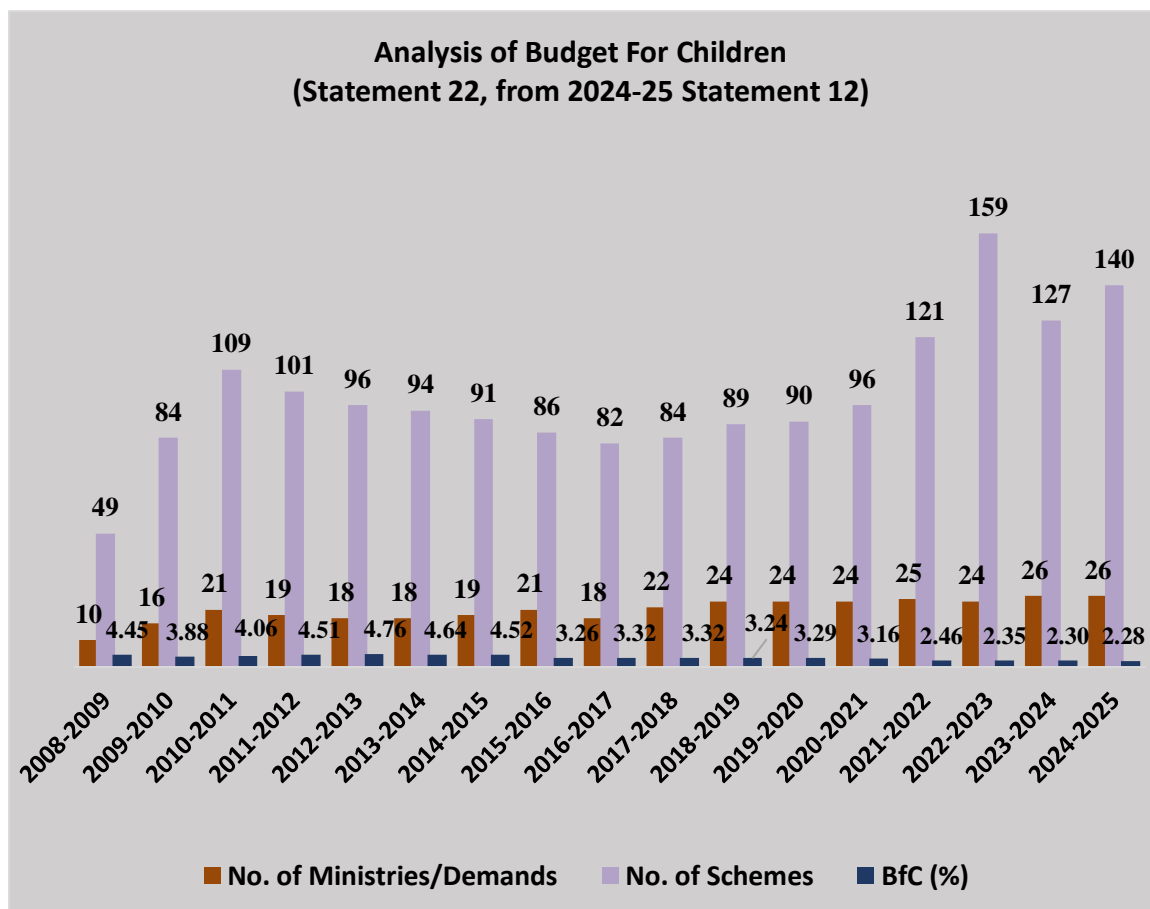
Sectoral Share of Allocation in the Union Budget 2024-25 & Within BfC 2024-25 (Per Cent)								
Year	Health		Development		Education		Protection	
	Union	BfC	Union	BfC	Union	BfC	Union	BfC
2020-21	0.11	3.36	0.80	25.49	2.18	69.17	0.06	1.98
2021-22	0.11	4.35	0.57	23.26	1.74	70.83	0.03	1.27
2022-23	0.09	3.78	0.45	19.22	1.77	75.31	0.04	1.70
2023-24	0.08	3.35	0.40	17.46	1.79	77.50	0.04	1.73
2024-25	0.09	4.10	0.39	16.96	1.76	77.36	0.04	1.63

Ministries/Department-wise Allocation:

Key Ministries with Increased/Decreased Allocation in the Union Budget 2024-25					
Ministries/ Department	2023-24 (BE) (Rs. Crore)	2023-24 (RE) (Rs. Crore)	2024-25 (BE) (Rs. Crore)	Increase/ Decrease against 2023-24 BE (%)	Increase/ Decrease against 2023-24 RE (%)
Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH)	3.52	9.15	13.92	295.45	52.13
Department of Health and Family Welfare	3490.5	3658.6	4488.48	28.59	22.68
Department of School Education and Literacy	67290.34	60148	71523.07	6.29	18.91
Ministry of Labour and Employment	20	6	0	-100	-100
Ministry of Minority Affairs	1582.1	1444	1517.34	-4.09	5.08
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment	4153.03	3697.4	4212.04	1.42	13.92
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	6653.72	3245.03	6608.3	-0.68	103.64
Ministry of Women and Child Development	19336.98	19986.61	19989.34	3.37	0.01
Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports	22	32.85	22	0.00	-33.03

A brief analysis of Statement 22/Statement 12 1 highlights the number of programmes included as a part of the Budget Statement for Welfare of Children. Initially, when Statement 22 was launched in 2008-09, 10 Ministries/Departments sanctioned a total of 49 schemes/programmes for children giving a total of 4.45 per cent of share of financial resources to children. Over the years, the number of Ministries/Departments kept increasing and so the number of schemes/programmes, but the Budget for Children (BfC) did not see much of change.

In 2010-11, a total of 109 schemes featured in Statement 22 by 21 Ministries/Departments, but the BfC remained a menial 4.06 per cent. On the other hand, in 2012-13, with 18 Ministries floating 96 Programmes/Schemes for children, the share of children observed to be 4.76 per cent, which was the highest share in last 7 years. Further in 2020-21, which is the year of unprecedented pandemic, the number of programmes targeted for the welfare of children remained the same as it was in 2012-13 i.e. 96, but the share of children reduced from 4.76 percent in 2012-13 to 3.16 percent. In the Union Budget 2024-25, while the number of programmes have reached a staggering high of 140 programmes with the support of 26 Ministries/Departments, the share of children have dipped down to all time low of 2.28 per cent.



PM Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) observed an increase of 51.25 per cent in the Union Budget 2024-25 as compared to the previous year. What is surprising that for a scheme of this significance, the allocations were reduced by 30 per cent at RE stage bringing it down from INR 4000 Crore at BE in 2023 to INR 2800 Crore at RE. In the current Budget, PM SHRI has been allocated INR 6050 Crore.

Despite so much of focus on the National Education Policy, the flagship scheme Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SMSA) observed almost no change in this year's budget. SMSA received a mere increase of INR 46.53 Crore in the Union Budget 2024-25 with a total allocation of INR 37500 Crore. In 2023-24, SMSA had received INR 37453 Crore.

The restructured PM POSHAN scheme observed a marginal increase of 7.48 per cent with total allocation of INR 12467.39 Crore in the Union Budget 2024-25.

Centre stops school scheme funds to Delhi, Punjab & Bengal after states refuse to participate in PM-SHRI: Report

While states have to confirm their participation in PM-SHRI by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Education Ministry— West Bengal, Delhi, and Punjab refused to do so alleging they are yet to receive third and fourth installments of SSA funds.

After Punjab, West Bengal, and Delhi refused participation in the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme, the Education Ministry has stopped funds to the three states under Centre's flagship Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)— a school education programme.

With an overall budget of over Rs 27,000 crore for the next five years— under PM-SHRI, Modi government and states will shoulder 60 and 40 per cent of the financial burden. As per a report in the Indian Express, the scheme is poised at upgrading at least 14,500 government schools into "exemplar" institutions to showcase the implementation of Centre's National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020. While states have to confirm their participation in PM-SHRI by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Education Ministry— West Bengal, Delhi, and Punjab refused to do so alleging they are yet to receive third and fourth installments of SSA funds for the last year's October-December and January-March period. The three states have further alleged that they have also not received the funds for the current financial year's April-June quarter.

Source:

<https://www.deccanherald.com/india/centre-stops-school-scheme-funds-to-delhi-punjab-bengal-after-states-refuse-to-participate-in-pm-shri-report-3107225>

The National Child Labour Project (NCLP) has been discontinued with no allocation at all in the Union Budget 2024-25.

Scholarships for Students with Disabilities” under Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities received a reduced allocation of INR 71.34 Crore in Union Budget 2024-25. This scheme was allocated INR 72.50 Crore in the Union Budget 2023-24.

The allocations for Mission Vatsalya remains unchanged with INR 1472.17 Crore. This unchanged allocation creates both concern and confusion as to the commitment towards child protection. The norms for Mission Vatsalya has been recently modified and yet there is no change in the allocation for Mission Vatsalya definitely indicates that the Government does not wish to protect our children. As per the data available, as on 31.03.2023, there are 120615 children who are either part of institutional care or non-institutional care. Apart from catering to the needs of these children, Mission Vatsalya is also responsible for smooth implementation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

S. No.	State	Number of Beneficiaries under Institutional Care	Number of Beneficiaries under Non-Institutional Care	Total Beneficiaries
1	Andhra Pradesh	1504	9150	10654
2	Arunachal Pradesh	206	840	1046
3	Assam	1380	858	2238
4	Bihar	2088	504	2592
5	Chhattisgarh	1974	288	2262
6	Goa	526	27	553
7	Gujarat	1651	506	2157
8	Haryana	1239	5155	6394
9	Himachal Pradesh	805	1347	2152
10	Jammu and Kashmir	817	1398	2215
11	Jharkhand	1219	3086	4305
12	Karnataka	3182	3875	7057
13	Kerala	697	1133	1830
14	Madhya Pradesh	2292	2377	4669
15	Maharashtra	3654	9844	13498
16	Manipur	2121	1120	3241
17	Meghalaya	972	1028	2000
18	Mizoram	914	591	1505
19	Nagaland	493	752	1245
20	Odisha	4153	1772	5925
21	Punjab	607	612	1219
22	Rajasthan	2560	239	2799
23	Sikkim	526	323	849
24	Tamil Nadu	7785	2975	10760
25	Tripura	829	305	1134
26	Uttar Pradesh	3238	1766	5004
27	Uttarakhand	700	847	1547
28	West Bengal	6220	1670	7890
29	Telangana	1129	6454	7583
30	Andaman & Nicobar	308	0	308
31	Chandigarh	202	199	401
32	Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	28	519	547
33	Ladakh	25	29	54
34	Lakshadweep	0	0	0
35	Delhi	1206	980	2186
36	Puducherry	690	106	796
	Total	57940	62675	120615

Source: Annexure Referred To In Reply To Part (B) Of The Lok Sabha Un-Starred Question No.250 For Answer On 21.07.2023 By Shri Shankar Lalwani, Dr. Arvind Kumar Sharma And Dr. Bharatiben Dhirubhai ShiyaI

“Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 received a little attention in terms of financial allocations with total allocation of INR 18020 Crore in the Union Budget 2024-25. It must be highlighted here that the current allocation is mere increase of 3.14 per cent as against the allocation made in FY 2023-24 at BE stage. This scheme was allocated INR 17471.16 Crore in 2023-24 at BE stage which was increased at INR 18294.66 Crore at RE stage in 2023-24. Further, as compared to the allocation at RE stage, Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 received much reduced allocation in 2024-25 in comparison to allocations at RE stage in 2023-24.

The Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes/programmes of different Ministries/Departments through States/UTs to address various aspects related to nutrition. In the 15th FC, components of nutritional support for children below the age of 6 years, pregnant women and lactating mother, Adolescent Girls (14 – 18 years); Early Childhood Care and Education [3-6 years]; Anganwadi infrastructure including modern, upgraded Saksham Anganwadi, POSHAN Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent Girls have been reorganised under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0). Mission Poshan 2.0 focuses on Maternal Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding Norms, Treatment of MAM/SAM and Wellness through Ayush practices to reduce wasting and under-weight prevalence besides stunting and anaemia. Under Mission Poshan 2.0, Supplementary nutrition is provided to beneficiaries 300 days in a year through the network of 13.97 lakh AWC located across the country for bridging the gap in the intake as compared to the recommended dietary intake. As per the data of Poshan Tracker for the month of November 2023, around 7.44 crore children under 6 years were measured, out of whom 37.51% were found to be stunted and 17.43% were found to be underweight and 6% children under 5 years were found to be wasted. The levels of underweight and wasting are much less than that projected by NFHS 5. (Source: LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2228 TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.12.2023)

When the Government has kept nutrition and well-being of children at such high pedestal through well-designed programmes, how is it then the Government decides to pay very little attention to the issue of POSHAN?

Mission Shakti: SAMRTHYA & SAMBAL (Lost in Transition??)

The Government of India launched 'Mission Shakti' - an integrated women empowerment programme as umbrella scheme for the safety, security and empowerment of women for implementation during the 15th Finance Commission period 2021-22 to 2025-26. SAMRTHYA and SAMBAL are two significant components of this umbrella Scheme. The components of SAMRTHYA sub scheme consists of erstwhile schemes of Ujjwala Homes, Swadhar Greh and Working Women Hostel, National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY). On the other hand, .In „Sambal', existing schemes of One Stop Centres (OSC), Universalisation of Women Helpline (WHL), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) have been included and a new component of Nari Adalat has been added.

In the Union Budget 2024-25, while SAMRTHYA received an increased allocation by 76.6 per cent, SAMBAL observed no change at all in the allocation. The allocation for SAMRTHYA stood at INR 150.11 Crore whereas for SAMBAL, the allocation remained unchanged with total allocation of INR 222 Crore in the Union Budget 2024-25.

Some of the Scholarship Schemes have received major setback in terms of reduced allocations in the Union Budget 2024-25 whereas a few schemes have seen either a marginal increase or no increase in the allocation in the Union Budget 2024-25. For example, PM YASASVI scheme, a scholarship scheme meant for the welfare of OBCs, EBCs and DNTs observed significantly reduced allocation in 2024-25.

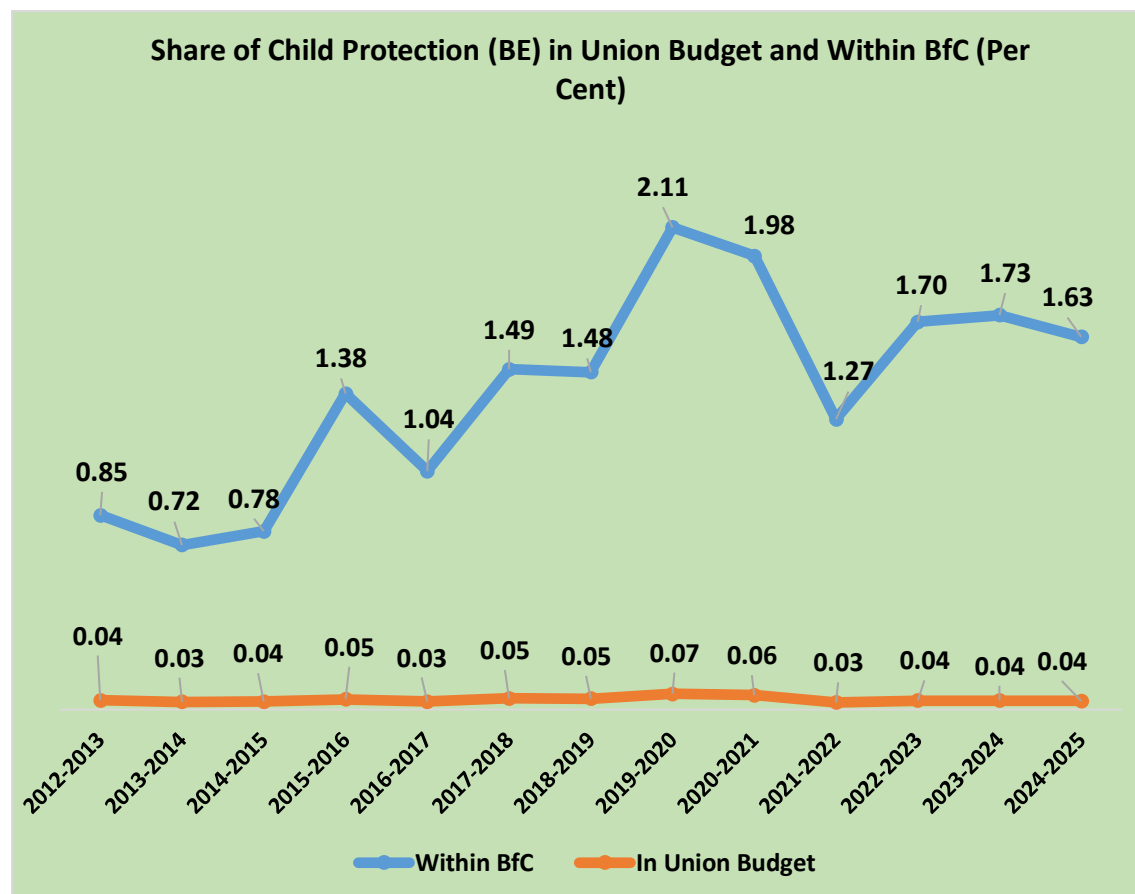
A Closer Look at the Scholarship Programmes in the Union Budget 2024-25				
Schemes/Programmes	2023-24 BE	2023-24 RE	2024-25 BE	Increase/ Decrease (%)
Department of School Education and Literacy				
National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme	364	358	377	3.57
Ministry of Minority Affairs				
Pre- Matric Scholarship for Minorities	433	400	326.16	-24.67
Post Matric Scholarship for Minorities	1065	1000	1145.38	7.55
Merit cum Means based scholarships	44	25	33.8	-23.18
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment				
Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SCs	3052.39	2592	3047.99	-0.14
Pre-Matric Scholarship for SCs	500	430	500	0.00
Pradhan Mantri Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM YASASVI) for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs	217.4	217.4	184.2	-15.27
102.01 Post Matric Scholarship for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs				
Pradhan Mantri Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM YASASVI) for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs	281	281	210	-25.27
Department of Disabilities Affair/Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities				
Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	72.5	72.5	71.34	-1.60
Ministry of Tribal Affairs				
Pre Matric Scholarship for ST Students	411.63	411.63	440.36	6.98
Post Matric Scholarship for STs	216.78	260.81	261.16	20.47
Grand Total	6657.70	6048.34	6597.39	-0.91

In the Union Budget 2024-25, the much talked about Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) have observed a reduced allocation by 2.24 per cent against the allocations of 2023-24. In the Union Budget 2024-25, the total allocation for EMRS stands at INR 5794.78

Cre. As per the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, a total of 708 EMRs have been sanctioned, out of which only 405 EMRs are functional, and further 32 EMRs are yet to be sanctioned. (Source: <https://emrs.tribal.gov.in/backend/web/>)

As per the National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) Annual Report 2022-23, 690 EMRs have been sanctioned in India out of which 401 EMRs are functional. (Source: Page no. 15 of the Report; Available at: <https://emrs.tribal.gov.in/WriteReadData/RTF1984/1712308115.pdf>)

One of the main critiques has been the use of language English and Hindi by the teachers in the selected EMRS in the tribal areas. As per the rules, EMRs schools are supposed to recruit teachers who can teach in the state/ native language of the region. However, there have been instances where the students are facing difficulty in understanding the language in which teachers are teaching. In Andhra Pradesh for example, the students have complained that the teachers in the schools are from North India and are teaching in English and Hindi whereas the children only know Telugu. Due to this children have the fear of failing in subjects which has led to an increase in dropout rate.



Traditionally, child protection has been one of the most under resourced areas. This year too, the share of child protection in the Union Budget 2024-25 as well as Budget for Children (BfC) has remained at the bottom of resource allocation with the share of 0.04 per cent and 1.63 per cent respectively. It has always been a struggle to understand why and how child

protection never becomes the priority of the Government despite the rising concerns of crimes against children, huge pendency of cases of both crimes committed by children and crimes committed against children at police station and at Courts.

While the Government is getting the country ready to transcend into the Viksit Bharat, it will be a difficult dream to achieve if children are not a part of it.