

# BUDGET FOR CHILDREN

*in West Bengal* 2004-05 to 2008-09



# A CRY FOR HEALTH & PROTECTION ALLOCATION FOR CHILDREN IN THE WEST BENGAL BUDGET

An Analysis from a Child Rights Perspective  
2004-05 to 2008-09

*A study by*



**HAQ: Centre for Child Rights**

*In Partnership With:*



**Society for People's Awareness (SPAN)**

Printed and Published in 2009

© Society for People's Awareness (SPAN), Kolkata and HAQ: Centre for Child Rights

Reproduction of any part of this publication for educational or other non-commercial purposes is authorised only with prior permission from

**Society for People's Awareness (SPAN)**

66/2, Sarat Chandra Dhar Road,

Kolkata - 700090

Phone: 91-33-2564-3305, 91-33-2566-3709

Email: [info@spanvoice.org](mailto:info@spanvoice.org)

Website: [www.spanvoice.org](http://www.spanvoice.org)

*or*

**HAQ: Centre for Child Rights**

B 1/2, Malviya Nagar, Ground Floor

New Delhi-110017, India

Phone: 91-11-26677412/3599

Fax: 91-11-26674688

Email: [info@haqcrc.org](mailto:info@haqcrc.org)

Website: [www.haqcrc.org](http://www.haqcrc.org)

978-81-906548-5-2

**Credits**

**Research Team**

At HAQ | Paromita Shastri

Madhumita Purkayastha

Indarilin Dkhar

At SPAN | Biplab Das and Sinjini Ghosh

Photo Credit | Cover Gunnar Geir Petursson

Inside Shahbaz Khan Sherwani

Design and Typesetting | Aspire Design, New Delhi

Supported by | Ford Foundation



# Foreword

A budget is an estimate of the resources that will be available during a specified financial year to be spent on a set of projects that give shape to the nation/state's long-term development plan. Through an annual budget, which breaks down into several sectoral and departmental budgets, the Government allocates money to achieve various social and economic goals such as education, health care, water and power supply, roads, dams, etc. Thus the budget becomes the most important economic policy statement in any country, more so in a welfare state like India that still has miles to go in achieving a decent human development record.

Since the size of the allocation of funds determines, at first glance, the level of priority accorded to a programme, a budget is also the best reflection of how seriously the government takes its policies and their implementation. As a result, tracking the allocations in an annual financial statement, right from the printed numbers in the budget document to the expenditures detailed in the demands for grants, becomes an indispensable tool in monitoring whether the government has kept the promises made to the citizens.

Children are full citizens with full human rights but since they lack the all-important vote, they are neglected even in national budgets that contain several programmes to benefit children. It is to make the government walk its talk on children that in 2002, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights, a New Delhi-based civil society organisation, embarked on a decadal analysis (1990-91 to 1999-2000) of the Union Budget from a child rights perspective. Society for People's Awareness (SPAN), Kolkata, decided to follow this unique effort and started child budget analysis work in West Bengal in 2006 in partnership with HAQ. The first analysis of this partnership came out in 2008 as "Budget for Children in West Bengal".

This report offers a five-year review of state budgets from the perspective of child rights from 2004-05 to 2008-09. We have sought to make the analysis more exhaustive by including the latest actual expenditure figures, which are usually

available with a two-year lag. The objective is to evaluate the budget provisions made by the Government of West Bengal towards ensuring the rights of children in the areas of survival, protection and development and examine how far the financial commitments have fallen short of fulfilling these rights. This year, we have also undertaken a special ear-to-the ground financial tracking analysis of the government's flagship Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, or the Education for All programme, in the second half of the report, which tries to evaluate how far the programme has succeeded in achieving its broad objectives.

This report would not have come about without the support of The Ford Foundation, particularly Bishnu Mohapatra at the Foundation who believes in our ideas and in us. It has been written by Biplab Das and Sinjini Ghosh of SPAN and edited at HAQ by Paromita Shastri, with assistance from Madhumita Purakayashtha and Indarilin Dkhar.

In disseminating the budget analysis, our purpose is to engage diverse stakeholders at the local, state and national levels in generating a wide discussion and debate. We hope it will serve as an effective tool for all child rights activists and organisations and help in holding governments accountable for the changing allocation and expenditure patterns in child-focused programmes. HAQ takes full responsibility for all facts and figures. Reader reactions, including about any inadvertent mistakes, will be appreciated. Write in to us at [info@haqrc.org](mailto:info@haqrc.org)

Enakshi Ganguly Thukral & Bharti Ali  
HAQ: Centre for Child Rights  
New Delhi

Prabir Basu  
Society for People's Awareness (SPAN)  
Kolkata

# Contents

---

## SECTION I

Children Benefit Little from Economic Growth	1
Methodology & Overview of the BfC Analysis	7
Little Progress in Education Despite Lion's Share in BfC	17
Child Development Neglected in State Budget	26
Allocations Lag Far Behind Health Goals	32
Despite Trafficking, Protection Not on the Radar of State	37
Conclusion	43
Annexure	45

## SECTION II

Tracking SSA Implementation in West Bengal	53
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	81



# **Section I**

## **Budget for Children**





# Children Benefit Little from Economic Growth

Development of a state cannot be assessed merely by the rise and fall of the income levels of its citizens. A state can be considered developed only when, as economics Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen says, its citizens are capable enough to develop their own potential and exercise their rights and choices. In other words, a state is developed when all sections of its people, including children, have access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods or the conditions promoting such livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and a sense of participation in community and governance activities.

The total population of the state of West Bengal is 85.3 million. The child population, or the population in the 0-18 age group, is 33.23 million, or about 42 per cent of the total. In fact, Bengal's children account for about 7.4 per cent of the total number of children in India. It is only fitting that the state government makes the well-being of 42 per cent of its population a priority so as to achieve all-round development of the state.

West Bengal has the second-highest percentage of scheduled castes in India. The Census of India 2001 placed the proportion of Scheduled Caste population at 23.02 per cent and the proportion of Scheduled Tribe population at 5.5 per cent. Thus, 28.52 per cent of the total population of the state belongs to backward classes.

West Bengal is distinguished as a state with high population density, legalisation of land reforms that has reinforced small and marginal landholding based cultivation, high agricultural production which is now leveling off, diversity of human and mineral resources, dwindling industrial production, and a rapidly growing services sector. Lately, the state has been in the centre stage for the land acquisition agitation taking place at Singur and Nandigram, which resulted in the automobile giant Tata Motors ultimately shifting its production base for the small car Nano from Singur to Sanand in Gujarat.

Like most national governments across the world, the government of West Bengal too views industrialisation and modernisation as the most important means of development. The West Bengal Human Development Report (HDR) 2004<sup>1</sup>, brought out jointly by the West Bengal government and the United Nations Development Programme which publishes global HDRs every year, describes the state as the third largest economy in India, as reflected in its promising annual growth rate and per capita growth rate. The state has been successful in promoting foreign direct investment, which has come mainly into software and electronics, making the capital city of Kolkata a rising hub of information technology (IT). On the other hand, the state has seen a significant increase in the percentage of unemployment in both urban and rural sectors and a huge section of the population has slipped below the poverty line.

West Bengal has seen rapid economic growth in the first half of this decade. According to the Economic Review 2007-08<sup>23</sup>, the Net State Domestic Product (NSDP), measured in constant 1999-2000 prices, grew by 8.81 per cent in that year over the previous (2006-07), while per capita income rose by 7.63 per cent in 2007-08 over the past year. This is a significant rise from even the steady 5 per cent growth in the per capita income registered over the decade of the nineties. In fact, throughout the Tenth Five-year Plan period of 2002-07, the state also maintained an annual average growth rate of 6.33 per cent in NSDP and 5.05 per cent in per capita income.

Within this, however, sectoral shares in the NSDP have been changing radically. The percentage share of the primary sector in the total SDP at constant 1999-2000 prices declined from 32.85 per cent in 1999-2000 to 25.92 per cent in 2006-07. This decline of agriculture has been compensated by the expansion of the tertiary sector, mainly services, to 55.59 per cent. This sector grew at an average annual rate of 7.2 per cent during the Tenth Plan even as agriculture grew at a measly 1.94 per cent. In a surprise surge, even the secondary sector (mainly manufacturing industry) grew at 11.44 per cent in the period, and its share in total SDP went up from 14.54 per cent to 18.49 per cent. During the better part of the 2000s thus, it was the steadily growing services sector, the IT and ITes subsectors in particular, that brought West Bengal close to the highest per capita NSDP state in India, Gujarat<sup>4</sup>.

**Table 1.1: West Bengal and India- A Comparative Profile**

Indicators	West Bengal	India
Population (in million)	80.17	1028.74
Percentage of urban population to total population	27.97	27.81
Population 0-18 years	33.23	450.49
Percentage of 0-18 years in total population	41.44	43.79
Literacy (per cent)	68.64	64.82
SC literacy	59.04	54.69
ST literacy	43.40	47.10
Female literacy		
Sex Ratio (Number of females per 1000 males)	934	933
Net State Domestic Product (2007-08) (GDP for India)	204,197.49	3114,452
Per capita Income (2007-08)	23,563.33	24,256
Unemployment (in lakhs) as listed on employment exchange registers at the end of 2004-05	72.97	131.00

Source: Economic Review, Government of West Bengal 2007-08 and Economic Survey, Government of India 2006-07

1 [http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=124&Itemid=212](http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124&Itemid=212)

2 Economic Review 2007-08, Government of West Bengal

3 Economic Review Ibid

4 Banerjee, Devdas: West Bengal State Development Report 2007, Institute of Development Studies Kolkata, for Development and Planning Department, Government of West Bengal, Chapter 1, Structural Changes

However, this growth has not necessarily been equitable. This is primarily because of low growth as well as share of agriculture in the economy. Also, since agriculture is where half of the rural workforce is employed, this at once points to low and declining labour productivity in the sector.

Thus the economy of West Bengal is at a crossroads. Despite high growth, Planning Commission data pertaining to 2004-05 found, 17.3 million people lived below the poverty line (BPL) in the rural areas of the state, while the urban BPL population was 3.5 million. The BPL survey<sup>5</sup> released on 30 October 2002 by the state government said some 36.68 per cent of total families are BPL. Among these, 34.26 per cent are from scheduled castes, 9 per cent are from scheduled tribes and 42.56 per cent are farm labour families. In terms of the total population in the state, then, the poorest are the STs, followed by the SCs (see Table 3), and both of these make up a part of the third poorest category, agricultural labourers.

The India State Hunger Index<sup>6</sup> released on 14 October 2008, which is the country edition of the Annual Global Hunger Index released by the International Food Policy Research Institute, puts West Bengal in the 'Alarming' category, with 18.05 per cent of calorie undernourishment, 38.5 per cent of underweight children among the total number of under-five children, and 5.9 per cent child mortality rate. It ranked eighth among 17 states, with Punjab at the top with the least hunger index.

**Table 1.2: The Economic Story of WB**

Indicators	Estimate
Average Annual Growth Rate (NSDP) in 2007-08 (constant 1999-2000 prices)	8.81% <sup>1</sup>
Per Capita Income in 2007-08	Rs 21953 <sup>1</sup>
Average Annual Growth in Per Capita Income in 2006-07 (constant prices)	7.63% <sup>1</sup>
Percentage of families Below Poverty Line in 2002	36.68% <sup>2</sup>
Number of people below poverty line in 2004-05 (Planning Commission, 2007)	20.8 million
Growth in Rural Unemployment rate (from 1993-94 to 1999-2000)	0.6% <sup>3</sup>
Growth in Urban Unemployment rate (from 1993-94 to 1999-2000)	2.3% <sup>3</sup>
Per Capita Consumption Expenditure	Rs 572 per month (lower than the national average of Rs 591 per month) <sup>3</sup>

1 Source: Economic Review 2007-08, Government of West Bengal

2 Source: Ministry of Panchayats & Rural Development <http://wbprd.gov.in/html/misc/bpl2002.htm>

3 Source: West Bengal Human Development Report 2004

**Table 1.3: Development Indicators Related to Area, Gender, Class and Caste**

Indicators	Total	Rural	Urban	Male	Female	SC	ST
Literacy (%) <sup>1</sup>	68.64	63.42	81.25	77.02	59.61	59.04	43.40
BPL Families (per cent of all families) <sup>2</sup>	36.68	-----	-----	-----	-----	39.47	43.45
Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1000 live births) <sup>1</sup>	38	40	29	37	40	NA	NA
Households with Electricity (%) <sup>3</sup>	52.5	34.9	89.6	-----	-----	NA	NA
Households with Access to Toilet (%) <sup>3</sup>	59.5	44.8	90.5	-----	-----	NA	NA
Households with Piped Drinking Water <sup>3</sup>	27.9	9.5	67.0	-----	-----	NA	NA

NA- Not Available

<sup>1</sup>Economic Review, Government of West Bengal, 2007-08

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of Panchayats and Rural Development, Government of West Bengal - <http://wbprd.gov.in/html/misc/bpl2002.htm>

<sup>3</sup>NFHS-III

Despite uneven economic growth leading to unequal economic opportunities between the social classes, increasing unemployment, sharp income disparities between primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, alarming rate of food insecurity and poverty, the state managed to improve upon a few social indicators thanks to land reforms and successful promotion

5 West Bengal P&RD Department <http://wbprd.gov.in/html/misc/bpl2002.htm>

6 India State Hunger Index, IFPRI, New Delhi, 2008, Advance copy for discussion

of local self-government. But even here, there exist sharp disparities on gender and caste lines, between rural and urban population and between urban and rural poor.

However, in what is considered a surprising positive for the state, the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of employment during 2000 and 2005, was impressive. The annual growth of employment was 3.33 per cent in rural areas, generated mostly in the tertiary sector. It was 3.55 per cent in urban areas, generated mainly in manufacturing industries. The average annual growth of employment is the highest in the tertiary sector, 5.8 per cent, followed by 1.9 per cent in the secondary sector. As the Economic Review said, “The large-scale industrial investment in the state in recent years seems to have started impacting industrial employment.” Of the total workforce, 93 per cent are working as unorganised labour, without any social security and at less than legitimate wages or income.

## The Status of Children in West Bengal

Childhood is conceived as a period of growth and development. Children need care, nutrition, healthcare, hygienic environment, protection, affection and interaction for growth and development. Lack of fulfillment of these vital needs adversely impact the physical, cognitive and psychosocial growth of children. The rights-based approach recognises the needs of children more as their rights that must be fulfilled as a precondition for the realisation of their cognitive, emotional and physical potential.

Although 17 years have passed since India ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1992, children in India are nowhere close to attaining even the basic rights. The situation of children in West Bengal is not much different from that in most other states.

Any honest effort to gauge the condition of the child in India and realisation of their rights is caught in the confusion over the many conflicting ways a child is defined in various legal provisions. The UNCRC defines child as any person who is less than 18 years old. The Indian Penal code 1860 defines children in some cases as less than 7 years old, in some cases less than 12 years old and in some cases less than 16 years old. The Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) act, 1986 defines children as less than 14 years old and the Constitution in article 21A and article 24 also defines children as less than 18 years old. In the Census data again, it is not easy to get child population for 0-6 years or for 0-18 years, as the age boundaries for general population data are 0-4, 5-9, 10-14 and 15-19.

**Table 1.4: The Status of Children in West Bengal and India: A Comparative Study**

Indicators	West Bengal	India
Child Population as percentage of total population*	41.44	43.79
Child Population (0-14 years) as percentage of total population*	32.99	25.19
Child Population (0-6) as percentage of total population *	14.24	15.92
Children out of school as percentage of total number of children of 5-14 years*	36	38
Child labour as percentage of the number of children in the 5-14 years' age group*	4.50	5.00
Infant mortality rate (per thousand live births) in 2005**	48	57
Percentage of children aged 12-23 months who received all recommended vaccines in 2005**	64	44
Percentage of underweight children under three years in 2005**	44	46
Number of missing children during 2004-06#	10778	87329

\* Census 2001

\*\* National Family Health Survey III

# Rajya Sabha unstarred question no. 2353, 5 October 2007, Monsoon Session 2007, Parliament of India

Children constitute 42 per cent of the population in West Bengal. Below, we find out how over two-fifths of the population of West Bengal live and whether they have enough attention from the state government.

If we compare the state and national data on the status of the children, West Bengal seems ahead in all the basic indicators. However, within the state, there is a long way to go to ensure every right for every children of the state.

Age Group	Classes I-IV	Classes V-VIII	Classes IX-X	Classes XI-XII
Boys	50.64	37.23	9.89	5.40
Girls	46.40	35.98	8.68	5.27
Total	97.04	73.21	18.57	10.67

Source: Annual Plan, Government of West Bengal 2007-08 – Social Service

The question of ensuring the rights of children becomes meaningless when we are unable to save their lives. Yet, we find that the very survival of children poses a challenge to the government. A grim picture of child health in the state, the latest National Family Health Survey-III, says as many as 22 out of every 100 children less than five years old are severely malnourished. Child malnutrition is a result of inappropriate childcare and feeding practices, leading to an imbalance in nutrients crucial for growth and development of the body. The prevalence of high malnutrition rates, IMR, and childhood diseases indicate that children's right to health is being violated daily. Slow progress in child health is indeed incongruous with the economic growth in West Bengal.

Class	Percentage
I-IV	98.03
V-VIII	78.74
IX-X	67.02
XI-XII	45.08

Source: Annual Plan, Government of West Bengal 2007-08 – Social Services

There is a similar violation of the right of education. Tables 5 and 6 give the net and gross enrolment ratios as furnished by the Annual Report of the School Education Department, Government of West Bengal. We can see that enrolment at the primary level is much higher than the upper primary and high school levels. But since enrolment does not automatically guarantee completion of school, it is not a true indicator of the actual status of children going to school.

True to expectations, we see a rapid and sharp drop in the net enrolment ratios in the higher classes. From 98 per cent in classes I-IV, the net enrolment ratio drops to less than half or 45 per cent in classes XI-XII. This fact is also borne out in the Civil Audit Report, SSA Performance Review of the year ended 31 March 2006, which says that 8.97 lakh children (4.16 per cent) were never enrolled in any school.

The same report adds that 76 out of 100 children drop out of school before completing the primary level, or Class V, while 51 out of every 100 children enrolled in Class V leave before completing middle school, or class VIII. The other cause for serious concern is that despite persistent efforts by the state government, enrolment of girls remains far fewer than that of boys. Evidently, if elementary education remains a challenge, higher education would be a distant dream for a large section of the state's children.

In West Bengal, trafficking of children has of late become a serious problem. The nature and scope of trafficking range from industrial and domestic labour to forced early marriages and commercial sexual exploitation. More, for children who have been trafficked and rescued, opportunities for rehabilitation are scarce and the reintegration process is difficult.

In the study entitled Report on Trafficking in Women and Children, 2002-03, the National Human Rights Commission has estimated that 44,476 children go missing every year in the country. The Talash initiative by the National Crime Records Bureau tracked that out of these, 16,000 children were from West Bengal alone. Massive as it sounds, even this data is extremely limited due to the constraints in tracking missing children. Rather, the official data constitutes only the tip of the iceberg.

In 2007, Save the Children in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare, came out with a “Study on Missing Children: West Bengal” which covered three blocks in the two districts of North and South 24 Parganas. The study says, “Data pertaining to 271 missing children revealed that 49.06 per cent of the children were between the ages of 15-18 years, while 29.96 per cent were in the age group of 13-14 years and 20.97 per cent below 12 years of age.”

The study also pointed out that an “overwhelming majority of the girls,” or 79.22 per cent, either never went to school or had dropped out by Class 3, suggesting a clear correlation between not attending school and going missing, a euphemism for being trafficked.

While systematic data and information on child protection issues are difficult to find, we can conclude from the above data that children in need of special protection mostly belong to communities already suffering from social and economic exclusion, such as scheduled caste and tribes, or to a particular gender.

Thus, with more and more children being pushed into the labor sector for survival, it is the duty of the state to ensure rescue and rehabilitation of children from exploitation. However, the state commitment on paper has never been translated into concrete action and a firm political will to protect children. The document, ‘Abolition of Child Labour in India: Strategies for the Eleventh Five year Plan’ reviewed the status of the National Child Labour Programme in different states in terms of both reaching out to child labour as well as enforcing the law to stop it. The document stated that the number of children mainstreamed so far in West Bengal is 16,086, or 1.6 per cent of the number of child labourers in the state as estimated by the 2001 Census, which is 857,087. This is laughably small and a drop in the ocean.

The task before the government and society is humongous. Worse, even the current data on children in difficult circumstances, that is, children who are in danger of being trafficked, abused and exploited in labour, could be an underreporting. The number of children needing protection has increased with the unabated migration into Kolkata, the capital, and rise in slum population. According to Census 2001, Kolkata’s slum population is 32 per cent of the total.

A study by Darshini Mahadevia, professor, School of Planning, Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology, says that more than 1.5 lakh slums were demolished within a year of the previous government at the centre that too in states where the ruling United Progressive Alliance constituents or their outside supporters were in power<sup>7</sup>. For instance, an estimated 42,000 units were demolished in Kolkata since 2004. These are the children who are now directly at risk and are not taken into account in any survey. If we were to add up all the children engaged in the “hidden sectors”, it would become clear that the state government needs to take up child protection on a war footing.

---

7 Quoted in the 4th civil society review of the NCMP by 16 NGOs in May 2008.



# Methodology & Overview of the BfC Analysis

The Budget for Children (BfC) is not a separate budget. It is just an attempt to separate the allocations made for implementation of all programs and schemes that benefit children. Child budget analysis can be undertaken for all kinds of national, sectoral and departmental budgets. Here, we analyse the West Bengal government annual budget.

## Defining a Child

In consonance with the UN Convention on Child Rights and The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, a child includes all persons in the age group of 0-18 years.

## Timeframe of the study

The present analysis is for a time period of five years from 2004-05 to 2008-09.

## Rationale

By showing us how much the government allots and spends on programmes and schemes for children, a child budget analysis works as a tool to determine how significant children are for the policymakers. National and international commitment for attainment of child rights can only be translated into action when programs and schemes are equipped adequately with resources and utilized optimally. Budget analysis findings could go a long way towards providing people and the civil society with the ammunition we require to hold the government accountable for its action or inaction and exert pressure on it for course correction in current policies and bringing about improved policies and programmes.

## Objectives

The goal of the study is to undertake a critical assessment and analysis of the state budget provisions in accordance with the needs of the children and from the perspective of their rights to education, health, development and protection.

The objectives of the study are:

- To critically analyse if the allocations for programmes and schemes of child welfare are able to meet the needs of children. That is, matching needs with allocation
- To examine the trends in allocation and expenditure and thereby the implications for children's programmes and schemes. In other words, to evaluate if they are increasing or decreasing and if they are gaining or losing priority.
- To assess the utilisation of funds allocated for the child welfare programmes and thus evaluate utilisation versus allocation to see if children are getting their just share of the state's resources.

## Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and Actual Expenditure

Budget Estimates (BE), Revised Estimates (RE) and Actual Estimates (AE) are key phases in the process of resource generation, allocation and spending. We are concerned here with the BE, RE and AE of government expenditure, both plan and non-plan.

While the main budget is prepared by the finance ministry, it is a sum of various budgets and demands submitted by all the ministries as well as representation from various lobbies, including the private corporate sector. **The final Budget Estimates (BE)** are prepared by the finance ministry on the basis of numbers sent in by each department under each ministry, which does its own assessment of the requirements for the ensuing year basing it on the actual numbers of the previous years, the historic trend of budget estimates and utilisation, and the revised numbers for the immediately preceding year. The finance ministry usually has the last word on the final budget estimates after discussion with all departments and ministries and after taking into account the revenues expected in a year. The Budget Estimates define the money the government is able or willing to commit in a particular year under various heads of expenditure. For the purpose of our study, we look at the budget estimates in relation to the various ministries and departments that implement programmes for children.

The **Revised Estimates (RE)** take into account any change in the budget estimates for the year, such as additional or lowered allocations following any new or changed policy/programme/scheme. It is the most up-to-date version of the budget estimate of expenditure expected to be incurred for a programme/scheme in a fiscal year (April-March) at the time of preparing the next year's budget, the process of which starts in the second half of the year. Thus, it is on the basis of both

the Budget and Revised Estimates for a fiscal year that the next fiscal's budget estimates are prepared. However, for many programmes, the BE and RE may remain the same.

The Actual Expenditure (AE) figures are the final version of the expenditure budget estimates for any fiscal year. In other words, the actual amount that was ultimately spent in that fiscal year, which may be more or less, mostly less, than the initial budget estimate. However, these estimates are available to the general public with a time lag of two years. This is why our budget analysis has actual estimates for only the first three years from 2004-05 to 2006-07, even though we have analysed budgets for five years from 2004-05 to 2008-09.

All the expenditure data have been taken from the **Detailed Demands for Grants (DDG)**. Estimates for expenditure are presented to Parliament as Demands for Grants. Generally, each ministry or department presents one list of Demands for Grants, and large ministries or departments may present more than one list. Each such list includes the total provisions required for a service, followed by the estimates for expenditure under different major heads of account. These demands are submitted to the Lok Sabha along with the Annual Financial Statement<sup>8</sup>. **Detailed Demands for Grants (DDGs)** are released after the presentation of the Budget to Parliament but before the discussion on the Demands begins. As the name says, the **DDGs** have further details of the provisions/schemes and the heads under which a demand (or an allocation) will be spent as well as the actual expenditure in the past.<sup>9</sup> DDGs are available at both the State as well as the Centre. For example, the Detailed Demands for Grants for 2008-09 has AE for 2006-07. This is why our budget analysis has actual estimates for only the first three years from 2004-05 to 2006-07.

The difference between Budget Estimates and the Actual Expenditure shows how much of the budget, more or less, has been spent in a given financial year. This difference is a reflection on not only the government's understanding and assessment of the needs of its citizens but also its implementation efficiencies. Overspending is rare in government schemes and underutilisation/ underspending of the budget allocation is found to be especially rampant among child-focused schemes. Although the scope of the study does not cover reasons for such under spending, we discuss them whenever the reasons are easily known to us.

While estimating total expenditure, we have taken into account both Plan and Non-Plan Expenditures. Plan expenditure is the spending already planned out in the on-going five-year plan/s, divided into annual plans. Our study period covers both the Tenth and the Eleventh five-year plans. Plan expenditure is to be utilised within the time period set by the plan (usually annual). If the schemes or programmes extend beyond that time period, then the future expenditure to be incurred on the project is called as non-plan expenditure. This includes, for example, the maintenance expenditure needed to maintain an asset created by plan expenditure. Often, during austerity drives or due to inadequate allocation by either the centre or state governments in relation to a scheme, the non-plan expenditure portion is axed or curtailed as these are typically considered to be inessential. This is one of the commonest reasons for waste of assets created by plan investments. For instance, hand pumps for water lying defunct all over the countryside could very well be because maintenance funds are not being sanctioned anymore.

---

8 The estimates of expenditure from the Consolidated Fund included in the Annual Financial Statement and required to be voted by the Lok Sabha are submitted in the form of Demands for Grants in pursuance of Article 113 of the Constitution.

9 Each Demand normally includes the total provisions required for a service, that is, provisions on account of revenue expenditure, capital expenditure, grants to State and Union Territory Governments and also loans and advances relating to the service. With regard to Union Territories without Legislature, a separate Demand is presented for each Union Territory. Where the provision for a service is entirely for expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund, for example, interest payments, a separate Appropriation, as distinct from a Demand, is presented for that expenditure and it is not required to be voted by Parliament. Where, however, expenditure on a service includes both 'voted' and 'charged' items of expenditure, the latter are also included in the Demand presented for that service but the 'voted' and 'charged' provisions are shown separately in that Demand.)

## Research Design and Analysis

We began the research by identifying departments that run programmes for children and departments that are directly concerned with children, such as the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The identification was done after minutely studying the expense heads in the detailed demands for grants. Then we segregate the child-related expense heads from among the demands for grants submitted by the departments. All the data (Budget Estimate, Revised Estimate and Actual Expenditure) pertaining to the selected heads were entered and tabulated for comparison and analysis. Departments from which programmes and schemes were selected:

- Department of School Education
- Department of Mass Education Extension
- Department of Backward Classes Welfare
- Department of Higher Education
- Department of Technical Education
- Department of Public works
- Department of Hill affairs
- Department of Minorities Development
- Department of Panchayat and Rural Development
- Department of Sports and Youth Services
- Department of Women and Child Welfare
- Department of Health and Family Welfare
- Judicial Department
- Labour Department

The next step involved identifying schemes concerning children. We divided the provisions made for children in different schemes and programs into four sectors keeping in mind the UNCRC child rights framework which describes the four basic Rights as the Rights to survival, development, protection and participation. All the child-focused schemes that we include in the analysis address all these rights except for the Right to participation.

So all existing programmes and schemes in the West Bengal budget were now grouped under four broad heads:

- Development:** This includes mainly programmes and schemes for early childhood care and education and some other general schemes and programs that do not fit within a definite category but are aimed at the overall development of children.
- Health:** This includes programmes aimed at meeting the health care needs of children.
- Education:** This covers elementary and secondary education programmes since in India, the school-leaving age is also 18 years.
- Protection:** This includes interventions aimed at the following groups of children: child labour, physically or mentally challenged children, children in need of care and protection such as children in need of adoption, homeless or street children, and neglected children among others, and those children who are in conflict with law.

## Analysis Structure

The focus of analysis was identification of gaps at the following multiple levels:

- Between needs of the children to fulfill their rights and the commitments made by the state, both national and international;
- Between the commitments made by the state and the actual programmes/schemes under the various ministries and departments;
- Between the objectives of the programmes/schemes and the financial allocations towards them;
- Between the allocations and actual expenditures; and
- Between the outlays and the outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

For preparing the final report, to begin with, the total allocation and expenditure for each individual schemes/programmes as calculated. In the second stage, the sum total for all programmes in a sector was made for each of the four sectors and then the total Budget for children (BfC) was calculated. Then the sectoral totals and the BfC were compared with the total state budget.

In the third stage, the **Need vs Allocation** analysis was done using the allocations against the quantitative and qualitative status of the children in the state. At this stage, secondary data and analysis from different government and non-government reports and publications have been used.

In the fourth stage, the analysis of **Allocation vs spending** was made on the basis of the data on actual expenditure (AE) available from the Detailed Demands for Grants for the first three years and comparing them with the budget and revised expenditure figures to gauge how well government money was being utilised for the children. This and the outlays vs outcomes analysis are also based on the other financial documents of the government such as the audit reports, the performance budgets and the appropriation accounts.

## Constraints and Limitations of the Study

Unavailability of data posed a huge problem for the researchers, especially the reluctance of the state government and its officials to share data with researchers which really hampered our work on financial tracking of the SSA. The Budget publications, including the DDG, were available only on the state government website, so the analysis is based on the web version of the documents. The Annual Reports of the different departments of the state government too were available only from the West Bengal Assembly Library. The results of the study are obviously constrained by the quality of the data available.

## An Overview of the Budget for Children in West Bengal

A first glance at the West Bengal government budget figures over 2004-05 to 2008-09 shows that the size of the Budget has increased substantially (table 2.1). In terms of Budget estimates (BE), the state budget has moved up by 25.8 per cent between 2004-05 and 2008-09. But the growth has been uneven at best, declining in the second year and then going up again. In contrast, the allocation to the Social Service sector in the state budget has gone up steadily and consistently both in terms of absolute numbers, from Rs 8,780.76 crore in 2004-05 to Rs 17,127.91 crore in 2008-09, and as a proportion of the total state budget, from 20.69 per cent to 32.07 per cent in those years.

<sup>10</sup> The Government of India has begun the practice of presenting the outcome budget in addition to outlays since 2005-06.

**Table 2.1: West Bengal BfC at a Glance (Budget Estimates Only)**

Year	Total West Bengal Budget (Rs crore)	Allocation for Social Sector (Rs crore)	Budget allocation for children (BfC) (Rs crore)	BfC as a percentage of social sector allocation	BfC as percentage of total WB Budget
2004-05	42,438.98	8,780.76	4,643.20	53.00	10.94
2005-06	41,717.52	10,461.06	5,284.91	51.00	12.67
2006-07	43,667.70	12,759.47	6,264.41	49.00	14.35
2007-08	47,748.99	14,400.65	6,722.03	47.00	14.08
2008-09	53,391.63	17,127.91	7,951.91	46.00	14.89
<b>Average size of BfC during this period</b>				<b>48.59</b>	<b>13.48</b>

Source: Detailed demands for grants, Budget at a glance, West Bengal state budget documents for the years 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

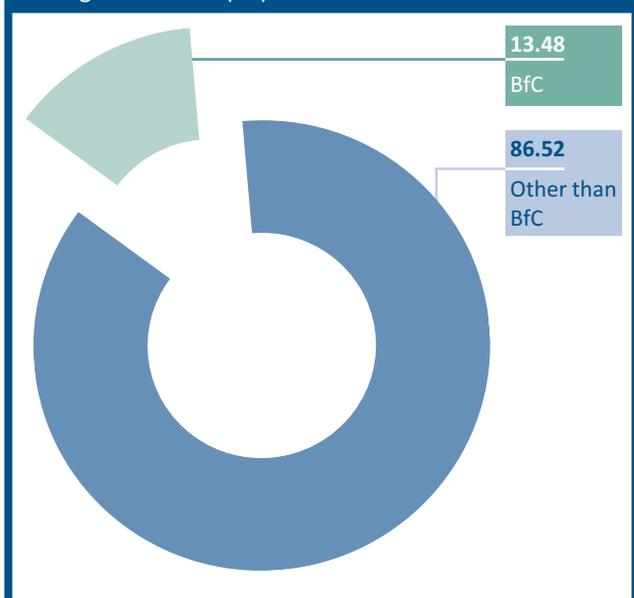
Similarly, the allocation for children in the state budget has also increased steadily in this period, reflecting an average growth in BfC of 13.48 per cent. Over the years, its share in the state budget has moved from a little less than 11 per cent to close to 15 per cent. In fact, a welcome development is that the size of BfC has increased faster than the state budget, though it has grown slower than the social service sector budget.

The rise in the allocations for total state budget, Social service and BfC is uneven and not in harmony. As a result, while the BfC as a proportion of the state budget has gone up from 10.94 per cent to 14.89 per cent in the five-year period, as a proportion of the Social Service sector budget, the BfC has fallen from 53 per cent to 46 per cent.

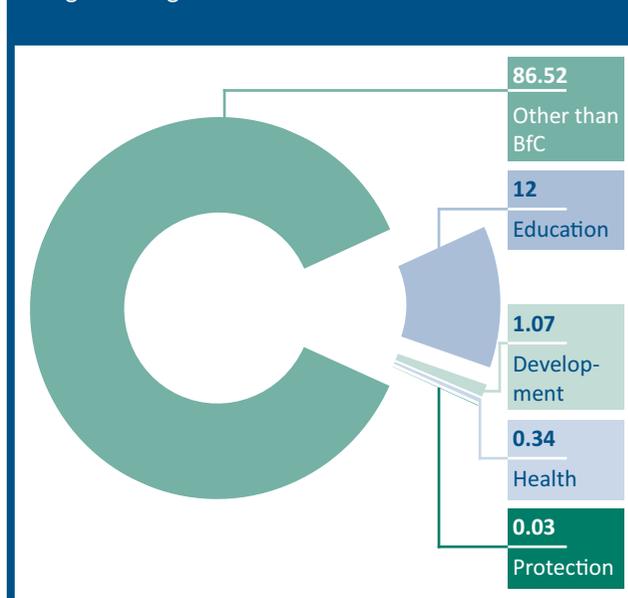
Still, the average annual allocation of 13.48 per cent of the total state budget to the children of West Bengal, who comprise 42 per cent of the total state population according to the 2001 census, remains woefully small. As we shall see later, low allocations and inefficient spending of even this small amount have led to worsening indicators in many areas.

Of every Rs 100 allocated in the West Bengal state budget between 2004-05 and 2008-09, only 13 rupees 48 paise was allocated to children on an average every year.

**Figure 2.1: BfC as Percentage of the WB Budget Average Allocation (BE) 2004-05 to 2008-09**



**Figure 2.2: Sectoral Allocation (BE) as Percentage of WB Budget Average: Allocation 2004-05 to 2008-09**



## BfC in West Bengal – Sectoral Allocation

From the sectoral shares in BfC (Table 2.2 and figure 2.2), it would appear that state governments do not think they need to invest in anything other than education for their children. Not health, not even development of infants. And the less said about protection, the better. As a result, the BfC is disproportionately skewed in favour of education. On an average, this sector accounts for 89 per cent of the BfC and 12.04 per cent of the state budget. The next in line, though with a much smaller share, is the development sector. It accounts on average for 7.91 per cent of the BfC and 1.07 per cent of the state budget. The remaining two sectors—health and protection—remain the most neglected. While health, on average, accounts for 2.50 per cent of the BfC and 0.34 per cent of the state budget, the respective shares for protection are a pathetic 0.24 per cent and 0.03 per cent!

Of every Rs 100 allocated in the West Bengal Budget over 2004-05 to 2008-09, child health has received an average of 34 paise only.

Of every Rs 100 allocated in the Budget, child protection has been provided an appalling 3 paise! This in a state that has high trafficking of girl children, child marriage and child labour.

Table 2.2: Sectoral Allocation within BfC

Sectors of BfC						(Rs crore)	
	2004-05 (BE)	2005-06 (BE)	2006-07 (BE)	2007-08 (BE)	2008-09 (BE)	Average percentage in WB Budget (per cent)	Average Percentage within BfC (per cent)
Education	4,271.23	4,828.98	5,549.24	5,977.88	6,951.28	12.04	89.35
Health	112.68	124.34	164.25	169.62	200.31	0.34	2.50
Development	248.95	318.59	537.48	558.10	779.25	1.07	7.91
Protection	10.33	13.00	13.44	16.44	21.07	0.03	0.24
Total BfC	4,643.20	5,284.91	6,264.41	6,722.03	7,951.91	13.48	100.00

Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget publications for the years 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Although allocations have uniformly gone up over the years in all sectors of the BfC, Education and Development sectors were luckier. In these sectors, the allocation increased by 66.96 per cent and 213.01 per cent respectively between 2004-05 and 2008-09. In the case of Health and Protection, the allocation increased by 77.76 per cent and 103.96 per cent respectively.

### Neglected Children

36 per cent of children (12-23 month old) have not received all recommended vaccines in West Bengal.

48 deaths against 1000 live births were recorded between 2000 and 2005 in West Bengal.

In the three years from 2002-05, only 48 per cent of births took place in health institutions in West Bengal.

25 out of 100 girls in the state, of age group 15-19 years, have already given birth or are about to give birth.

Source: NFHS III Provisional data

There are around 8.5 lakh working children in the state below the age of 14 years, according to Census 2001.

The 2007 Study on Child Abuse by the Ministry of women and child development, government of India found that out of every 100 respondent children, 55 reported to have faced physical abuse one or more time, 44 faced corporal punishment in schools and 32 have faced sexual abuse at least once.

Of the 23 districts in the country known as source-points for girls intended for the red-light areas in Mumbai, seven are in West Bengal.

Source: Indian Child: A Profile 2002, Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India.

The paltry share of allocations-- only 2.50 per cent for health and 0.24 per cent for protection--reflects the government's low priority to these two sectors. This is inexplicable, as there is still considerable progress to be made in strengthening development indicators such as immunisation coverage, infant mortality rate, safe birth rates, and so on. One also fails to justify the abysmally low allocation to child protection schemes in a state that has a large number of child labourers and is experiencing increasing child trafficking and child marriage.

**Table 2.3: BfC in Terms of Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and Actual Estimates**

Year	BE (Rs crore)	RE (Rs crore)	AE (Rs crore)	BE – RE		BE – AE	
				Rs crore	Per cent	Rs crore	Per cent
2004-05	4,643.20	4,990.86	4,848.83	347.66	7.48	205.63	4.42
2005-06	5,284.91	5,762.82	5,363.38	477.91	9.04	78.47	1.48
2006-07	6,264.41	6,374.69	6,118.10	110.28	1.76	-146.31	-2.17
2007-08	6,722.03	7,201.63	NA	479.60	7.13		
2008-09	7,951.91	NA					

If we compare the BE, RE and AE of the BfC during the five-year period under study, we find that the revised estimates are always a little higher than the budget. In the end however, the actual expenditure always falls a little short of the revised and gets closer to the budgeted one. In the three years for which actual estimates are available, we find that they were a little higher than the budget estimate in only one year, 2005-06.

However, the overall BfC figure masks the serious underutilisation of budget outlays in several schemes in the four sectors. A closer look at various child-related programmes in 2006-07 gives us the following percentage of underutilisation of the BE:

- Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG) – 58.93 per cent
- Supplementary Nutrition Program (SNP) – 15.51 per cent
- Scheme for Prevention & Control of Juvenile Social Maladjustment – 16.45 per cent
- Manufacture of Sera and Vaccines – 20.64 per cent
- Book Grant and Examination Fees for SC, ST and OBC – 41.93 per cent
- School Dress for girl student in primary schools – 97.26 per cent
- District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) – 94.6 per cent
- Primary School Teacher's Training – 40.78 per cent
- Text Book for the Primary School Student – 42.15 per cent

Even in 2005-06, when in the aggregate there is no evidence of any underspending of the BE, we found underutilisation of funds, though to a smaller extent. These programmes are:

- Nutrition Program for Adolescent Girls (NPAG) – 59.7 per cent
- Manufacture of Sera and Vaccines – 9.5 per cent
- Book Grant and Examination Fees for SC, ST and OBC – 14.75 per cent
- School Dress for girl student in primary schools – 99.9 per cent
- Text Book for the Primary School Student – 14.45 per cent

A part of the reason for underspending could be late release of funds. In most cases, however, it reveals the gap between allocation and implementation as well as poor planning which only serves to deprive the children from possible gains from the allocation in the budget.

It is relevant here to quote from the Performance review report of the Comptroller of Auditor General of India (CAG) on the performance of the Backward Classes Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal, in Educational Development programmes for Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The report says:

*“The objectives of the schemes for educational development of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) remained unachieved due to non-release / delayed release of funds by the Backward Classes Welfare Department, failure in providing scholarships to the targeted beneficiaries, non-achievement of physical targets, high drop-out rate and non-evaluation of the performance of the students benefited under the schemes. Further, construction of a number of central hostels remained incomplete for a considerable period besides some hostels being utilised for other purposes. Due to deficient fund management, instances of inadmissible payments, irregular expenditures, parking of scheme funds in local fund/personal ledger/deposit accounts, etc, were also noticed.”*

The report also said that due to this underspending in six test-checked districts, 1993 students were deprived of the benefit of the pre-matric Scholarships, In seven test-checked districts, 25000 SC and 4000 ST students were deprived of these scholarships and 14.15 lakh students were deprived of the benefit of the Book Grant Scheme. (*Chapter III, Performance Audit, Audit Report (Civil) for the year ended 31 March 2007 by CAG*)

Thus, even as West Bengal seems to be allocating more and more money every year out of its budget to BfC, underutilisation of the allocated funds continues to plague children’s programmes. This not only erodes the overall gain from the increasing BfC but also deprives many more children from accessing their legitimate share of the state’s resources.

### **Children being trafficked in thousands from Bengal**

Agencies, Kolkata, March 13: Lured with the promise of good jobs or marriage, thousands of children, especially girls, were being trafficked from seven districts of West Bengal, an NGO has claimed.

Most of the children were trafficked to Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Jaipur, Jalandhar besides other northern cities in Haryana, UP and Bihar, the NGO Save the Children said quoting data from the National Crime Records Bureau.

Source: [http://www.expressindia.com/story\\_print.php?storyId=283977](http://www.expressindia.com/story_print.php?storyId=283977), Seen on 15/06/2009

### **30 years on, Bengal’s Integrated Child Scheme remains disintegrated**

Shiv Sahay Singh

Kolkata : The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in West Bengal to combat nutrition deprivation and impart pre-school education below six years of age has reached to only half of the beneficiaries in the state even after three decades of its inception in 1975.

A recently published report by Pratichi Trust --set up by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen--on ICDS across six districts and 28 ICDS centres in the state, pointed out ....“According to the data provided by the Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare, the total number of ICDS centres in the state was 55,310 which covered 50 percent of all children eligible leaving out a large number of children who needed the benefit of the services,” the report says.

Source: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/30-years-on-bengals-integrated-child-schem/432612/>, Seen on 15/06/2009

### **Bengal plans 19 residential schools for child labourers**

Economy Bureau, Posted: 2008-12-23

Kolkata: The West Bengal government is trying to open residential schools, one in each of the 19 districts, for child labourers.

“When we went to organise awareness programmes against child labour in various parts of the state, we felt there was a need to provide special care for those rescued children whose parents are either too poor to support them, or are incapacitated to earn, or do not have guardians. So we conceptualised residential schools in each of the districts

that might be able to address the issue," said state labour minister Anadhi Sahu.

Source: <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/bengal-plans-19-residential-schools-for-child-labourers/401796/>, seen on 15/06/2009

### **School slide for Bengal, comrade still on top**

Charu Sudan Kasturi

New Delhi, January 22: Educational standards for Classes I to VIII in Bengal have declined over the past year, widening the gap between the state and its Left-ruled partner Kerala, a central government study has said.

Bengal has slipped nearer to the bottom of the pile of states and Union territories, with only Jharkhand and Bihar below it, in the annual analysis of school education, released by the government today.

.....In 2005-06, Bengal was ranked an abysmal 32 out of 35 states and Union territories, with Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar behind it.

Arunachal has now swapped places with Bengal while Uttar Pradesh, ranked 31 — just ahead of Bengal — last year has hoisted itself up to 26 in the rankings. Kerala, on the other hand, has held on to the pole position.

Source: [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1080123/jsp/nation/story\\_8816197.jsp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1080123/jsp/nation/story_8816197.jsp), seen on 15/06/2009

### **Snake served with mid-day meal, 55 kids fall ill**

13 Jun 2009, 0100 hrs IST, Someshwar Boral, TNN

SURI: Fifty-five children were treated for shock and nausea in a children's care centre in Birbhum district of West Bengal on Friday after they found a dead snake in their mid-day meal.

The food was prepared at the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) centre in Kabirajpara near Rampurhat. Hospital superintendent Himadri Halder said no symptoms of food poisoning had been found so far.

Source : <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Snake-served-with-mid-day-meal-55-kids-fall-ill/articleshow/4650345.cms>, Seen on 15/06/2009

### **Purulia girl power gets President seal**

Amit Ukil

Date: 15 May, 2009

Purulia, May 14: Three schoolgirls from Purulia today shook hands with the country's President who had come to know how they had "revolted" when told to become child brides.

The girls — Rekha Kalindi, 12, and Afsana Khatun and Sunita Mahato, both 13 — are students of special schools set up under the National Child Labour Project to educate children who have to work for a living.

Last September, Afsana, who stays in a Purulia town slum, was told by her family she would have to marry. Her elder sister got married when she was 14. "Afsana, who collects metal scrap with her father, is the first known case in our records to have revolted," said Prasenjit Kundu, the assistant labour commissioner who accompanied the girls to Delhi.

Source : [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1090515/jsp/bengal/story\\_10967133.jsp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1090515/jsp/bengal/story_10967133.jsp), Seen on 15/06/2009



## Little Progress in Education Despite Lion's Share in BfC

Among all Indian states, West Bengal allocates one of the largest shares of its total budget funds to education. On an average, 12.04 per cent of the total state budget of West Bengal (BE) went to education programmes between 2004-05 and 2008-09. Within the total Budget for Children, the sector received the lion's share of 89.35 per cent on an average during this period.

The allocation for education has increased by 62.75 per cent between 2004-05 and 2008-09, even though it has decreased in terms of its share in the BfC. Unfortunately, for all this allocation, which came to Rs 27,657.61 crore for the five years under study, the state's record on the ground is not very good. According to the child census of West Bengal, 705,723 children in the age group of 5-13 years are 'Out-of-School' as on 1 October 2007, says the Economic Review 2007-08. The number was 896,000 in 2005. This implies only about 21 per cent more children got into school in these two years.

The National Flagship Programme for education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), implemented throughout our study period, had the goal of "Universal Enrolment" by 2003, later postponed to 2005 and now 2010. But neither the country as

"The empowerment value of basic education is so obvious that there is something puzzling in the fact that the promotion of education has received so little attention from social and political leaders in the post independence period."

*Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, in India: Development and Participation*

a whole nor the state of West Bengal is likely to achieve that goal even in the next five years if the present system continues in education.

Figure 3.1: Education Sector Allocation (BE) within BfC, Average : 2004-05 to 2008-09

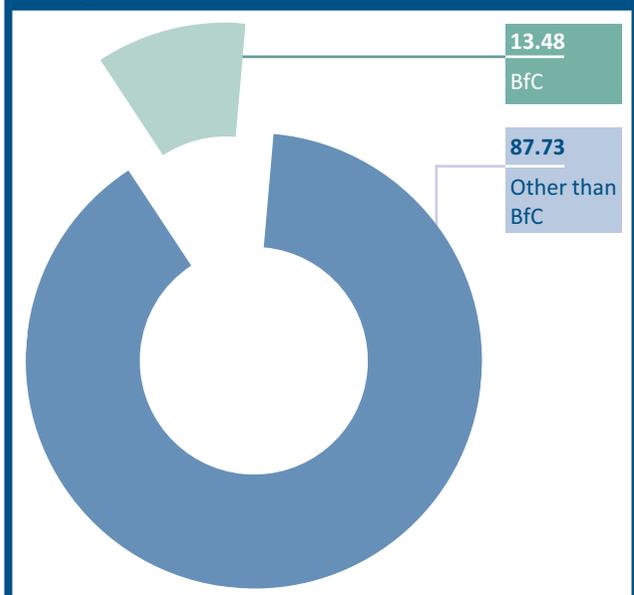
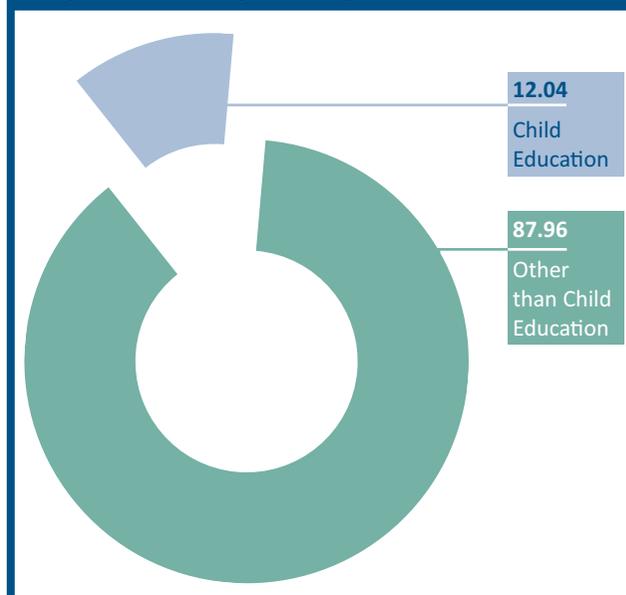


Figure 3.2: Education Sector Allocation (BE) within State Budget of West Bengal, Average : 2004-05 to 2008-09



Source: Detailed Demands for Grants, West Bengal State Budget documents for 2004-05 to 2008-09

Table 3.1: Allocation for Education Sector as Percentage of BfC and of Total State Budget

Year	Allocation for Child Education (BE) Rs crore	Allocation for Education as percentage of BfC	Allocation for Education as percentage of total state budget
2004-05	4,271.23	91.98	10.06
2005-06	4,828.98	91.37	11.58
2006-07	5,549.24	88.58	12.70
2007-08	5,977.88	88.92	12.52
2008-09	6951.28	87.42	13.02
<b>Average percentage of allocation during 2004-05 to 2008-09</b>		<b>89.35</b>	<b>12.04</b>

Source: Detailed Demands for Grants, West Bengal State Budget documents for 2004-05 to 2008-09

In a chapter on “Human Capital”, the West Bengal State Development Report 2007, prepared by the Institute of Development Studies Kolkata (IDSK) and commissioned by the Development and Planning Department, government of West Bengal, ranked the Primary Education Infrastructure of West Bengal at 18th among the 20 major states ranked following the ‘Borda Method of Rank-Order Scoring’ on the basis of data of 2004. Table 3.2 gives the complete ranking and performance indicators.

**Table 3.2: Borda Ranking of States According to Primary School Infrastructure Indicators in 2004**

States	Ratio of 'Primary' to 'Upper Primary'	% of Single classroom school	Student per class room	% of Single teacher School	% of female teachers	Pupil-teacher Ratio	Borda Rank
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Kerala	1.84	1.16	29.28	0.08	73.00	27.04	1
Himachal Pradesh	2.94	6.43	18.20	13.59	42.24	21.07	2
Gujarat	1.51	14.73	34.27	9.99	48.23	30.76	3
Tamil Nadu	2.88	12.42	31.73	10.85	69.49	36.96	4
Uttaranchal	3.30	2.91	27.15	23.10	55.03	27.73	5
Punjab	2.45	2.83	31.30	21.81	64.09	42.36	6
Karnataka	1.98	24.25	27.34	20.09	44.59	25.67	7
Tripura	2.96	18.33	29.57	12.04	18.90	24.18	8
Haryana	2.54	10.62	50.33	10.82	46.69	47.59	9
Madhya Pradesh	2.33	8.95	42.43	13.42	29.09	35.56	10
Andhra Pradesh	3.10	34.25	41.69	15.71	40.48	32.40	11
Maharashtra	3.60	19.01	35.15	16.45	45.22	33.42	12
Orissa	3.46	10.19	34.89	19.10	31.53	39.65	13
Rajasthan	3.07	4.36	35.96	38.60	24.63	38.11	14
Assam	3.25	62.72	55.50	15.72	34.04	27.80	15
Chhattisgarh	3.32	7.10	36.99	20.74	25.49	40.24	16
Uttar Pradesh	4.12	2.20	62.41	16.08	30.67	69.34	17
<b>West Bengal</b>	<b>5.32</b>	<b>20.94</b>	<b>61.94</b>	<b>8.25</b>	<b>24.33</b>	<b>52.48</b>	<b>18</b>
Jharkhand	4.51	7.52	51.51	33.34	22.09	58.09	19
Bihar	4.52	15.54	84.91	15.74	18.29	71.43	20

Source: Detailed Demands for Grants, West Bengal State Budget documents for 2004-05 to 2008-09

The Performance Review Report on the performance of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in West Bengal, released by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India on 31 March 2006, puts on record the poor performance of the state in ensuring elementary education in terms of enrolment, retention, utilisation of fund, infrastructural facilities and peoples' participation in planning. It reports:

- As of April 2005, 8.97 lakh children continued to remain out of school in the State.
- Overall dropout rate in the State from class I to Class IV was 76 per cent, while from class V to class VIII, it was 51 per cent.
- The State failed to get Rs 522.48 crore as grants from GOI during 2001-05 due to low spending. Against the projected outlay of Rs 1,685.31 crore during 2001-05, only Rs 789.33 crore (47 per cent) was spent.
- The perspective plan and the annual plans were prepared without any household survey and survey of girl children, children belonging to SC, ST, children with special needs and street children. As such, the plans did not reflect the

true picture of the State. Out of 5.04 lakh children with special needs in the State, only 0.62 lakh were enrolled in schools as of March 2005, and out of them, only 0.16 lakh children were provided with aids and appliances.

- Village education committees (VECs) were not formed in 4437 villages (9 per cent) while 47 per cent of VEC members were not trained in sensitisation and orientation of SSA activities.
- Pupil teacher ratio (PTR) in primary and upper primary schools in the state is way above the norm--over 60 students for one teacher now. Vacant posts of teachers were not filled in and appointment of additional teachers required to achieve the PTR of 40:1 as envisaged in SSA was not made.
- Out of 50,255 primary schools in the State, 363 had no building, 10,084 (20 per cent) had only one classroom, 9,316 (19 per cent) had no drinking water facility and 20,468 (41 per cent) had no toilet facility while 40,925 (81 per cent) had no separate toilet for girl students.

Not only enrolment, there has been little improvement of state performance indicators in terms of retention, infrastructure and other related factors. Table 3.3 gives the status of children of West Bengal in terms of various education indicators.

	2004-05	2007-08
Number of Out of School Children (5 years to 13 years age Group)	896,000	7,05,723
Number of primary schools including SSK	66,925	67,107
Ratio of 'Primary' to 'Upper Primary and above' School (per cent) (Calculated on the basis of the total number of Primary and SSK, total number of schools of upper primary standard and above)	5.22	5.77
Pupil teacher ratio in Primary section (Total number of enrolment in primary schools including SSK divided by total number of teachers in primary school)	68.45	61.10
Drop-out rate at primary level (Class I to Class V) in per cent	10.7*	11.55
Students covered by the Mid-Day Meal Programme	9,100,000	9,002,537

Source: Economic Review of Govt. of West Bengal, 2005-06 and 2007-08

\*Source: Elementary Education, State Report Cards, by NUEPA

The comparative status does not give a significantly brighter picture, at least not one that matches the amount of money spent, while the reduction in the number of out-of-school children in the last four years is a meagre 21.23 per cent. The increase in the number of primary schools (including under SSK and SSP schemes) is only 182, the pupil-teacher ratio remains almost the same, and there is only one upper primary school for every five primary schools in the state—as if the state assumes a significant number of children will drop out by middle school level! **Thus, West Bengal is ranked 33rd among the 35 states of India in Elementary Education, according to the 'Composite Educational Development Index' released by National University on Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) based on DISE data 2007-08.**

## Allocation for Education Programmes

The allocations for education are made under many departments in West Bengal. The most significant allocations are made by the Departments of School Education, Mass Education Extension, Backward Classes Welfare and Technical Education. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-day Meal Programme) are the most significant in terms of coverage and amount of funding.

**Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:** The national flagship programme for the universalisation of elementary education, SSA aims at providing useful and relevant elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010. SSA provides funds

for 19 components of the elementary education which includes Civil Works (building new school, building classroom in existing schools, etc.), Maintenance and repairing of existing school building, Salary of para-teachers, Alternative schooling facility (EGS and AIE), Free Text Book, Teaching Learning Equipment for upper primary school, School grant, Teachers Grant (TLM), Teachers Training, Training of Community Leaders, Provision to integrate disabled children in school education, Management cost, Block and cluster resource centre, among others.

Under SSA, the Centre and the state government both release funds to the State Society of SSA, an independent society formed at state level under the chairpersonship of Chief Minister and Chief Secretary of the government of West Bengal. In West Bengal, it is the Pashchimanga Sarva Shiksha Mission, which gets the funds against an approved plan and outlay for each year. The state budget of West Bengal only reflects the state share of the SSA funding, but to have a complete idea on the allocation, release and expenditure of SSA, we need to look at the data provided by the Centre.

**Table 3.4: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan- Allocation, Release and Spending of Funds**

Year	Approved Work Plan and Budget	Government of India Share	Funds Released		Expenditure
			State Share	Total Funds Released	
2007-08	143,876.18	90,381.30	48,505.30	138,886.6	102,200.21
2006-07	146,487.37	63,912.59	20,578.93	84,491.52	93,259.60
2005-06	105,944.58	32,024.00	12,899.92	44,923.92	48,828.91

Source: Ministry of HRD <http://ssa.nic.in/financial-management/allocation-releases-and-expenditure>

Table 3.4 clearly shows how in none of the three years from 2005-08, the full approved amount of money was released. Since central funds release is tied to state allocation, it is easy to deduce that this is because of the failure of the state to allot its scheduled share (35 per cent of the total approved funds). Also, the state share has increased four times in this period, reaching close to its due share in 2007-08. In 2005-06, it released less than half its due share. However, in 2007-08, although the state was able to release 33 per cent of the total approved budget, instead of the 35 per cent required, it could ultimately utilise 73 per cent of the released funds. In 2006-07, the state share came to only 14.04 per cent, and in 2005-06 the state could release only 12.17 per cent of the approved budget, thus affecting release of funds by the Centre.

To quote the CAG *Performance Review Report of SSA performance in West Bengal, despite its poor record in elementary education enrolment, retention, utilisation of fund, infrastructural facilities and peoples' participation in planning, the state has shown a highly casual approach towards the implementation of the SSA by bothering to release enough funds. In 2007-08, it even failed to spend the released funds besides slipping from the approved work plan.*

Though SSA caters to most of the components of elementary education, except for the salaries of the regular teachers of primary and upper primary schools, the state budget has made some extra provisions such as giving money for text books, teachers' training, maintenance and repairing of school building and so on as per the demands for grants by the School Education Department, Government of West Bengal. The state budget also includes education support programmes, such as scholarship, book grant, residential schools, etc especially for the backward classes (SC, ST and OBC) under the state's Backward Classes Welfare Department.

There are two other state schemes, **Shishu Shiksha Kendra (SSK)** and **Madhyamik Shiksha Kendra (MSK)**, devised as alternatives to Primary and Upper Primary Schools respectively under Panchayat and Rural Development Departments, Government of West Bengal. As of 2007-08, the state runs 16,054 SSKs and 1,233 MSK in the state which enrolled 1488107 and 285,006 students respectively, says the Economic Review 2007-08.

The **National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education** (Mid-day Meal Scheme) is a fully centrally sponsored scheme to give cooked meals to students up to class V to promote enrolment and attendance. According to the Economic Review, in 2007-08, out of 74994 institutes (including schools and EGS centres), 67,950 institutes were covered along with an enrolment of 9,002,537.

The **Integrated Education Programme for Disabled** is targeted to include disabled children in regular school through the support of aid and appliances, providing disabled friendly school infrastructure, engaging special educator and scholarships. The programme is implemented under the school education Department.

Schemes and Programmes	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2006-08	2008-09
Maintenance and Repair of Primary School Building	147.77	152.2	146.85	138.01	110
Primary Schools - Teacher's Training	11,92.46	808.14	1,719.64	3,891.37	2,866.55
Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi and Madhyamik Shiksha Karmasuchi (SSK & MSK)	1,002	500	763	700	12,100
National Programmeme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education - Mid-day Meal Programme	10,775.34	33,325.62	52,947.33	49,403.13	51,319.45
Expansion of teaching and educational facilities for the children of age group 11-14 years	16,969.4	17,679.52	10,549.4	10,694.78	7712.1
Book Grant and Examination Fees for SC, ST and OBC	1,139.63	2,357.1	2,393.78	2,488.3	2,953.7
Maintenance charges to the students belonging to the families having income less than Rs.3600 per month	734.22	1,481.25	1656.95	1,723.09	1,988.31
Pre-matriculate stipends for the children of those who are engaged in unclean occupation	39.3	29.03	35.85	37.25	50
Merit Scholarship for SC/ST and OBC	3,055.85	4,298.63	6,326.2	9,450.68	9,523.3
Integrated education for disabled children	5.34	16.467	74	106.677	154

Source: Detailed Demands for Grants, West Bengal State Budget documents for 2004-05 to 2008-09

Out of all these programmes, as table 3.5 shows, the maximum allocation has gone to the Mid Day Meal programme and it has increased steadily too. Yet, many children remain uncovered. Some 9.39 per cent of the eligible institutes of West Bengal and around 10 per cent of the eligible student for the scheme are still deprived of a hot cooked meal, making the state remain far from achieving the Supreme Court directive of universalising MDM.

The allocation for 'Expansion of Teaching and Educational Facilities for the children of age group 11-14 years' gradually decreased between 2004-05 and 2008-09, marking a total decline of 54.55 per cent. The money goes to fund school building improvement, salary of teaching and non-teaching staff, electricity cost and other costs for upper primary and secondary education. In a situation where the school dropout rate between class VI and Class VIII was 51 per cent in the state in 2005 (CAG report on SSA) and the teacher-student ratio in the upper primary section is 1:57 against the SSA norm of 1:40 (Flash Statistics by NUEPA 2007-08), it is bewildering that the state more than halved the allocation for this programme.

While the allocation for the programme to support education of Backward Classes (Book Grants, Scholarships etc) was regular and rising, the annual allocation for Integrated Education for the Disabled fluctuated.

## Utilisation of Funds

Table 3.6 shows a curious though consistent trend. Between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the revised estimates have gone up slightly (between 1.82 per cent and 6.44 per cent) from the budgeted estimate every year. However, the expenditure incurred finally has fallen a little short of even the budgeted amount in both 2005-06 and 2006-07. In 2004-05, it fell short of the revised but was a little higher than the budgeted. The underutilisation is more glaring in the case of individual schemes and programmes, as table 3.7 shows.

**Table 3.6: Allocation and Utilisation of Funds - A Comparison of BE, RE and AE in Child Education**

Year	BE	RE	AE	Difference of RE over BE		Difference of AE over BE	
				Rs crore	per cent	Rs crore	per cent
2004-05	4,271.23	4,546.45	4,380.67	275.22	6.44	109.44	2.56
2005-06	4,828.98	5,062.99	4,813.09	234.01	4.85	-15.89	0.32
2006-07	5,549.24	5,650.15	5,461.42	100.91	1.82	-87.82	1.58
2007-08	5,977.88	6,322.21		344.33	5.76		
2008-09	6,951.28						

Source: Detailed Demands for Grants, West Bengal State Budget documents for 2004-05 to 2008-09

**Table 3.7: Underutilisation of Funds in Child Education Schemes**

Schemes and Programmes	Difference of AE over BE					
	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	Rs lakh	Per cent	Rs lakh	Per cent	Rs lakh	Per cent
Book Grant and Examination Fees	727.23	63.81	347.68	14.75	-1,003.90	41.94
Maintenance for students from families with monthly income of less than Rs 3600	996.14	135.67	229.88	15.52	-348.07	15.35
Maintenance and Repair of Primary School Building	-147.77	100	36.1	23.72	37.38	25.46
Primary School-teachers training	-641.19	53.77	61.02	7.55	-701.43	40.78
Expansion of teaching and educational facilities for the children of age group 11-14 years	-8,434.71	49.7	-8,815.60	49.86	-4,341.38	41.15

\*Actual spending (AE) is more than budget allocation (BE)

Source: Detailed Demands for Grants, West Bengal State Budget documents for 2004-05 to 2008-09

According to DISE-2007-08 and the Seventh All India School Education Survey, only 57.14 per cent of primary schools in the state have pucca buildings, 21.26 per cent of primary schools have no drinking water facilities, 55.68 per cent of primary schools have no ramp facilities for disabled student and 670 primary schools have no building at all. Notwithstanding, however, the state government had no qualms about not spending 100 per cent of the budget allocations in 2004-05 and about a quarter of the funds allocated in 2005-07 under the Maintenance and Repair of Primary School Building scheme. Similarly, both the Primary School Teachers Training Programme and the Programme for Expansion of Educa-

tional facilities for the children of 11-14 years have seen about 40-50 per cent underspending in the three years for which actual figures are available.

Underutilisation of allocated funds in Book Grant and Examination fees and Maintenance charges to support the education of Backward Classes is also reported in the CAG Performance Audit of Backward Classes Welfare department, Government of West Bengal, released on 31 March 2007. CAG also said that this underutilisation deprived 14.15 lakh students of the benefit of the scheme.

The depressing status of the elementary education in West Bengal is now a proven fact that is supported by the data of the state and central governments, CAG and many independent sources. Even the 12 per cent plus allocation for child education in the state budget (over 2004-09) is inadequate to cover all children and their needs. The problem is compounded by less release of state share of funds in the case of SSA and underutilisation of budgeted funds across all programmes, excluding MDM but including SSA. However, all the blame cannot be laid at the doors of the state since education is a concurrent responsibility and the Centre must get its due share of credit/discredit.

It is shameful that neither the state nor the central government could work together to achieve universal education since independence. Even the promise in the Constitution of India which vowed to provide free and compulsory education to all children of less than 14 years of age has been diluted. The Supreme Court of India, way back in 1993, too declared education to be a fundamental right for all children less than 14. (Unnikrishnan vs state of Andhra Pradesh). Although the Right to Education is now an Act, the government must implement it. It must make Free, Compulsory, Quality and Equitable Education for all children up to 18 years its unwavering goal and strive to meet it sincerely and on a war footing by planning, allocating and fully spending a substantial part of its budget on school education.

### **Huge dropout rate affecting education in WB**

August 12, 2008

Kolkata: Education in this CPM's political bastion seems a distant dream as only 60 million out of 200 million children in the age-group 6 to 14 years go to school in West Bengal. Adding to this, the state is also short of 5,000 school teachers in rural and semi-urban areas.

"According to state government records, 120 million out of 200 million children between 6 to 14 years go to school in West Bengal. But if we consider the huge number of drop outs, the figure stands at around 60 million," West Bengal Central School Service Commission (WBCSSC) chairman Ranjit Kumar Basu said on the sidelines of a workshop.

Source : <http://www.headlinesindia.com/education-news/state-education-boards/huge-dropout-rate-affecting-education-in-wb-293.html#>

### **HIV-positive student thrown out of Bengal school**

October 12, 2007

A primary school student in West Bengal was thrown out of his school after being allegedly humiliated by his teachers because he was HIV positive, his mother said.

The 11-year-old-boy, a resident of Baruipur, on the eastern fringes of the city, "During admission I had told the school authorities about my son's ailment," said the boy's mother, who did not want to be named.

..... the boy was made to sit on a separate bench and his classmates were told to shun him. (IANS)

Source : [http://news.webindia123.com/news/ar\\_showdetails.asp?id=710120476&cat=&n\\_date=20071012](http://news.webindia123.com/news/ar_showdetails.asp?id=710120476&cat=&n_date=20071012)

### **Inflation hits mid-day meal, 70,000 schools affected**

Shiv Sahay Singh

Aug 26, 2008

Kolkata, August 25 The soaring prices are hitting the mid-day meal scheme in schools across the state. Despite an inflation rate of nearly 12 per cent, there has not been much increase in the amount allotted per child by the state and the Centre.

According to the education department officials, lakhs of students of nearly 70,000 schools in the state are directly benefited by the scheme.

.....From this academic session, the Central allocation for the scheme has been increased for primary classes to Rs 1.58 from Rs 1.50 and for the upper primary classes to Rs 2.10 from Rs 2. The state government's contribution to the scheme, however, remains constant at Re 1 for both the levels.

Source : <http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Inflation-hits-midday-meal-70-000-schools-affected/353405/>

### **Mid-Day Meal scheme extended to upper primary**

Wednesday, 24 October, 2007

New Delhi, Oct.22 (ANI): The Mid Day meal scheme has been extended by the Government to the Upper Primary Stage of Education (classes VI to VIII) in 3479 Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) in 2007-08 and areas across the country from 2008-09. The extension to the Upper Primary Stage in EBBs has already become effective from October 01, 2007. About 1.7 crore children at upper primary will be covered. The Government of India has released the Central assistance to the respective States for extension of Mid-Day Meal programme to upper primary stage.

A sum of Rs.7324 crore was provided in the Budget 2007-08 for the MDM Programmeme, representing a 37 percent increase over the budget provision for 2006-07.

Source: <http://www.my-india.net/n/2007/10/mid-day-meal-scheme-extended-to-upper.shtml>

### **Students wish ongoing security Operation in Lalgarh to finish soon**

Date: June 25 2009

Lalgarh/Kolkata, June 25: While security forces are carrying out operation in the Maoist infested area Lalgarh in West Bengal to free it from criminals' grip, local students lament that their studies are getting affected.

A section of students complains that studies are getting affected due to the ongoing operation by the security forces in the jungles of Lalgarh region in Medinipur district of West Bengal.

Security forces, who are taking on the armed Maoists in the region, are using school buildings and campus as camps, as a result, the students cannot attend their school buildings.

Certain examinations, scheduled to take place in the month of May and June, have been cancelled by authorities due to the ongoing security operations.

Source: <http://www.andhranews.net/India/2009/June/25-Students-wish-ongoing-13553.asp>

### **Bengal gets poor marks on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

Apr 16, 2007

New Delhi: Four years of implementation and spending has failed to yield the desired impact of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in West Bengal. Here's why.

There were 8.97 out-of-school children in West Bengal as of April 2005, despite the target of universal enrolment set by the SSA. Not just that, 76% children dropped out of school from Class I to IV and 51% from Class V-VIII as of April 2005, according to a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

Source: <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/Bengal-gets-poor-marks-on-Sarva-Shiksha-Abhiyan/104470/#>



# Child Development Neglected in State Budget

The development sector mainly caters to children in the 0-6 years of age group. In the development sector, programmes and schemes for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), and other general schemes and programmes that do not fit within any particular sectoral category but are aimed at the overall development of children, have been included.

Our first goal in this chapter is to assess whether the allocation is adequate to meet the needs of children below six years of age. The second is to see if the allocated money has been spent optimally to attain the goal of early childhood care and development, or ECCD. For this, we divide the programmes into two categories: Early Childhood Care and Development, and All other programmes of child development.

**Table 4.1: Status of Children in the 0-6 Age group in West Bengal**

Child Population in the 0-6 age group			Child Sex Ratio (Number of females per thousand males)	Child population as a percentage to total population
Male	Female	Total		
5,824,180	5,590,042	11,414,222	960	14.24

Source: Census of India, Provisional Population Totals, West Bengal

**Table 4.2: Child Feeding Practices And Nutritional Status Of Children**

Indicators	Per cent
Children under 3 years breastfed within one hour of birth	23.7
Children of age 0-5 exclusively breast fed	58.6
Children of age 6-9 months receiving solid and semi-solid food and breast milk	55.9
Children under 3 years who are stunted	33.0
Children under 3 years who are wasted	19.0
Children under 3 years who are underweight	44.0
Children of age 6-35 months who are anemic	69.4

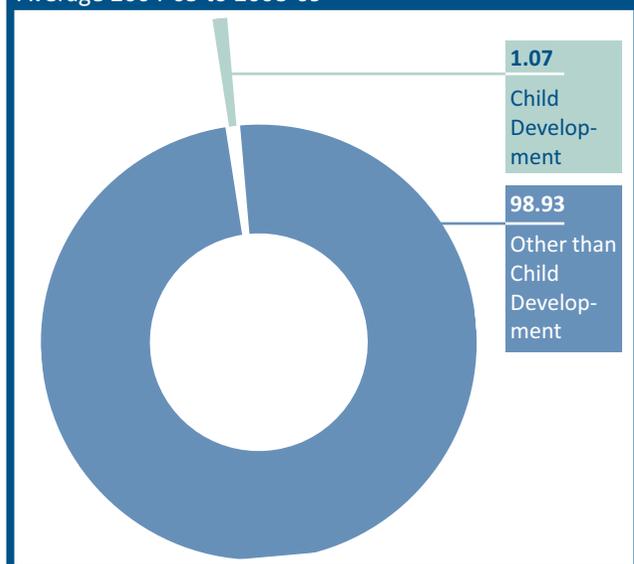
National Family Health Survey III

Children in the age group of 0-6 years constitute 14.24 per cent of the population. Considering the proportion of children in this age group who are malnourished, underweight and anemic, this age group remains the most vulnerable and needy section of the child population.

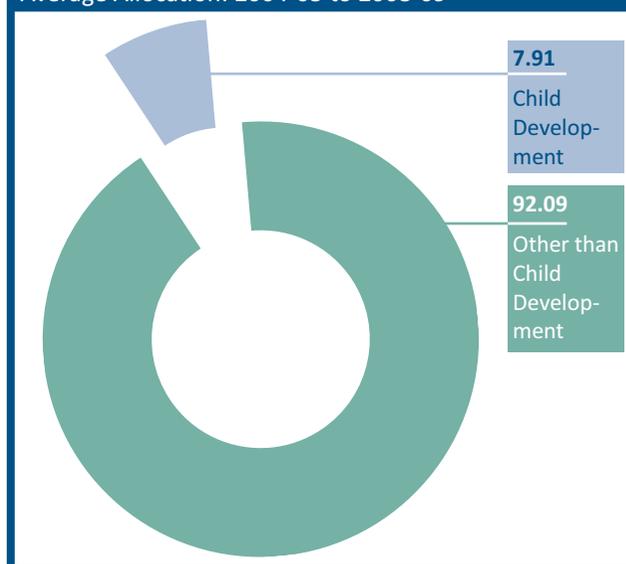
## Allocation for Children in Development

The allocation for the development sector has increased from 0.59 per cent of the total state budget in 2004-05 to 1.46 per cent of the total state budget in the last five years of the study period.

**Figure 4.1: Allocation (BE) for Development Sector of BfC as Percentage of State Budget  
Average 2004-05 to 2008-09**



**Figure 4.2: Sectoral Allocation (BE) within BFC as percentage of State Budget  
Average Allocation: 2004-05 to 2008-09**



Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget publications for 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

If we look at the allocation for child development in the budget, we find that it occupies a minuscule 1.07 per cent of the total state budget, while within the Budget for Children, it occupies 7.91 per cent. Child development gets the second highest share of allocation after the education sector.

Table 4.3: Share of Child Development in BfC and State Budget

Year	Allocation for child Development (BE) Rs crore	Allocation for Development as percentage of BfC	Allocation for Development as percentage of total state budget
2004-05	248.95	5.36	0.59
2005-06	318.59	6.03	0.76
2006-07	537.48	8.58	1.23
2007-08	558.10	8.30	1.17
2008-09	779.24	9.80	1.46
Average percentage of allocation during 2004-05 to 2008-09		7.91	1.07

Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget publications for 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Although the allocation (BE) for children in the development sector has gone up from Rs 248.95 crore in 2004-05 to Rs 779.24 crore in 2008-09, recording an increase of 213 per cent in the last five years, this allocation seems barely enough in view of the huge numbers of children yet to be reached and the acute challenge of ensuring quality childhood care and service for all of them.

Of every Rs 100 allocated in the West Bengal Budget, child development has been provided on an average one rupee and seven paise in the five-year period.

The flagship programme in the early childhood care and development (ECCD) sector, accounting for most of the allocation i.e. 85.18 per cent of the total allocation for Child Development (BE) in 2008-09, is the Integrated Child Development Services, popularly known as ICDS. This scheme, operational in the country from 1975, aims at providing proper nutrition, care, immunisation and pre-school education to children between 0-6 years of age as well as pregnant women, lactating mothers and adolescents.

ICDS covers only 44 per cent of the children of less than six years old owing to inadequate allocation in the state budget

“About 50 per cent of the mothers complained about the abysmally low quality of food served in the centres, 46 per cent said that weighing of their children was not done and above 70 per cent children said no medicine was provided to the children.”

----“30 years on, Bengal’s Integrated Child Scheme remains disintegrated”, *Indian Express news on the Pratichi Trust report on ICDS, 9 March 2009*

As of February 2008, 411 ICDS projects are operational in West Bengal, which covers almost 44.66 per cent of the 0-6 years age group, through 87,665 Anganwadi centres<sup>11</sup>. That means around 55 per cent of the children of this age group are still not receiving the benefit of supplementary nutrition and pre-school education which they are supposed to be getting under ICDS. And ICDS is not able to cover them despite a 213 per cent increase in the allocation of funds for child development in the last five years. Clearly, either the planning and budget-making has gone wrong or the allocation for child development, especially for Early Childhood Care and Development, needs to be increased significantly to cover all the children up to six years of age.

Again, children are not receiving the full quota of supplementary nutrition in terms of days and quality in the state, a deliberate violation of Supreme Court orders.

11 Annual Report, 2005-06, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India

According to the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development, West Bengal ICDS is currently providing supplementary nutrition to 59,05,467 children and 8,08,417 pregnant and lactating mothers throughout the year<sup>12</sup>. After the Supreme Court verdict in 2001<sup>13</sup>, each of the Anganwadi Centre beneficiaries is now eligible to receive Rs 2 worth supplementary nutrition per day for 300 days in a year. Following the standard set by the Supreme Court, the state government needs to allocate at least Rs 402.83 crore every year to provide supplementary nutrition to all the 67 crore beneficiaries, including children (0-6 years of age group) and mothers.

In a blatant violation of SC orders, the government has never once during the last five years of the period under review, 2004-05 to 2008-09, allocated this amount for providing supplementary nutrition to this beneficiary group. The highest allocation was in 2008-09, of Rs 334.36 crore. This is the sum total of the budget allocations for schemes such as Supplementary Nutrition Program, Government of India Crash Program of Nutrition for Children and Nutrition Programme under Health System Development Initiative (DFID-assisted project) in that year. Evidently, either the number of days or the quality of food or both are being compromised due to the inadequate funds allocation.

Among the programmes in the development sector, Kishori Shakti Yojana is significant as the scheme is designed to bring about qualitative improvement in the health and nutrition status of adolescent girls, which can positively impact both the maternal mortality ratio as well as the infant mortality ratios.

Kishori Shakti Yojana, a programme for development of adolescent girls, pushed to the backburner after one year.

According to the State Ministry of Women and Child development, funds allocated under this scheme have shown a consistent rise. According to a Government of India media release<sup>14</sup>, West Bengal was allocated Rs 222.6 lakh in 2005-06 and Rs 196.9 lakh in 2006-07. Surprisingly, the detailed Demands for Grants for the Department of WCD, West Bengal, record no budget allocation for Kishori Shakti Yojana in 2004-05 and 2006-07. There was also no entry under the revised estimates of 2006-07. Table 4.4 gives an account of funds released, utilised and percentage of expenditure for the KSY scheme and it is obvious that neither reporting for the budget.

**Table 4.4: Funds Released by the Centre to West Bengal and Funds Utilised by the state under Kishori Shakti Yojana**

Year	Fund released (Rs lakh)	Fund utilised (Rs lakh)	Percentage of expenditure
2004-05	62.7	62.7	100
2005-06	226.6	31.35	13.83
2006-07	196	Not reported	

Source: Department of Women and Child Development, West Bengal

The allocation for the Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) began only in 2006-07, with Rs 2 crore allocated in the Revised Estimates. The same amount was allocated in 2007-08. However, in 2008-09, only half of the allocation of this programme was utilised. This again is inexplicable because KSY is one of the most important initiatives to prevent early marriage

and maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS and raise nutritional status of the adolescent. Despite its traditional progressive cultural background, West Bengal has surfaced of late as a state with a high incidence of child marriage and a proper implementation of the programme might help.

**Table 4.5: Status of Adolescent Girls in West Bengal**

Indicators	Urban (in Percentage)	Rural (in Percentage)	State Total (in percentage)
Women aged 20-24 married by 18	31.5	62.6	53.3
Women age 20-24 who became mothers before 18	11.9	36.1	28.9

Source: NFHS III, 2005-06

12 Ibid

13 Writ Petition No 196 of 2001

14 <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=31287>

## Child marriages, trafficking on the rise in West Bengal

KOLKATA: A survey conducted across several districts in West Bengal has indicated that a rising awareness against dowry is fuelling the incidence of child marriage and trafficking. "We found that the traffickers approach the villagers in the guise of grooms without any dowry demand and lure them into marrying off even minor girls," said Ishita Mukhopadhyay, Director, WSRC, Calcutta University. "The girls are then sold and sent to other places like Mumbai, Dubai or Kashmir," she added. "The problem is compounded by the fact that West Bengal lies on the vulnerable international trafficking route, a fact acknowledged by the United Nations, with Kolkata itself becoming a significant source and destination for traffickers," Dr. Mukhopadhyay said.

Source: *The Hindu*, 19 July 2007

Thus, although adolescence is a period of rapid changes, affecting girls from poorer families in particular, the state is yet to give priority to programmes such as NPAG (Nutrition Program for Adolescent Girls) and KSY. Tiny allocations and lack of political will to implement the programmes properly only add to the woes of the children.

**Table 4.6: Child Development: Utilisation vs Allocation Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and Actual Expenditure in the Development Sector** (Rs crore)

Year	BE	RE	AE	RE-BE		AE-BE	
				Rs crore	Per cent	Rs crore	Per cent
2004-05	248.95	311.05	319.70	62.1	24.94	70.75	28.42
2005-06	318.59	497.95	380.44	179.36	56.30	61.85	19.41
2006-07	537.48	546.02	466.75	8.54	1.56	-70.73	13.16
2007-08	558.10	650.40		92.3	16.53		
2008-09	779.24						

Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget publications for 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

If we look at the total BE, RE and AE figures in the child development sector, we do not find any under-spending. But a closer look of the different schemes and programmes within the development sector reveals that in the case of schemes such as the Family and Child Welfare Project and ICDS training, there has been underspending in more than two years out of the three. In the case of Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme, about 40 per cent of the money has remained unspent in all the three years.

Other schemes such as ICDS General and Government of India Crash Programme on Nutrition too have seen under-spending in one year. On the other hand, Supplementary Nutrition Programme and the Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls have seen overspending.

**Table 4.7: Utilisation of Allocation of Some Development Sector Schemes in West Bengal during 2004-05 to 2006-07**

Schemes/Programs	Percentage of BE not spent as per actual estimates		
	2004-05	2005-06	2006 - 07
Family and Child Welfare Project	20.57	27.12	37.26
ICDS Training	+10.85	22.35	11.90
Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme	37.61	43.21	33.33

Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget publications for 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

It is evident from table 4.6 that a significant part of the allocation for programmes aimed at early childhood care and development is not utilised. It is surprising that at a time when 44 per cent of less than three-year olds and 22 per cent of less than five-year olds are malnourished, according to the NFHS-III and the West Bengal Human Development Report, 2004, the state government is either unable to spend the money they themselves had asked for in the first place or did not find enough centres to spend it on!

According to the CAG Report of 2005<sup>15</sup>, constraints in the proper implementation of the ICDS are: inadequate infrastructure facilities, shortage of staff in key areas, delayed procurement of foodgrain under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme, and inadequate visits to Anganwadi centres by the supervisory and health staff to create a desired level of awareness among mothers. The need of the hour is to have consistent planning and a foolproof implementation mechanism so that the resources available for children are optimally utilised.

A positive ray of hope comes in the form of SNP. To tackle malnutrition among children less than 6 years old and pregnant women, the allocation for supplementary nutrition programme has been raised by 37 per cent over the last year's allocation and a new programme for nutrition has been introduced in 2008-09, which is a welcome step. The DFID programme for nutrition aims at reducing "maternal and child mortality, and the burden of communicable, non-communicable and nutrition-related diseases and disorders". This initiative of West Bengal government as part of the broad Health System Development Initiative will hopefully go some way towards improving the nutrition level and the infant mortality ratio in the state.

### **Bengal falls short in ICDS execution**

In spite of having a stable government, West Bengal is at the mid-performing levels in terms of public programmes related to health and other sectors, said Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen. Sen acknowledged the efforts of the state government in carrying out the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), but at the same time highlighted various pitfalls that would have to be tackled for implementing the programme successfully.

'The Pratchi Child Report', highlights that the projects in West Bengal fall short of coverage not only in terms of target beneficiaries, but also in terms of actual delivery of services. Currently, there are around 411 ICDS projects being conducted in West Bengal, out of which there are 28 such centres in the districts of Jalpaiguri, Bankura, South Dinajpur, Burdwan and Murshidabad, where the reserach was conducted.

*Source: Business Standard, Kolkata 26, 2009*



## Allocations Lag Far Behind Health Goals

One of the primary goals of the Eleventh Five year Plan is to achieve good health for the people, especially the poor and underprivileged. With this objective in mind, the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal, has focused its attention in the last few years on improving the primary health sector by pooling resources from the State Plan, the National Rural Health Mission and external aid that is coming from KfW (Basic Health Project) and the DFID, UK (Health System Development Initiative).

Most of these programmes relate to infrastructure development of State hospitals and Primary Health Centres in the blocks and gram panchayats and rarely have any components directly related to child health. Although promoting the survival and health situation of children is a public health concern, child health in itself has never been accorded priority. Rather it has always been considered a component of the reproductive health care. The Family Welfare Programme in the state addresses the issues of institutional delivery, safe motherhood, operationalising first referral units, making facilities operational for Basic and Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric Care, strengthening the referral system, strengthening routine immunisation and related cold chain system.

Under the Rural and Urban Family Welfare Services, the programme of family planning was integrated with the National Component of Reproductive and Child Health Programme Phase II addressing the issues of maternal mortality, infant mortality, immunisation and safe birth in a focused way. The RCH II brings mainly the logistical support to the programmes in the form of civil works, equipment and medicine, engagement of new staff like Staff Nurse, Lab

Technician, Safe Motherhood Consultant, strengthening of referral system, creation and expansion of MTP services, support to UIP and Cold Chain System, etc.

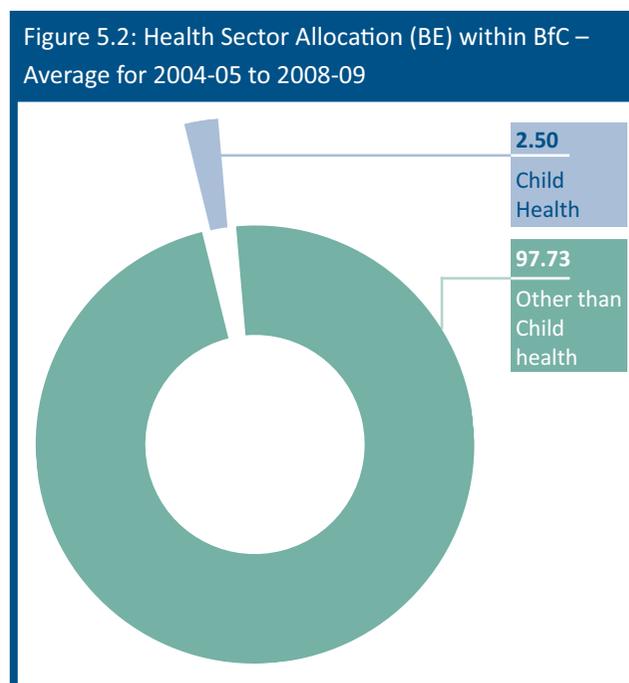
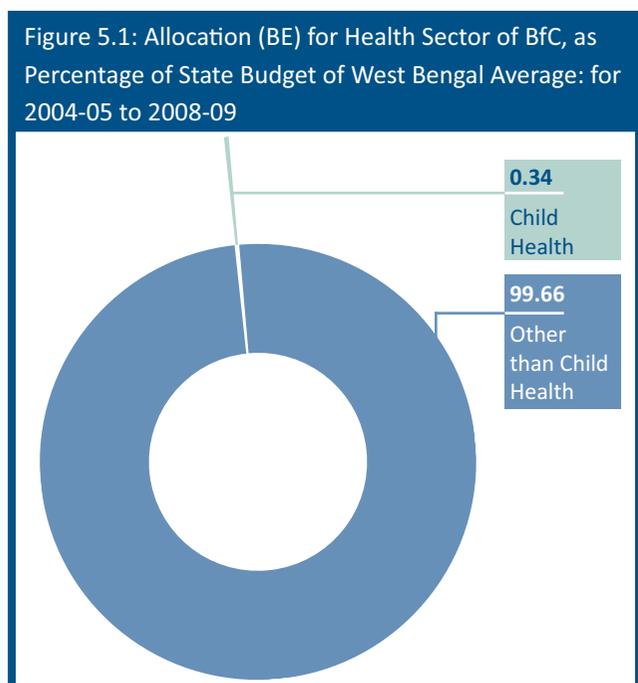
Besides the Rural and Urban Family Welfare services, the state budget has programmes such as the School Health Scheme, Pulse Polio Immunisation, manufacture of serum and vaccine, Post partum Unit, etc which are directly related to children and thus have been included in this study for BfC analysis.

Programmes like Training and employment of multipurpose workers, Village Health Guide, Training ANMs and Dais are also directly related to the target of Reproductive and Child Health and hence included in the study. One of the major objectives of Health Sector Strategy 2004-14, prepared by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal, is “to reduce maternal and child mortality, and the burden of communicable, non-communicable and nutrition-related diseases and disorders”. The same strategy has decided on a few definite ‘health outcome goals’ achievable within 2010 by which time the success of this strategy will be measured. The goals are the following:

Indicators	Target for 2010	Status in 2005
Neo-natal mortality	15 / 1,000	30/1,000 (2005)**
Infant mortality rate	21 / 1,000	48/1,000 (2005)*
Maternal mortality rate	70 / 1,000,000	194/1000,000 (2001-03)*
Deliveries by skilled attendants	100%	45.7% (2005)*
Institutional deliveries	80%	43% (2005)*
Total fertility rate	2.1	2.3 (2005)*
Couple protection rate	90%	
Children fully immunised	100%	64.3% (2005)*

\*NFHS-III data

\*\* Economic Review 2007-08, Government of West Bengal



Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget publications for 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Table 5.1 shows clear and wide gaps between the status of the health indicators in 2005-06 and all the goals set by the government for 2010, which need to be bridged forthwith.

Table 5.2 on budget estimates for health tells us that average allocation for child health in the last five years is only 2.50 per cent of BfC and 0.33 per cent of the total state budget. Health is the second most neglected sector after child protection in terms of budget allocation.

Year	Allocation for child Health (BE) Rs crore	Allocation for health as percentage of BfC	Allocation for health as percentage of total state budget
2004-05	112.68	2.43	0.27
2005-06	124.34	2.35	0.3
2006-07	164.25	2.62	0.38
2007-08	169.62	2.52	0.36
2008-09	200.31	2.52	0.38
Average allocation during 2004-05 to 2008-09		2.50	0.34

Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal budget documents for the years 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

It is possible to say that the allocation for child health is too little to achieve the targets set by the state government for itself for 2010, especially after considering the status of the indicators in 2005-06. In the five years under study, the budget estimate has gone up by only 77.76 per cent, or by a little over 15 per cent a year, which is not significant enough to carry out the changes planned. The allocation to child health as a percentage share of the BfC as well as the total state budget too went up only marginally during this period. Clearly, in child health, the state government has not been putting its money where its mouth is,

certainly not in keeping with the promises made in the Health Sector Strategy 2004-14 and the Health Outcome Goal 2020.

The second point on which the state government can be accused of neglecting health is on utilisation of even the meagre funds allocated.

Of course, if we look at the budget and revised estimates for the entire sector and compare them with the actual estimates, we may not find the underutilisation, as is clear from table 5.3.

Of every Rs 100 allocated in the West Bengal Budget, child health has been provided an average of 34 paise during 2004-05 to 2008-09.

Year	BE	RE	AE	RE-BE		AE-BE	
	(Rs crore)	(Rs crore)	(Rs crore)	Rs crore	Per cent	Rs crore	Per cent
2004-05	112.68	120.74	137.78	8.06	7.15	25.10	22.27
2005-06	124.34	187.64	157.36	63.30	50.90	33.02	26.56
2006-07	164.25	163.95	175.59	-0.30	-0.18	11.34	6.90
2007-08	169.62	209.46		39.84	23.48		
2008-09	200.31						

Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget documents for the years 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

But if we closely inspect the allocation and spending on individual schemes or budget head, we would find that programme such as Urban Family Welfare Services, Pulse Polio Immunisation Programme, School Health Scheme, Training and employment of Multipurpose Workers, etc. suffer from regular or occasional underutilisation of funds, while programmes such as Rural Family Welfare Services have regularly shown overspending.

Urban Family Welfare Services are actually meant to extend Reproductive and child health related services through three types of urban family welfare centres integrated with the second phase of the RCH programme. This is a vital programme

that extends RCH support to the urban poor who are now 32 per cent of the total urban population in West Bengal. But before we go into the allocation and utilisation details, it is important to take a look at the indicators of the child health among the urban poor as furnished in the NFHS III.

Health Indicators	Urban poor	Urban Non-poor
Institutional deliveries	58.9%	90.6%
Children completely immunised	66.7%	73.6%
Neonatal Mortality	41/1000	4/1000
Infant Mortality	56/1000	15/1000
Women who had contact with a health worker in last three months	21.1%	NA

Source: NFHS III 2005-06

Table 4 gives the status of the urban poor in West Bengal in terms of health, which is far worse than that of the non-poor. If we pick up the Urban Family Welfare Services in the state budget of West Bengal for a closer look, we find that there has been underutilisation of its Budget outlays every year from 2004-05 to 2006-07.

Such regular underutilisation of allocated funds for Urban Family Welfare services is a major hindrance in the way to achieving the Health Outcome Goal 2010 fixed by the state government. We have also found under or no utilisation in a few other schemes related to child health. The school health scheme, for instance, was envisaged to carry out health checkup of primary school-going children and foster awareness among the children and their parents. Such a scheme is well placed to address the health problems of a large section of children who are otherwise not directly covered in any of the other health programmes. Yet, for some inexplicable reason, the meagre amount of Rs 2-5 lakh allocated to the scheme was not spent at all in any of these three years!

Table 5.5: Underutilisation in Urban Family Welfare Services in BfC Health Sector (Rs lakh)

Year	BE	RE	AE	BE-AE	BE-AE (percentage)
2004-05	400.00	816.00	280.15	119.85	29.96
2005-06	820.00	968.00	497.49	322.51	39.33
2006-07	968.00	900.00	417.12	550.88	56.90

Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal budget documents for the years 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Table 5.6: Underutilisation in Health Sector in West Bengal BfC during 2004-05 to 2006-07

Schemes/Programmes	AE as percentage of BE not spent		
	2004-05	2005-06	2006 - 07
School Health Scheme	100	100	100
Pulse Polio Immunisation Programme	27.45	100	93.08
Training of ANM and Dais	8.85	22.17	34.73

Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget publications for the years 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Thus the health sector is afflicted with a curious malaise of allocations that are either too small to write home about or are often marked, even increased, and then kept unspent. This is also true of the scheme called Training of ANMs (auxiliary nurse midwives) and Dai-s. In both 2004-05 and 2005-06, the budget estimates gave way to significantly higher revised estimates, yet the administration ultimately did not actually manage to spend even the original budget figure. In further

irony, the budget estimate for the scheme was increased in 2006-07 to Rs 2.33 crore, practically doubling from Rs 1.21 crore in 2004-05, while the amount actually spent was even lower than that spent in 2005-06. On an average, 38 per cent of the reallocated amount, that is the revised estimates, was kept unspent in these years.

The pulse polio programme in the state is another good example of bureaucratic shortsightedness. West Bengal's earlier status of being a polio-eradicated state has been challenged recently with new cases of polio being reported. And with good reason too. In January 2008, newspaper reports said quoting the Health Department<sup>16</sup> that 30 per cent of children below six years of age were still outside the coverage of Pulse Polio Immunisation. Despite that, we see 100 per cent and 83 per cent of funds remaining unspent in 2006-07 and 2007-08, presumably because polio had been eradicated! Is it a surprise then that polio cases are resurfacing?

The allocation and spending pattern in this sector not only reflects the lack of political and administrative will to find ways to spend the available money but also shows up the thoughtless budgeting process often adopted in India of blindly marking the RE as next year's BE without pausing to assess the absorption capacity of the sector and adequacy of projects.

---

16      Heading of the news report, Ananda Bazar Patrika, 11 January 2008



## Despite Trafficking, Protection Not on the Radar of State

Since the nineties, growing economic liberalisation and shrinking of the welfare state has meant reduced social sector expenditure by the central and state governments. The sector worst hit by this is child protection, which has the smallest share in the BfC. In a situation where children's issues are already a low priority in the state budget, protection schemes are at a further disadvantage.

Yet, children now need protection more than ever before. Denial of the right to protection is reflected in more children being forced into child labour and joining their migrant labour parents, trafficked for sexual exploitation, domestic

### **30 thousand women and children trafficked, only 8 thousand rescued**

Budhha Babu (Chief Minister of West Bengal) said in the Assembly (on 18 June 2009) that in the last three years 30,672 women and children have been trafficked from the state but only 8319 were rescued. The chief minister was answering questions from the leader of opposition, Partha Chattopadhyay. The chief minister was also of the view that this was not only a law and order problem; at the root of women and child trafficking are poverty, illiteracy and gender disparity. To stop trafficking, there is need for a holistic initiative.

*(From Bengali newspaper Ananda Bazar Patrika dated 19 June 2009, translated by authors)*

servitude and other gross forms of child abuse, abandoned, lost or forced to live on the streets and often lured by crime to come into conflict with law, as well as in a swelling of the ranks of those who make up the category of “children in difficult circumstances”. While all children need care and protection, governments in their own wisdom focus their schemes on children in difficult circumstances.

If we look into government statistics, we find that the status of children needing protection is really alarming. Successive census reports over the last 30 years (1971–2001) say the number of child labour has increased by around one lakh. The number of missing children from West Bengal is 107,78 during the period 2004-06<sup>17</sup>. As per the central government study on Child Abuse, some 55 out of 100 respondent children are reported to have faced physical abuse at least once and 44 children faced corporal punishment in schools<sup>18</sup>. And it could be worse in West Bengal. Some 23 districts in the country mainly supply girls trafficked or sent to the red light areas in Mumbai, and seven out of those 23 districts are in West Bengal<sup>19</sup>.

Seen from this angle, it does seem astonishing that the state of West Bengal has allocated on average 0.03 per cent of the total state budget for the protection of the children in the five years of our study. Similarly, of the total state budget for children (BfC), child protection has on an average 0.24 per cent only.

Of every Rs 100 allocated in the West Bengal Budget, child protection has been provided an average of 3 paise in the five-year period.

Figure 6.1: Protection Sector Allocation (BE) within BfC Average for 2004-05 to 2008-09

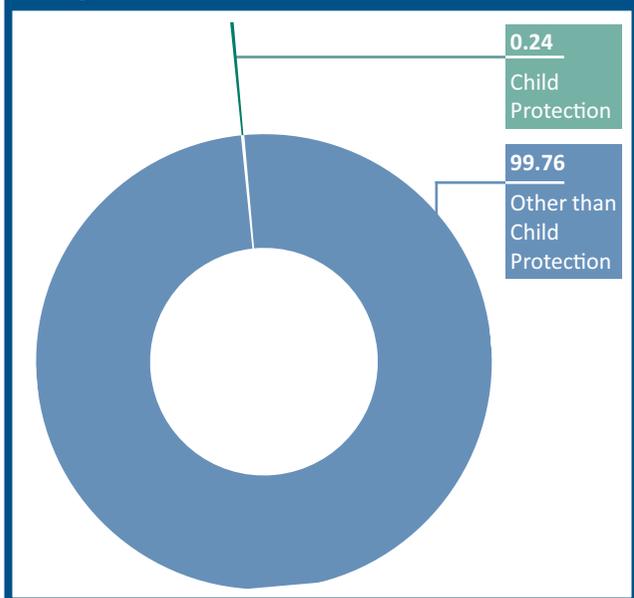
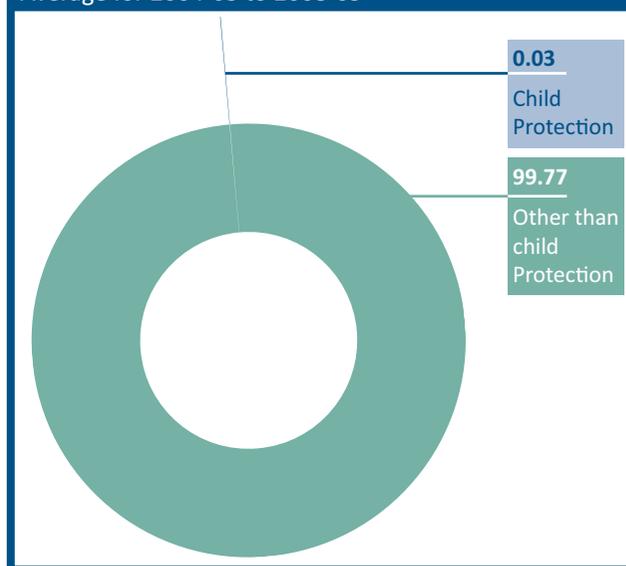


Figure 6.2: Allocation (BE) for Protection Sector of BfC as Percentage of State Budget Average for 2004-05 to 2008-09



Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget documents for 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

## Minimum Allocation, Minimum Concern

The scanty resource allocation to the protection sector is evident from Table 6.1. As we have seen in the case of education, in a culture where funds allocation is directly proportionate to priorities accorded by the government to programmes, the

17 RSUSQ 2353, 5th October 2007, Monsoon Session 2007, Parliament of India

18 Study on Child Abuse 2007 by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India

19 Indian Child – A Profile 2002 by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India

funding for protection reflects clear apathy of the state to such schemes.

The trend of allocation in the West Bengal State budget between 2004-05 and 2008-09 shows that the allocation for protection as per budget estimates has doubled in 2008-09 over the allocation in 2004-05. Yet, the allocation of Rs 10 crore in 2004-05 was only 0.02 per cent of the total state budget and 0.22 per cent of the budget for children. So a mere 103.87 per cent increase in the BE from 2004-05 to 2008-09 is not really a lot compared to the alarming situation of children needing protection. Even in 2008-09, only 0.04 per cent of the state budget, or

Rs 21 crore, was allocated for child protection. Is it possible that this small amount is capable of ensuring the care and protection of thousands of uncared for, homeless and orphaned children, ensure efficient<sup>20</sup> and adequate justice, and ensure that the rights of the children working as unorganised labour are recognised?

In the last few years, the Union government has taken some important steps towards child protection:

- Prohibition of employment of children of less than 14 years in Hotel and Domestic Sectors, amending the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 1986 on 10 October 2006.
- The Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act 2000 was amended by a notification in the official gazette of India on 22 August 2006 which made the constitution of Juvenile Justice Board and Child Welfare committee in each and every district mandatory for the government.
- The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights was set up in March 2007 under the Commission for the Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005. The Commission “sees an indispensable role for the State, sound institution-building processes, respect for decentralisation at the level of the local bodies at the community level and larger societal concern for children and their well-being.”

Yet, despite such a long list of tasks, the state budget of West Bengal has shown a rise of only 22.25 per cent and 28.18 per cent in the BE for child protection in 2007-08 and 2008-09 respectively. The share of the allocation as usual remains low

**Table 6.1: Child Protection Most Neglected**

Year	Allocation for Child Protection in BE (Rs crore)	Allocation for Protection as percentage of BfC	Allocation for Protection as percentage of total state budget
2004-05	10.33	0.22	0.02
2005-06	12.99	0.25	0.03
2006-07	13.44	0.21	0.03
2007-08	16.43	0.24	0.03
2008-09	21.06	0.26	0.04
Average percentage of allocation during 2004-05 to 2008-09		0.24	0.03

Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget documents for 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

### Government of West Bengal’s comments of the ban on employment of children

“The Government of India has prohibited engagement of children as domestic workers and in dhabas, restaurants, hotels and recreation centres with effect from 10th October 2006. .... **As a commitment of a welfare state, the Government cannot remain idle where a child labour who do not have parents or whose parents are unable to work. Withdrawal of children from their working places would no doubt aggravate the survival of them and their families.**”

*(Quoted from Annual Plan, Govt. of West Bengal, Chapter 10 Social Service, P-194)*

– only 0.03 per cent of the total state budget in 2007-08 and 0.04 per cent of the total state budget in 2008-09. Will this meagre increase be able to support the expenditure of setting up and adequately staffing a State commission for Protection of Children’s Rights, forming Child Welfare Committees (CWC) and Juvenile Justice Boards (JJB) in 19 districts of the state (there are CWCs in only six districts and JJBs in only two districts of West Bengal)? Will this money be enough to liberate some of the thousands of children toiling in domestic sectors and hotels, who are not even officially enumerated?

Though the state CPCR has not come up yet, the government officially reported the constitution of JJB and CWC in all of the 19 districts. However, significant negligence on the part of the administration is visible in enforcing the ban on employment of children in hotel and domestic sectors. Between October 2006 and April 2008, only 13 cases of violations in terms of employment of children were identified in the state.<sup>21</sup> In spite of planning for enforcing the ban on child labour and allocating adequate funds for that, the government in its different policy documents did not seem to agree with rapid withdrawal of children from their employment in view of their poor family economic condition<sup>22</sup>.

Interestingly, assistance to the voluntary sector for children in need of care and protection has been increasing steadily, from Rs 1.99 crore in 2004-05 to Rs 5.80 crore (BE) in 2008-09. Even for other schemes such as Cottage Scheme and Welfare of Street Children, the implementation is done through the voluntary sector. While it is appreciable that the voluntary sector is encouraged to get involved, it should not become a movement. As it is, the state is showing a growing

**Table 6.2: Underspending in BE, RE and AE in Protection**

Year	BE	RE	AE	RE-BE		AE-BE	
	(Rs crore)	(Rs crore)	(Rs crore)	Rs crore	Per cent	Rs crore	Per cent
22004 - 05	10.33	12.61	10.66	2.28	22.07	0.33	3.19
2005 - 06	12.99	14.59	12.49	1.6	12.31	-0.5	3.84
2006 - 07	13.44	14.56	14.34	1.12	8.33	0.9	6.69
2007 - 08	16.43	19.55		3.12	18.99		
2008 - 09	21.06						

Source: Detailed demands for grants, West Bengal state budget documents for 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

tendency to shift its own responsibility to civil society. Protection of children is the primary duty and responsibility of the state and the accountability for it should also remain with it.

Table 6.2 shows that even as the revised estimates show a significant increase over the BE in the revised estimates, mostly it remains an eyewash and the increased amount is not finally spent. Out of the first three years for which we have actual estimates, the actual spending in the first two years was close to or even less than the original budget estimates. Only in the third year, 2006-07, we see the actual estimates coming close to the increased revised estimates.

The analysis of allocations and utilisation of budget outlays and spending in the protection sector shows that the state has neglected this sector far too long and the citizens are now paying the price of this through rising violence against girls, increased trafficking and child labour. The government needs to give priority to this sector and raise allocations forthwith if it is to ensure a protective environment for the children who need to first live safely to utilise life’s various opportunities. Without realising the right to protection, we cannot think of fulfilling the rights of our children to education, health and all-round development.

21 Information provided by Central Labour Ministry in response to an RTI filed by Bachpan Bachao Andolon – Source: <http://www.indiaenews.com/politics/20081008/149527.htm> )

22 Annual Plan, Government of West Bengal, Chapter 10, Social Service, Page 194

## Some Instances of Severe Violation of Child Protection

### **Blast in the Cracker factory of Nilganj killed two kids**

**Cracker unit blast kills 2 kids**  
**Statesman News Service**

BARASAT, Aug. 28: Two child labourers died and one was seriously injured at Narayanpur Kalapara under Ichapur- Nilgunge gram panchayat in North 24-Parganas when crackers that were being illegally manufactured went off at the residence of a local, Julfikar Ali. One of the victims, Sahrukh Ali, died on the spot and the other, Hasan Ali, died in hospital. The injured child, Sahana Khatoon, was admitted to B N Bose Hospital. No one has been arrested in connection with the incident yet. The owner of the house has fled.

The incident occurred at 11.30 a.m. Manufacturing crackers is a common profession of residents of Narayanpur Kalapara and Ichapur. Police apparently came to the spot three hours after the incident took place.

The incident once again exposed the failure of the district police to stop this illegal cottage industry from flourishing in the villages of North 24-Parganas. Despite the government's blanket ban on the manufacture of crackers such as chocolate bombs and rockets, it is done with impunity. This cottage industry employs more than 500 children. The illegally-made crackers are supplied to licenced factories.

Local residents of Narayanpur and Fateyabad said frequent raids could put a stop to the illegal trade. "Police did not take any action. Officers know everything but they come to the village only to extort money from the traders of illegal crackers. They do not listen to our complaints," said Shk Allauddin, a local resident. "We have visited the spot of the blast to find out the exact cause of the fire," said Mr SS Chakraborty, I-C, Barasat police station. Source: The Statesman, 29 August 2007

### **Five adolescent girls trafficked for dance party, yet no action by police against trafficker**

In January 2007, five girls, aged between 14 years and 17 years, were reported missing from their homes at Promodnagar under South Dum Dum Municipality area. Later, one of these missing girls made a phone call to her house to say that they went along with their neighbour, an adult woman named Swati Das, and were now working in a dance Group at Jathbazar area of Uttar Pradesh. She said Swati had told them they would soon become famous as dancers and earn a lot of money. The girl also admitted that in reality, they were forced to do obscene dance, abused physically regularly, and have no freedom to get out, let alone come back home.

After five long months, the girls returned in July 2007. They were released by the trafficker on condition that they would not demand wages for their work. Among these girls, two were also married off forcefully and illegally.

Immediately after receiving the first phone call, the parents of the trafficked girls lodged a complaint against Swati Das, the alleged trafficker, in the Dum Dum Police station. The police, besides questioning the parents of the trafficker, did nothing towards either rescuing those missing minor girls or arresting the alleged trafficker.

*Reported by: SPAN*

A five-member fact-finding team from CACL, West Bengal, went to the spot of the cracker blast on 30 August 2007. Their objective was to find out the attitude of the local stakeholders towards employment of children in the cracker factories. They also wanted to propagate the campaign on total eradication of child labour to the local people. The first step towards this was to call a meeting of all stakeholders in the area. They talked to Malati Das, Pradhan (head) of Nilganj Gram Panchayat, the teacher of the local NCLP School, Fatayabad-Narayanpur, Ajay Bhattacharya, executive assistant secretary, Nilganj GP and local people. The findings:

- The home-based cracker industry, which is of course illegal, is a major source of employment for the poor people of the area, mainly in the monsoon when the other major local source of employment, brick kilns, close down due to lack of sunlight.
- Panchayat leaders and secretary say that mainly adults are working in the cracker factory, while children accompany their parents. But they also admit the children are preferred as employees as they cost less.
- The Nilganj panchayat head admits that out of 10 -12 cracker factories in the area, only two have a license. The wage rates for adult are Rs 60-70 per day, while the children get only about Rs 20-30.
- There is one primary and one NCLP school in the area. The NCLP teacher is reluctant to talk about child labour. Interestingly, many children at the NCLP school, which is meant for the rescued child labour, continue to work. In fact, Sharukh, one of the children who died in the blast, was the student of the same NCLP school.
- Clearly, there seemed to be a local administrative acceptance of the employment of children as well as the running of illegal cracker factories. Everybody was happy to point fingers at the parents for sending their children to work, due to poverty and lack of awareness, neglecting the society's responsibility.
- Nobody seemed aware of the Child Labour (Regulation and Prohibition) Act, 1986, which bans employment of children under 14 in cracker-making and penalizes employers.
- The local people are afraid of running any kind of campaign on the issue because that would fall foul of the cracker factory owners and other influential persons. The leaders are similarly afraid of losing their vote banks.
- The Officer-in-Charge of the Barasat Police Station proposed paying compensation to the families of the dead children by raising subscription from local businessmen. But he didn't say if the employer had been booked under the Child Labour Act, 1986, and would be penalised for employing children.

### **Residential Schools for Child Labourers: Absence of Central Fund Affects Plans**

*Government has planned to set up one such school in every district*

Kolkata: The state government's plan to set up residential schools in each of the 19 districts in the state for the welfare of child labourers is facing stiff financial problems

Though the state government has agreed to provide an annual subsidy of Rs 6,000 per child staying in these residential schools, the absence of any hike in the Central budget allocation for the NCLP has made NGOs reluctant to take up the scheme

According to 2001 census, West Bengal has 8,57,000 child labourers. Government officials say the issue of child labour is complex and rooted in social, political and economic conditions of our country. Source: Express News Service, 23 Dec 2008

### **Laying The Foundation For A Better Future In Brick Kilns**

North 24 Parganas in West Bengal is a district lined with brick kilns. The government legally bans Child labour. But a visit to any of the kilns in North 24 Parganas reveals hundreds of children under 15 lending a helping hand to parents as they carry soil from river banks, prepare the clay mixture with various chemicals for bricks, and then mould them by hand into perfect rectangles. The going rate of Rs 100 per 1000 bricks made is no small temptation either.

Neither have any of the kiln owners taken over the MACs. What's more, many kiln owners are yet to allow the children from their kilns to attend school. One only hopes that the district administration actively pressurizes kiln owners to open up their hearts and minds and make them a little more responsible towards the toiling masses who ensure their profits. Source: Child Labour News, 6 Feb 2009



## Conclusion

A government's political will for human development is invariably reflected in its budget document. This dictates the rationale behind our five-year child budget analysis for the state of West Bengal, which is to weigh the state's declared commitment towards realising the rights of the children against the funds it has committed and actually spent for children.

Viewed from child rights perspective, then, our budget analysis finds a clear lack of interest shown by the state government in accepting children as a separate entity or a beneficiary group with full human rights as well as its reluctance to acknowledge them as a political constituent that needs to be catered to. The broad findings are as follows:

- Children still remain out of focus: Even 62 years after independence, children remain a low priority in the state government's planning for development. This is clear from the fact that despite being 42 per cent of the population, an average of 13.48 per cent of the total budget money was allocated for them.
- Sharp disparity in allocations for different sectors: Not only is the allocation to children's programmes low, it is also skewed and short-sighted. On an average some 89.35 per cent of the BfC was allocated to education during 2004-05 to 2008-09, while the three equally vital sectors of health, development and protection together got only 10.65 per cent.
- Protection of children the least priority: Surprisingly, protection of children gets the lowest priority, as is evident from the allocation of only 0.03 per cent of the total state budget and 0.24 per cent of the BfC on average. The adverse effects of this neglect is felt in rising crime against children, especially girls, rising trafficking, rising early marriage, and a poor implementation of the juvenile justice system.

- SSA plagued by low release of state share and underutilisation of funds: Despite allocating 90 per cent of the BfC to education, one of the highest among states, West Bengal is not able to capitalise on this, as evident from the high dropout rate and large numbers of children still remaining out of school. This is partly because the state has failed to properly implement the largest ongoing national programme of education, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) or Education for All. Figures for 2005-06 to 2007-08 say that state's failure to release its due share of the approved cost of the programme cost it a substantial part of the matching central government allocation. There was evidence also of unspent allocation.
- Mid Day Meals still don't reach 10 per cent of eligible children: Allocation for Mid-Day Meal in the primary schools has been increased by 376 per cent between 2004-05 and 2008-09, yet 10 per cent of the eligible students are deprived from any mid-day meal in their schools. Nor has MDM been extended to upper primary students as per the Union finance minister's announcement in 2007, on extending the MDM up to the Upper Primary stage in 3427 Educationally Backward Blocks of the country. To fund this extension, the Union budget for 2007-08 had raised the allocation by 37 per cent. But the state budgets for 2007-08 or 2008-09 do not reflect any such move or allocation.
- Allocation for child health is low and stagnant: Allocation for Child Health in the BfC has hovered around 2.5 per cent on average during 2004-05 to 2008-09. As against this, allocation for development, which includes the components of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), has been increased massively so that it has now the second largest share in the BfC. But the share is still pitifully small compared to education—only 7.91 per cent compared to over 89 per cent respectively. The allocation for child development has been increased by 213 per cent between 2004-05 and 2008-09, and within that, the allocation for Supplementary Nutrition Programme aimed at combating malnutrition among 0-6 year olds, has been raised by 419 per cent. Yet, even now, some 55.34 per cent of the children in the target group remain outside the coverage of Supplementary Nutrition.
- Underutilisation of funds is a massive problem: Expenditure figures for various education schemes recorded in the state budget documents show underutilisation of the allocated funds, most commonly under the heads of book grants, scholarships, and maintenance grants to support the education of the children from backward classes. Although the overall Budget for Children does not indicate any underutilization of the budget allocations, many of the schemes for children show massive underspending, with the result that the actual estimates for a year always fall short of the planned. This is very evident in programmes in the areas of education, protection and health. This implies that a large number of children are routinely deprived of their rightful share in the state's resources.

## Annexure

Figure are in Rs lakh. Data sourced from DDGs of various departments, Government of West Bengal

### Education

Education Support for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	11321.23	12919.54	15180.98
2005-06	12919.54	15180.9	12072.86
2006-07	15621.87	16854.84	14092.53
2007-08	21989.05	21526.26	NA
2008-09	22747.58	NA	NA

Higher Secondary Education			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	9161.33	10368.45	6935.4
2005-06	10862.26	10758.8	6725.8
2006-07	11757.51	7447.16	5568.9
2007-08	8390.38	6870.93	NA
2008-09	7239.93	NA	NA

Elementary Education			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	189198.59	214969.73	19629
2005-06	230740.80	24508.47	229568.9
2006-07	26549.76	279179.7	25826.38
2007-08	288055.0	305087.6	NA
2008-09	325589.5	NA	NA

Technical Education			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	1030.61	932.38	743.41
2005-06	1189.93	9980.80	7618.31
2006-07	1098.83	1000.5	746.39
2007-08	1116.26	10110.7	NA
2008-09	1999.1	NA	NA

Education Support to the Muslim Student			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	82.00	82.00	82.23
2005-06	85.30	85.30	70.57
2006-07	90.00	60.00	56.75
2007-08	100.00	70.00	NA
2008-09	90.00	NA	NA

Programme to Provide Educational Support to the Disabled			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	683.84	1122.65	1000.30
2005-06	1292.37	1864.33	1579.77
2006-07	2215.10	2460.15	2040.02
2007-08	2215.70	2726.16	NA
2008-09	3767.79	NA	NA

Secondary Education			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	216477.21	213268.74	220501.0
2005-06	223877.7	230877.95	229333.3
2006-07	256697.29	256085.70	263888.8
2007-08	271259.46	291448.9	NA
2008-09	3302743.0	NA	NA

#### Educational Support and Vocational Training Programme for Destitute Children

Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	358.59	366.70	338.66
2005-06	387.01	378.40	349.19
2006-07	394.50	380.15	359.25
2007-08	441.95	441.35	NA
2008-09	459.90	NA	NA

#### National Program for Nutritional Support to Primary Education- Mid day Meal scheme

Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	10775.34	19590.87	16247.52
2005-06	33325.62	51883.45	37342.55
2006-07	52947.33	49098.7	56518.32
2007-08	49403.13	46313.08	NA
2008-09	51319.45	NA	NA

#### Maintenance and Repair of Primary Schools

Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	147.77	147.77	0
2005-06	152.20	146.75	116.10
2006-07	146.85	309.79	182.23
2007-08	138.00	100.00	NA
2008-09	110.00	NA	NA

#### District Primary Education Project (DPEP)

Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	240.00	147.81	141.79
2005-06	100.00	127.50	91.71
2006-07	150.00	0	80.91
2007-08	0	0	NA
2008-09	0	NA	NA

#### Provision of Toilet & Drinking Water Facilities in Primary Schools

Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	0	0	0
2005-06	0	0	0
2006-07	0	0	0
2007-08	20.00	20.00	NA
2008-09	36.00	NA	NA

#### Shishu Shikha Karmasuchi and Madhyamik Shiksha Karmasuchi

Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	100.20	109.00	102.12
2005-06	500.00	110.00	94.83
2006-07	763.00	337.21	318.90
2007-08	700.00	906.84	NA
2008-09	1210.00	NA	NA

#### Primary Schools: Salaries to Teaching & Non-teaching Staff and Administrative Cost

Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	139106.3	143958.2	143623.8
2005-06	146849.8	145569.9	154296.3
2006-07	169138.57	157318.3	179177.63
2007-08	179177.7	180390.21	NA
2008-09	193251.4	NA	NA

#### Government of India Crash Programme of Nutrition for Children

Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	2597.51	3539.50	2751.17
2005-06	3135.75	2858.45	2671.49
2006-07	3267.50	3489.70	3704.71
2007-08	3869.75	4060.00	NA
2008-09	4361.30	NA	NA

## Development

Family and Child Welfare Project			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	510.00	509.06	405.06
2005-06	510.00	490.00	371.70
2006-07	500.00	500.00	313.68
2007-08	500.00	470.00	NA
2008-09	558.00	NA	NA

Supplementary Nutrition Programme			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	5759.14	8239.14	8047.39
2005-06	9901.11	2019.83	1249.05
2006-07	1994.52	2182.67	1685.15
2007-08	2178.50	2590.73	NA
2008-09	2993.22	NA	NA

Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	21.43	21.43	13.37
2005-06	22.05	17.00	12.52
2006-07	18.00	16.75	12.00
2007-08	17.25	19.25	NA
2008-09	19.25	NA	NA

ICDS III (World Bank assisted)			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	737.00	737.00	441.23
2005-06	737.00	737.00	92.77
2006-07	737.00	1.00	11.63
2007-08	1.00	1.00	NA
2008-09	1.00	NA	NA

ICDS general			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	13000.00	15660.37	19570.92
2005-06	15150.00	23070.84	21360.86
2006-07	26900.00	26230.76	24700.16
2007-08	26900.10	32000.00	NA
2008-09	36000.00	NA	NA

Nutrition Programme under Health System Development Initiative (DFID-assisted project of State Government)			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	0	0	0
2005-06	0	0	0
2006-07	0	0	0
2007-08	0	0	NA
2008-09	350	NA	NA

ICDS Training			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	400.00	440.00	443.15
2005-06	450.00	450.00	349.40
2006-07	450.00	400.00	396.43
2007-08	450.00	450.00	NA
2008-09	450.00	NA	NA

## Health

School Health Scheme			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	2.45	2.45	0
2005-06	5.00	5.00	0
2006-07	5.00	5.00	0
2007-08	5.00	5.00	NA
2008-09	0	NA	NA

Manufacture of Sera and Vaccine			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	108.83	103.77	124.99
2005-06	104.56	134.87	94.60
2006-07	142.96	107.59	134.17
2007-08	113.44	153.40	NA
2008-09	163.38	NA	NA

Training and Employment of Multipurpose Workers			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	19.17	2.43	2.36
2005-06	2.50	2.74	3.85
2006-07	2.88	4.56	0.72
2007-08	4.82	2.45	NA
2008-09	2.58	NA	NA

Training of ANM and Dais			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	120.94	210.84	110.22
2005-06	210.91	233.17	164.14
2006-07	233.19	197.79	152.18
2007-08	207.83	211.23	NA
2008-09	225.88	NA	NA

Urban Family Welfare Service			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	400.00	816.00	280.15
2005-06	820.00	968.00	497.49
2006-07	968.00	900.00	417.11
2007-08	937.27	935.47	NA
2008-09	937.01	NA	NA

Rural Family Welfare Service			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	9900.00	9977.12	1260.64
2005-06	1039.71	1632.25	1403.37
2006-07	1376.02	1386.13	1586.97
2007-08	1442.23	1839.93	NA
2008-09	1748.90	NA	NA

Post Partum Unit			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	700.00	700.00	560.13
2005-06	751.30	760.11	603.52
2006-07	851.60	828.60	787.44
2007-08	815.60	890.49	NA
2008-09	950.00	NA	NA

Village Health Guide Scheme			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	0	222.38	69.37
2005-06	100.00	300.82	245.38
2006-07	450.00	450.00	183.96
2007-08	450.00	340.00	NA
2008-09	250.00	NA	NA

Pulse Polio Immunisation			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	0	22.20	16.10
2005-06	25.00	30.00	0
2006-07	40.00	27.00	2.76
2007-08	0	0	NA
2008-09	0	NA	NA

## Protection

Cottages Schemes			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	13.05	14.05	11.40
2005-06	14.00	13.30	12.05
2006-07	13.85	14.25	12.68
2007-08	14.90	14.90	NA
2008-09	16.85	NA	NA

Assistance to Voluntary Organizations for Children in Need of Care and Protection			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	199.28	209.28	170.62
2005-06	213.75	322.95	313.83
2006-07	351.00	399.15	352.46
2007-08	475.15	440.80	NA
2008-09	580.00	NA	NA

Welfare of Street Children			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	0.10	0.10	0.10
2005-06	0.10	0.10	0.12
2006-07	0.10	0.10	0
2007-08	0.10	0.19	NA
2008-09	3.00	NA	NA

Correctional Services			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	121.30	121.96	111.38
2005-06	133.45	128.65	110.87
2006-07	109.30	123.05	121.85
2007-08	130.50	139.25	NA
2008-09	148.00	NA	NA

Services for Destitute Children			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	12.13	12.19	11.13
2005-06	13.34	12.86	11.08
2006-07	10.93	12.30	12.18
2007-08	13.05	13.92	NA
2008-09	14.80	NA	NA

State Programme on Child Labour			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	4.00	4.00	2.25
2005-06	4.00	4.61	3.42
2006-07	5.00	5.00	0
2007-08	6.00	2.00	NA
2008-09	12.00	NA	NA

Scheme for Prevention and Control of Juvenile Social Maladjustment			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	192.19	282.75	260.22
2005-06	215.00	293.00	250.92
2006-07	218.00	287.00	182.12
2007-08	291.20	294.00	NA
2008-09	305.00	NA	NA

Social Welfare Homes under Mass Education Extension Department			
Year	BE	RE	AE
2004-05	196.00	331.00	239.87
2005-06	407.68	388.07	274.70
2006-07	332.18	302.61	358.30
2007-08	322.95	682.45	NA
2008-09	552.03	NA	NA



## **Section II**

# **A Half-hearted Quest for Quality Education for All**





# Funds Utilised but Teaching Neglected: Tracking SSA Implementation in West Bengal

**CHILDHOOD** is the most precious phase of human life, a time when the foundations are laid for a prosperous future. School education is an essential part of this foundation. Education is acknowledged as a fundamental value and an end in itself that needs no further justification. Social justice and equity are by themselves a strong argument for providing basic education for all. Apart from that, basic education improves the level of human well-being, with regard to life expectancy, maternal and infant mortality and nutritional status of children. Finally, universal basic education significantly contributes to economic growth.

In accordance with the Constitutional commitment to ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years, provision of universal elementary education has been a salient feature of national policy since independence. However, it is only in 2009 that the Constitutional commitment to free elementary education was given legal sanction in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (Act 35 of 2009) passed in August.

However, this resolve had been spelt out emphatically in the New Education Policy (NPE) 1986 and the Programme of Action 1992, especially since the “...problems of access, quality, quantity, utility and financial outlay, accumulated over the years, have now assumed such massive proportions that they must be tackled with utmost urgency”. It made primary education a national priority and envisaged an increase in resources committed, to at least 6 per cent of the GDP (gross domestic product).

The NPE led to a flurry of schemes at the national level, such as Operation Blackboard, Non-Formal Education, Teacher Education, Mahila Samakhya and the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, popularly known as the Mid Day Meal Scheme. In the mid 1990s, a series of District Primary Education Programmes (DPEP) were introduced in districts where female literacy rates were low. The DPEPs pioneered new initiatives to bring out-of-school children into school, and were the first to decentralise planning for primary education and actively involve communities.

In 2001, the Central government introduced its flagship Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme to provide elementary education for all children. The SSA is one of the largest programmes of its kind in the world and within India, the largest centrally sponsored scheme on education both in terms of financial allocation and coverage. It builds on the pioneering initiatives of the DPEPs and seeks to meet the needs of almost 200 million children living in over a million habitations across the country.

## Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: Objectives and Goals

The SSA aims to enroll all 6-14 year-olds in school by 2010, retain them in school, and provide them with quality education at least till class eight. When it began, the target was to have all children of 6-14 years old enrolled in school within 2003, complete primary schooling by 2007 and complete eight years of elementary education by 2010. It seeks to improve access to education by making a primary school available within one km of all habitations, mobilising communities in favor of education, supporting the training of teachers, developing teaching materials and monitoring learning outcomes.

SSA basically supports existing regular elementary education programmes that are aimed at improving the quality of education both in terms of infrastructure and curriculum and eradicating the social gaps affecting access to education, thereby achieving the long-cherished goal of Universal Elementary Education (UEE).

### The major goals of the SSA are:

- Enrolment of all children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate school, 'Back-to-School' camp by 2005.
- Retention of all children till the upper primary stage by 2010.
- Bridging of gender and social category gaps in enrolment, retention and learning.
- Ensuring that there is significant enhancement in the learning achievement levels of children at the primary and upper primary stages.

### Other objectives of the SSA are to

- Foster effective involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Management Committees, Village and Urban Slum Level Education Committees, Parent Teacher Associations, Mother Teacher Associations and other grassroots level structures in the management of elementary education.
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps by 2007 and ensure retention by 2010.

Several local evaluation reports and central audits have suggested that the scheme has been an unmixed blessing and, till 2009, had failed to achieve even its first target of getting all children to school, despite continuous stretching of deadlines. Even the resources committed to education have remained around 3.5 per cent of the GDP, compared to the government commitment of six per cent. West Bengal, in particular, has been one of the states that have lagged behind others with respect to implementation of the programme in a holistic manner and achieving the goals.

The report of the Comptroller of Auditor General (CAG) of India (Report 15 of 2006) says that *“Even after four years of*

*the implementation of the scheme and utilisation of almost 86 per cent of funds available with the implementing agencies, the revised target of SSA to enroll all children in schools, education guarantee scheme, alternative schools, back to school camps by 2005 was not achieved as 1.36 crore children (40 per cent of the total 3.4 crore children out of school) remained out of school in the age group of 6-14 years. Outreach of education to focus groups and disabled children was also not adequate.”<sup>1</sup>*

SSA is supported by domestic resources, mainly education cess of 3 per cent, supplemented partially by external funding from the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA), the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Commission (EC). The government and the development partners carry out a Joint Review Mission (JRM) twice a year, to review the progress in implementation and discuss follow-up actions.

According to the 10th JRM carried out during 20 July -31 July 2009, “Goal 1 is close to being achieved in many States... Impressive progress has also been made towards universalisation of the upper primary level of elementary education by expanding the infrastructure required for this level. However, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh continue to face varying obstacles which impede their progress. Some of the North-Eastern States and Jammu and Kashmir face a somewhat different set of problems in this context. Urban centres, especially the four metropolitan cities, also require special attention in the context of their attempt to cope with continuous migration from rural areas which renders the lives of many small children vulnerable.”<sup>2</sup>

Goal 1 is close to being achieved in many States... Impressive progress has also been made towards universalisation of the upper primary level of elementary education by expanding the infrastructure required for this level. However, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh continue to face varying obstacles which impede their progress.

10th Joint Review Mission of SSA, 20 -31 July, 2009

Even the Annual State of Education Report (ASER) 2008, facilitated by NGO Pratham, finds West Bengal below par with respect to several educational indicators.<sup>3</sup> As Table 1 shows, not only are more children out of school in West Bengal—5.7 per cent compared to the average of 4.3 per cent for the 31 states surveyed by Pratham—the state is also sending fewer children to anganwadis or pre-schools. In terms of quality of education and retention again, while not worse, West Bengal is not much better than the all-state average, and far lower than the high-performing states of Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

**Table 1: West Bengal’s Education Status in ASER 2008**

Indicators	West Bengal	All States
Per cent Children (age 3-4) in anganwadi/pre-school	75.9	76.4
Per cent Children (age 6-14) Out of School	5.7	4.3
Per cent Children (age 6-14) in Private school	5.3	22.5
Per cent Children (classes 1-2) who can read letters, words or more	84	75.4
Per cent Children (classes 1-2) who can recognize numbers (1-9) or more	84.8	75.7
Per cent Children (classes 3-5) who can read Level 1 (Class 1 Text) or more	67.7	66.6
Per cent Children (classes 3-5) who can do subtraction or more	55.5	54.9
Per cent Children (classes 3-5) who can tell time of both Clocks	36.9	46.9
Per cent Children (classes 3-5) who can do currency tasks	74	73.1

Source: ASER 2008

1 [www.cag.gov.in/html/reports/civil/2006\\_15\\_peraud/highlights.pdf](http://www.cag.gov.in/html/reports/civil/2006_15_peraud/highlights.pdf)  
 2 <http://ssa.nic.in/monitoring/joint-review-mission-ssa-1/joint-review-mission-ssa/>  
 3 <http://www.asercentre.org/asersurvey/aser08.php>

It is to take a close look at the funds flow process and utilisation pattern as well as supplement the civil society's efforts towards monitoring policy implementation that HAQ: Centre for Child Rights, New Delhi, and Society for People's Awareness (SPAN), Kolkata, decided to track the SSA as a test case in West Bengal<sup>4</sup>. The two organisations together have been carrying out budget for children analysis in the state of West Bengal since 2006 from the perspective of child rights. This study was done for a period of five years from 2004-05 to 2008-09, along with an analysis of state budgets for the same period.

The idea was to track the flow of funds from the state level to the grassroots as well as the impact of the scheme at the school level to understand the gaps in the implementation and monitoring of the SSA and find out if effective utilisation of funds and administrative capacity as well as participation of the community had indeed taken place. The entire field-level study and interviews were conducted by the SPAN team.

## Methodology of the Study

The study aims at analysing the flow of financial resources from the Centre to the state to districts to the last level of beneficiaries. The main objectives are to find out

- The process of budget transfer from Centre to the states to the last beneficiary (schools) via district or directly from the state.
- The amount of the promised budget allocations actually reaching and being utilised for the purpose it was meant.
- The final outcomes at the last level where the funds are being used and if the funds were actually being used for the purpose they were meant for.

The study has been divided into two components. The first is the financial tracking of the Planned and Approved Budgets, actual flow of funds and expenditure at various levels (state, district blocks and schools) of the selected project areas on the major interventions of SSA. The second part tries to gauge the impact of implementation down to the beneficiary through Focused Group Discussions with stakeholders/ beneficiaries and also one-on-one interviews with the officials at various levels. The information was collected through field visits, individual interviews, observations in the schools and discussions with the officials.

## Location and Period of Study

Keeping in view the limitation of time and data available at state level, one single district was chosen. Murshidabad district was chosen because SPAN has been working in the rural areas of this district for more than a decade. Two blocks, urban and rural, of the district were further selected at random, from which 10 schools, 5 from each block, were picked up for detailed study and analysis. The blocks chosen were Behrampore South Circle (Urban) and Sagardighi Block (Rural). The ten schools are:

### Behrampore South Circle (Urban)

1. Indraprastha Prathamik Bidyalaya (Primary School)
2. Tarunsangha Primary school (Primary School)
3. Tarunsangha Upper Primary School (Upper Primary school)

---

<sup>4</sup> The West Bengal study is a part of the full study carried out by HAQ: Centre for Child Rights and its state partners, which tracked 60 schools in 12 blocks in six districts each in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha and Assam.

4. Biharilal Prahadsundari Primary School
5. Baharampur Girls Mahakali Pathshala

#### **Sagardighi Rural Block (Rural)**

1. Mansinghapur Adivasi Primary School
2. Gobordhondanga High School (Upper primary)
3. Goshaigram Primary School
4. Ghugridanga Primary school
5. Ghugridanga Upper Primary School

## **Collection of Data**

For the purpose of data collection, frequent visits have been carried out to state SSA office (office of the State Project Director) and the district SSA office to collect state and district level plans, budgets and relevant documents. Visits have been made to the urban and rural block headquarters to carry out individual interviews and discussions with the officials, for information on the planning process and disbursement of amounts intervention-wise and collection of relevant budget documents from block levels. All schools were visited to interact with teaching staff and the final beneficiaries, that is, the children. Apart from collecting budget data from all levels, the views of government officials and grassroots-level service providers have been taken through interviews and focused group discussions.

## **Sources of Financial Data**

- Proposed Budgets for West Bengal State under SSA, 2005-06, 2006-07 & 2007-08
- Item-wise Revised Recommended Budget against PAB Approvals for SSA 2005-06, West Bengal
- Approved Annual Work Plan and Budget for SSA 2006-07, West Bengal
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Annual Work Plan and Budget 2007-08
- Consolidated Receipts and Payment Accounts for the year ended on 31 March 2006 – Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- Consolidated Receipts and Payment Accounts for the year ended on 31 March 2007 – Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- Approved Annual Work Plan and Budget for SSA 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08- West Bengal (District wise)
- School SSA Utilisation Certificate
- Books of Accounts from the schools concerned
- Intervention-wise proposed, approved budget and expenditure statements from the state, district, block and school level from the time period of 2005-06 to 2007-08.

## **Constraints and Limitations**

At the outset, it is important to mention that out of over 78,000 schools in 20 districts of the state, the study covers only one district and 10 schools. So this is too small a sample to yield a clear verdict of the performance of the SSA in the state in general. However, our broad findings resonate with the criticisms made of the SSA so far by the CAG and other moni-

toring studies and point towards the fact that though progress on enrolment has been encouraging, release of funds and spending, the quality of education and teachers as well as overall administration of the scheme remains dismal. The other constraints of the study are:

- Collection of budget documents at all levels proved the most challenging obstacle of the study. Lack of transparency, complicated bureaucratic procedures of getting permission leading to delays, irregularity of governments departments, non-cooperative attitude of teachers and government officers, lack of willingness to share information and negligent record-keeping were the stumbling blocks in gathering complete information about SSA budgeting
- Initially, there was a plan to cover all types of schools like alternative schools, EGS centres and residential schools. However, due to limited time period and delay in getting permission from the blocks to collect data from schools, only three types of schools could be covered – primary, upper primary and tribal schools.
- The Pashchim Banga Sarva Shiksha Mission did not publish the Annual Report of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for 2008-09. Therefore we were unable to get the expenditure statement for the year. Although our budget for children study covers a period of 2004-05 to 2008-09, we could not conduct our SSA study for only three years—2005-06 to 2007-08.

## Elementary Education in India

In 1992, India ratified the United Nations Child Rights Convention (UNCRC) and thus committed to ensuring the right of every child to education based on equal opportunity. Under article 28 of UNCRC, the government of India must “make primary education compulsory and available free to all” to “encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational, make them available and accessible to every child...”

In spite of this, more than 13 million children, or close to 7 per cent of all children aged 6-13 years were out of school in 2005. Among these, 68.26 per cent never went to any school, while the rest 31.74 per cent dropped out from school after one or more years of schooling<sup>5</sup>. Even the UNESCO’s Education for All (EFA) Monitoring Report declares that India is at the risk of not reaching the target of Universalising Elementary Education by 2015.

India has one of the lowest educational indicators in many of its northern states - Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. These states account for most of the country's children out of school and most of its illiterate population.

The Economics of Elementary Education in India: The Challenge of Public Finance, Private Provision and Household Costs, Edited by Santosh Mehrotra, Sage, 2006

The failure to achieve quality elementary education for all sections of children, especially the vulnerable, “dropouts” and “out of school” children, plagues the education system even in 2010, 17 years after the Supreme Court of India’s historical verdict in 1993 in the case of “Unnikrishnan Vs State of Andhra Pradesh” that every children has the right to free and compulsory education up to 14 years. Even the new law, it is feared, may dilute the Right to education to a great extent.

## The Status of Education in West Bengal

According to the West Bengal Human Development Report, 2004<sup>6</sup>, the literacy rate of West Bengal has improved from 57.7 per cent in 1991 to 62.2 per cent in 2001. Some 43.4 per cent of the scheduled tribe (ST) population is literate, which is lower than the national average. The male literacy rate is 57.4 per cent while the female literacy rate is 29.2 per cent, showing up a gross gender disparity in literacy.

5 All-India Survey of Out-Of-School Children of 6-13 Years Age Group by the Social and Rural Research Institute. See [www.ssa.nic.in](http://www.ssa.nic.in)

6 Development and Planning Department, May 2004

## Redrafting of Right to Education Bill Sought

Special Correspondent

Bangalore: The Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL) has demanded redrafting of the just-passed Right to Education Bill on the ground that it excludes millions of children from its ambit.

Prabir Basu, National Convener of CACL, has said in a release that Bill excludes about 157 million children in India in the age group of up to 6 years and around 50 million in the age group of 14-18 years, since it covers only children aged between 6-14.

Mr Basu has said the Bill does not have any commitment on the financial responsibility of the government.

“The Bill is depriving the poor children from the opportunity and eligibility of technical education and higher education by providing free education only up to eighth standard because most of the technical education needs at least 10+2 as eligibility,” he said.

The Hindu, 7 August 2009 <http://www.thehindu.com/2009/08/07/stories/2009080756080700.htm>

In order to universalise elementary education in West Bengal, the government aims at strengthening the formal as well as non-formal education system in the state. Since inception, the Primary Education Act of 1973 has guided formal elementary education in West Bengal, putting the West Bengal Board of Primary Education constituted under this Act in overall charge of primary education. At the District level, the District Primary School Council (DPSC), an autonomous body, looks after the day-to-day management of the schools<sup>7</sup>. All primary and secondary schools are under the authority of the DPSC. This system contrasts with some other states like Kerala, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Assam that have initiated the system of transfer of authority of primary schools to the Zilla or Gram Panchayat.

Apart from the formal structure of imparting elementary education, a parallel system of elementary educational programmes has been in operation since the 1980s encompassing Non-formal Education Programme (NFE), Operation Blackboard, Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi as well as Prakalpa (SSK & SSP)<sup>8</sup> and Madhyamik Shiksha Karmasuchi (MSK)<sup>9</sup>.

Table 2: Status of Elementary Education in West Bengal

Number of Districts	20
Number of Blocks	483
Number of Villages	38,983
Number of Primary Schools ((Including SSK and SSP)	67,107
Number of Teachers in Primary Schools	168,526
Number of Schools providing upper primary education (Including Junior High, Secondary, Higher Secondary and MSK)	11,625
Number of Teachers at upper primary level	141,329
Number of Children of age group 5-14 years	2,19,68,000
Net School Enrolment ratio at primary level (Class I –IV) in per cent	98.03
Net School Enrolment ratio at Upper Primary Level (Class V-VIII) in Per Cent	78.74

Data source: Economic Review, Government of West Bengal, 2007-08, and Annual Plan, Government of West Bengal, 2007-08

7 In West Bengal, classes I to IV are primary level and classes V-VIII are upper primary level.

8 SSK is the Shishu Shiksha Kendra established and run under the Panchayat and Rural Development Department and SSP is the Shishu Shiksha Prakalpa run under the Urban Municipalities. Both are the programmes under the Raja Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi scheme. They are the alternative primary schools to be established in those habitations and for those children who are not covered by the regular primary schools.

9 MSK is the Madhyamik Shiksha Kendra run by the Panchayat and mural development department and provide education from Class V to Class X. It is alternative Upper Primary School.

With the introduction of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)<sup>10</sup> and then Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which was a more holistic programme covering all districts, the informal programmes have been subsumed in these programmes. In West Bengal, some of them have suffered neglect, as the state government has tended to strengthen and focus more on the formal programmes. This is evident from the fact that budgetary allocation for all programmes of elementary education other than SSA reflect no provision for expansion.

The documents, Elementary Education in India and Progress Towards Universal Elementary Education (2007-08), released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) on 22 January 2008, has placed West Bengal low down on the Educational Development Index.

**Table 3: Education Development Index 2007-08-The Worst Performers**

Primary level	Upper primary level	Composite: Primary and Upper primary
Meghalaya	Chhattisgarh	Assam
Assam	Arunachal	Jharkhand
Jharkhand	Jharkhand	West Bengal
Arunachal	West Bengal	Arunachal
Bihar	Bihar	Bihar

Source: Press Information Bureau, 19January2009

**Table 4: A Comparative Performance in Education Indicators – West Bengal and India**

Indicators	West Bengal	All States
Primary school per 1000 of child population (6-11 years)	7	9
Upper primary schools per 1000 of the child population	2	6
Average Number of Instructional days	202	211
Percentage of schools having drinking water facilities in school	78.83	86.75
Percentage of schools having common toilet in school	68.95	62.67
Percentage of schools having girls toilet in schools	28.59	41.95
Percentage of schools having boundary walls	41.44	50.22
Percentage of classrooms having good conditions	55.01	74
Percentage of schools having pucca building	57.54	72.98
Average dropout rate at primary level	9.41	9.36
Pupil Teacher ratio at Primary Level	45	34
Pupil Teacher ratio at Upper Primary Level	57	31
Number of teachers per Primary school	2.96	2.83
Number of teachers per Upper Primary school	6.72	4.02
Percentage of Primary teachers (including para teachers) with in-service training	69.98	46.54
Percentage of Upper primary teachers (including para teachers) with in-service training	30.32	36.21
Percentage of Primary school para teachers out of total para teachers in all schools	44.82	67.78

Source: Elementary Education in India: Progress towards UEE - Flash Statistics: 2007-08, DISE, NUEPA

10 DPEP is a centrally sponsored, externally funded programme aiming at universalisation of primary education through universal access, enrolment and retention with a substantial improvement in the existing level of quality of education. In West Bengal, it is running in 10 Districts viz. Bankura, Birbhum, Coochbehar, Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas, Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Malda and Purulia. The four basic objectives of DPEP include: 1) Providing access to primary education (Class I to IV) to all children of 5 to 9 years age group through formal or non-formal/innovative systems, 2) Enrolling all children in the formal or non-formal/innovative systems, 3) Retain all children in school and provide necessary support for completing primary education within 4 years' time, and 4) Ensuring substantive improvement in existing level of quality of education.

As table 4 shows,

- Availability of adequate number of schools is still a fundamental problem of the school system. Particularly disturbing is the poor ratio of upper primary schools in West Bengal—only one third of the all-state average—resulting in natural dropout of students who remain uneducated simply because there just aren't enough schools. Even the higher than all-state average dropout rate at the primary level indicates that more children are at work than the statistics show.
- Good infrastructure facilities are an important determinant of retention of children at school and the quality of education offered. The state lags far behind the all-India average in terms of some basic facilities such as toilets for girls, boundary walls, drinking water facilities and classrooms. Even the pupil teacher ratios at both the Primary and upper primary levels are higher than the SSA norm of 40.
- The only area where West Bengal scores is the number of trained teachers per school. The state has traditionally been proficient in teachers, who also have been a loyal constituency of the ruling political party. It also has a fewer share of para teachers than most other states.

## Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in West Bengal

Under SSA, as mentioned before, the primary objective of universal elementary education is to be undertaken through provision of community owned school system and by incorporating all existing programmes of elementary education in the central /centrally sponsored category in consultation and partnership with states. The government would open new schools in habitations which do not have schooling facilities and strengthen existing school infrastructure through provision of additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grant and school improvement grant. Existing schools with inadequate teacher strength would be provided additional teachers. The capacity of existing teachers would be built by extensive training, provision of grant for developing teaching-learning materials and development of an academic support structure. SSA has a special focus on girls and children of weaker sections. A number of initiatives, including free textbooks, target these children.

Prior to SSA, the implementation of West Bengal Elementary Education Project was routed through a registered society named “Pashchim Banga Rajya Prathamik Shikkha Unnayan Sanstha”. The SSA mandates establishing a State Mission Authority in every state. In West Bengal, both DPEP and SSA have been carried out under Pashim Banga Sarva Shiksha Mission in collaboration with the School Education Department. The State Level Implementation Society (SIS) is known as “Pashchim Banga Rajya Prarambhik Shikkha Unnayan Sanstha” and entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out monitoring and operational support task.

The School Education Directorate, West Bengal Board of Primary Education, West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education (WBBME) and the State Council of Educational Research and Training have also been playing an active role in SSA.

## Operational Structure

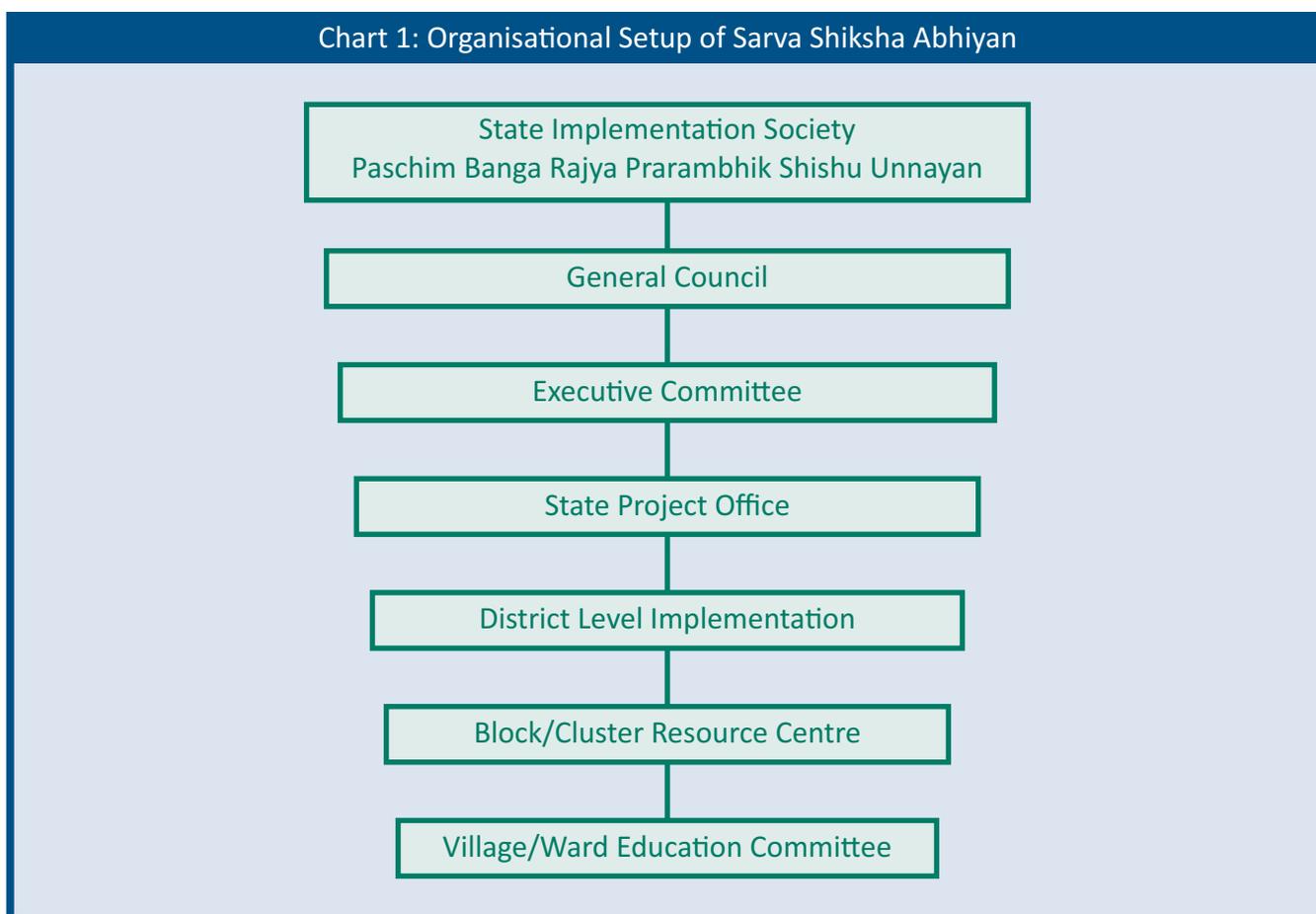
In West Bengal, the apex body for SSA implementation is Pashchim Banga Sarva Shiksha Mission (PBSSM) with the Chief Minister as Chairman of the General Council and the Chief Secretary to the government as Chairman, Executive Committee. The State Project Office is the most crucial unit for implementation of the programme, which has links with district and sub-district level structures, NGOs, state government, and all concerned.

For the implementation of SSA at the district level, there is a District Project Office under the direct supervision of the Zila Sabhadhipati as Chairman, SSM and the District Magistrate as the District Project Director in an ex officio capacity. The District Office interacts closely with the Panchayat Raj Institutions in the district, namely the Zila Parishad, Block Development Committee and Village Panchayats.

Under SSA, there is a Cluster/Block Resource Centre (CRC/BRC) formed for every 10-15 schools. The Sub Inspector of Schools is in charge of the Cluster Resource Centre, has one coordinator and one Resource teacher (Shikkha Bandhu) for coordinating the activities of the school.

At the final level are the Village Education Committee (VEC) and the Ward Education Committee (WEC), which prepare the plan for the schools according to local needs and monitors school-level interventions and work towards community ownership of the schools. The VEC/WEC is the critical unit for securing cooperation and participation of the local community and at the same time, oversees the implementation of SSA in the village. These committees are assisted by other grassroots-level structures such as the School Development Monitoring Committee (SDMC), Mother Teacher Association (MTA), Parent Teacher's Association (PTA) and women's groups.

Chart 1: Organisational Setup of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan



## SSA Funding Process

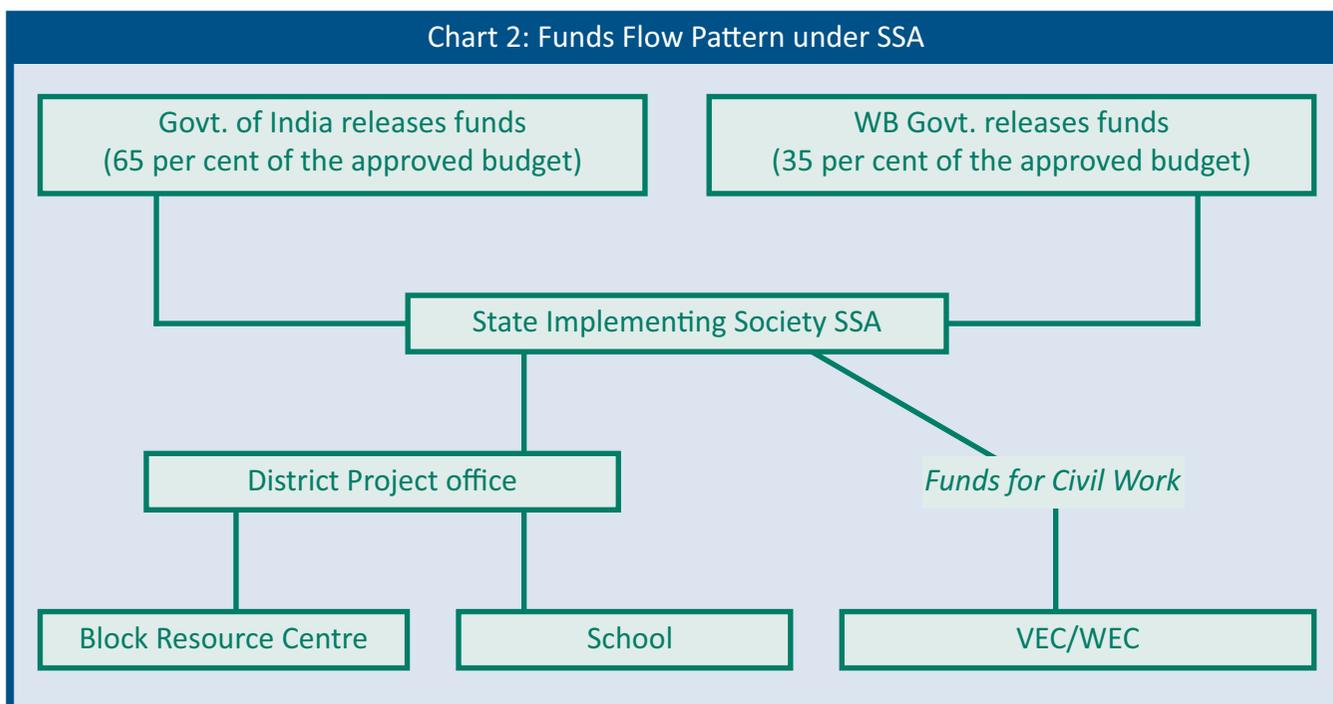
SSA was funded both by the Government of India and the Government of West Bengal in the ratio of 85:15 till 2002, of 75:25 till 2007 and 65:35 in 2007-08 and 2008-09. Preparation of District Elementary Education Plans, Perspective as well as Annual Plans, appraisal and approval of these plans as well as financial outlay by the Project Approval Board (PAB) precede the final release of funds by the Government of India.

The funds of the State Implementing Society mainly come from (i) Grants-in-aid made by the Government of India and the State Government; (ii) Income from the assets of the State Implementation Society, including interest and (iii) Other sources.

The budget proposals under SSA are prepared under the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B), covering all the interventions specified in the SSA norms. While the AWP&B specifically defines the planning for the annual year, it is prepared in the context of the goals enumerated in the Perspective Plan. The Perspective Plan of the district is the overall strategy, with defined financial targets and planning, to achieve the goals of SSA. Item-wise budget demands for one year are included in the AWP&B. The interventions under SSA include:

- Appointment of teachers,
- Opening new primary and alternative schooling facilities like Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS)/Alternative and Innovative Education centres (AIE),
- Opening of upper primary schools,
- Construction of additional classrooms, schools and other facilities,
- Provision of free textbooks,
- Maintenance and repair of school buildings,
- Provision of teaching/learning equipment for primary schools on, Upgrade of EGS to regular schools or setting up of a new primary school, TLE for upper primary school,
- School grant,
- Teacher grant,
- Teacher training,
- Opening of State Institute of Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT),
- Training of community leaders,
- Provision for disabled children,
- Research, Evaluation, Supervision and Monitoring,
- Management cost,
- Innovative activity for girls' education, early childhood care and education, interventions for children belonging to SC/ST community, computer education specially for upper primary level,
- Setting up Block Resource Centre (BRC)/Cluster Resource Centre (CRC),
- Interventions for out of school children.
- Preparatory activities for micro planning, household surveys, studies, community mobilization, school-based activities etc.
- NPEGEL and KGBV.

Chart 2: Funds Flow Pattern under SSA



The Government of India releases funds directly to the SIS in two instalments a year, in April and September. This is done only after the State Government has transferred its matching funds and expenditure of at least 50 per cent of the funds (Centre and the State) transferred has been incurred.

Both the central and the state governments release the funds directly to SIS, which in turn release funds to the District Project Offices (DPO), which again releases funds directly to the BRC/CRC and the VEC (at the school level). Only the funds for civil works are sent directly to the VEC by the State Project Office. The flow chart below indicates the process of funds flow under SSA.

## Bottom-up Planning Process

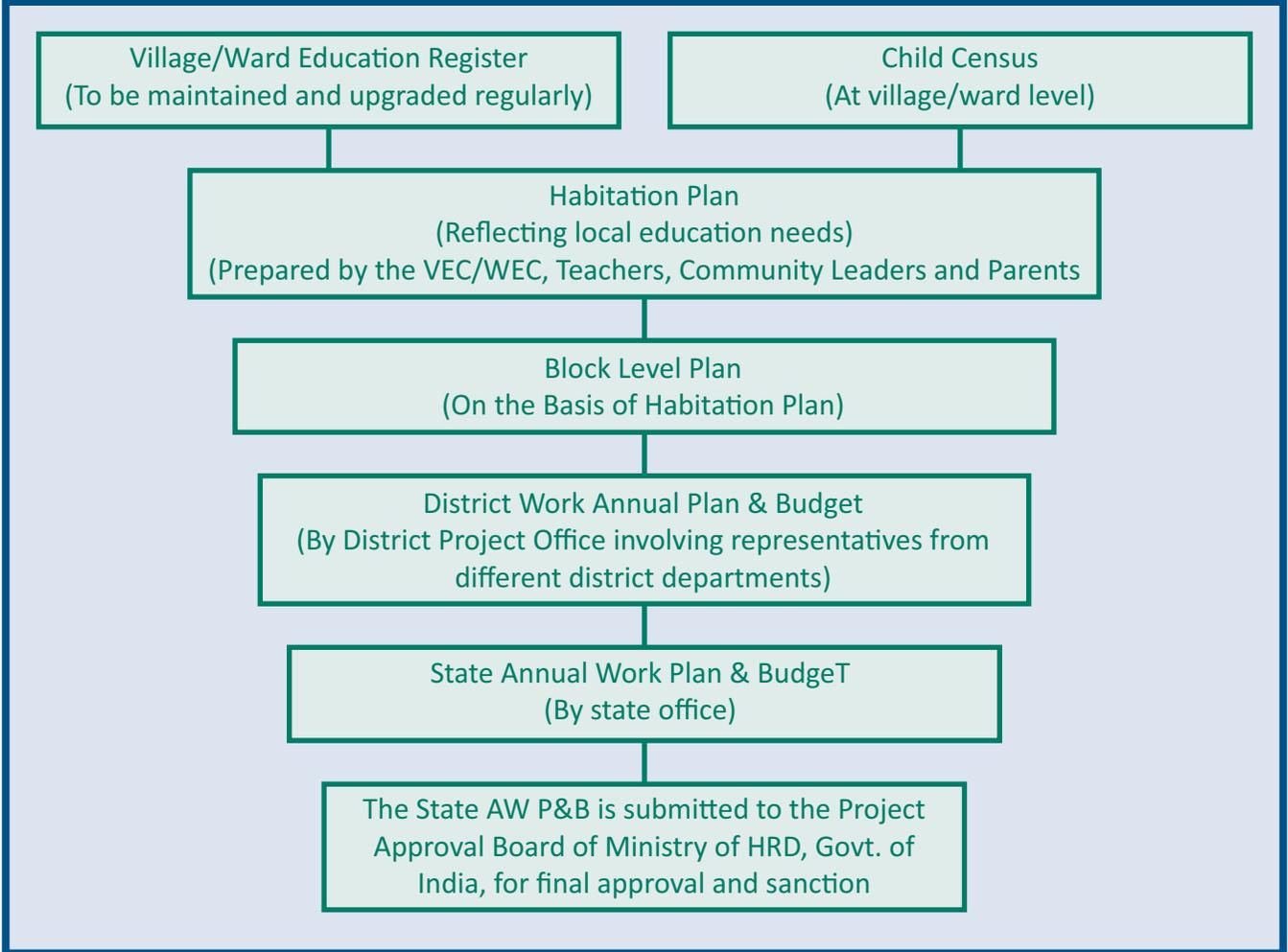
An important element of the SSA is the constitution of core planning teams at village/ward, block and district level (see chart 3 below). At the grassroots level, a village/habitation plan is prepared involving the VEC, community leaders,

### Status of Implementation of SSA in West Bengal in 2005

- Against the target of universal enrolment to be achieved by 2003, subsequently amended to 2005, there were still 8.97 lakh out of school children.
- Overall dropout rate in West Bengal in classes I-IV was 76 per cent and 51 per cent in classes V -VIII.
- Out of 50,255 primary schools in the State, 363 had no building, 10,084 (20 per cent) had only one classroom, 9,316 (19 per cent) had no drinking water, 41 per cent had no toilet facilities and 81 per cent of schools had no separate toilet for girls.
- Pupil-teacher ratio was much higher than the norm in primary and upper primary schools.
- Out of 5.04 lakh children with special needs in the State, only 0.62 lakh were enrolled in schools as of March 2005, of whom only 0.16 lakh were provided with aids and appliances.

Source: CAG Audit Report (Civil) no 15 for the year ended 31 March 2006, Chapter-III

Chart 3: Three-tier planning in SSA



teachers and parents reflecting the local needs of education. Similarly, there is a core planning team at the block level and a district level comprising representatives of various government departments. There is a State component plan for each state, both perspective and annual (based on the grassroots-level plans emerging from the school level) for universalising elementary education within the stipulated timeframe. All tables prepared by the districts are consolidated at the State level and furnished in the State component plan.

## SSA Track Record in West Bengal

The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), Government of India, is a good reference point for an assessment of the education scenario in the state in 2005-06, which coincides with the beginning of our study period, 2005-06 to 2008-09. The report highlights some critical areas of challenge for the state. First, it highlights the large number of children who are out of school and the huge lacunae in reaching out to them. Second, it reveals that the dropout rate is higher in primary classes than the upper primary ones. Third, high teacher-student ratios point to poor quality of teaching at the government schools. Finally, the low proportion of disabled children in school indicates the under-developed school facilities and infrastructure to accommodate the disabled children, undermining the goal of inclusive education.

The Economic Review lists positive achievements in scaling up infrastructure facilities and enrollment rates but a closer scrutiny reveals the challenges in meeting the objectives of SSA.

## Status of Implementation of SSA in West Bengal in 2007

- There is a 7.7 per cent annual rise in enrollment in the 5-13 years' age group.
- As per the NUEPA report, average dropout rate in the primary classes (I-V) is 11.55 per cent.
- Construction work of 78.91 per cent class rooms has been completed.
- 77.69 per cent children have enrolled already.
- There is a target of appointing 80.64 per cent para teachers.
- 46,863 mother teacher associations have been formed to reduce existing gender and social gaps.
- 44,955 VECs and 2,696 WECs have been formed in 341 blocks and 127 municipalities have been formed.
- As on 31 August 2007, construction work of 65.84 per cent new school buildings, 58.41 per cent of additional classrooms, 78.66 per cent of drinking water facilities and 85.33 per cent of toilet facilities has been completed.

Source: Economic Review, Government of West Bengal, 2007-08

- Although 77.69 per cent children have been enrolled, the retention level is low. The dropout rate is more than the annual enrollment rate suggesting low retention and more children out of school
- As per SSA norms, each school should have a VEC/WEC. There is still a gap of 47,651 VEC/WEC in the state.
- The Third Joint Review Mission of the SSA held in January 2006, found that
- The number of out of school children has reduced in the Primary and Upper Primary sections but still remains large enough to pose a challenge, especially in the context of paucity of schools.
- Despite several innovative steps taken to improve quality of education at the primary level, the state is lagging behind in filling the number of vacancies of teachers and developing civil infrastructure, which in turn is limiting the efforts towards providing quality school education.

## West Bengal gets Poor Marks in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Four years of implementation and spending under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has failed to give the desired results in West Bengal.

There were 8.97 million out-of-school children in West Bengal as of April 2005, despite the target of universal enrolment set by the SSA. Not just that, 76 per cent children dropped out of school in Class I to IV and 51 per cent in Class V-VIII as of April 2005, according to a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). Pulling up the Pashchim Banga Rajya Prarambhik Shiksha Unnayan Sanstha, which is responsible for implementing SSA in the state, the CAG report said non-utilisation of funds and delay in submitting the annual work plan was the key reason behind the lag in funds' release by the Centre, in accordance with the guidelines for SSA. West Bengal's record in encouraging education among girls, SC and ST children is also dismal, according to the report. Out of the budget provision of Rs 10.27 crore during 2002-05 for the purpose, only Rs 1.83 crore was spent. In fact, the state project director had stated that scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and girl students were dropping out of school due to lack of monitoring.

Source: The Financial Express, 16 April 2007

- West Bengal has not been opening new upper primary schools. As a result, the Primary/Upper Primary school ratio is highly skewed at 5:1, with large inter-district variations.
- The system of funds flow needs to be revamped due to delays in finalisation of construction sites, delay in release of installments, and submission of utilisation certificates.

## A Profile of Murshidabad

When the country became independent, the district (Murshidabad) suffered from the rude shock of partition. The government's efforts, in the years following independence, to expand opportunities for elementary education in the district proved inadequate. That is why the district is characterised by massive illiteracy and poverty.

SSA Monitoring Report for the district of Murshidabad, 2007-08, by the Department of Rural Extension, Vishwa Bharati University

West Bengal has 18 districts. The SSA study is located in Murshidabad district. Despite a 7.32 per cent share in the state's population, Murshidabad is a demographically important district. Muslims account for almost 64 per cent of the population of the state and people from the scheduled castes about 12 per cent of the population. At 934 females for every 1000 males, the sex ratio is higher than the state average of 934 and the national average of 933. The sex ratio is the same as national for SCs, 951, and

improves to 972 for STs. The mean age for marriage for girls is just above 18 years. Infant mortality rate is a high of 60 per thousand live births, compared to just about 40 for the state.

### Status of SSA Implementation in Murshidabad District

Finding of the study conducted by the Department of Rural Extension, Viswa Bharati University (Monitoring Report for the district of Murshidabad) 2007-08

- There is an urgent need for opening new primary and upper primary schools as no new school was opened in 2007-08.
- Teacher-student ratios in both primary and upper primary school are higher than national average.
- In many upper primary schools, para teachers are found busy in managing the workload of regular teachers.
- In 2006-07, 64 per cent of the targeted civil works were completed due to delayed release of funds for civil works.
- About 83.22 per cent of schools reported the distribution of free textbooks among the student in time.
- Only 33 per cent primary school teachers and 66 per cent upper primary school teachers completed 10 days of training during the April-December 2007.
- VEC involvement in school activities is negligible.

According to the Economic Review, 2007-08, of the Government of West Bengal, Murshidabad enjoys a per capita income of Rs 17,486.22, compared to Rs 20,895.64 for the state (measured at current prices for 2003-04). About 43 per cent of the people live below the poverty line, compared to 37 per cent for the state.

The district has five subdivisions, 26 blocks and 255 village panchayats. It is prone to natural disasters such as floods. Majority of the people depend upon agriculture, while the rest are engaged in brass, zari and bidi industries. These industries also employ a lot of children. There are 3,498 schools in the state, 2,491 of them primary. There are also 1,030 Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi schools and 40 Special Child Labour Schools. Over 31 per cent of its population belongs to the 0-14 age group and over 17.8 per cent are in the 0-6 age group. However, female literacy is poor, only 46.33 per cent, compared to 61.4 per cent for males. With a high sex ratio and poor literacy, girls are prime candidates for trafficking in the state, which has increased in recent years.

Medical facilities are improving but still inadequate. The district offers only 86 beds per lakh of people at its 239 medical centres, which include 16 hospitals. Mean life expectancy is 59 years compared to 67 years for the state.

With a median human development index value of 0.46, Murshidabad is ranked at a low 15th among West Bengal's 19 districts in the state's latest Human Development Report, 2004. It has a similar ranking in gender development, while its performance in education is worse, keeping it at the 16th place.

Though the major funding for the SSA comes from the Union Government, regular release of the state's share is crucial. On an average, during 2005-06 to 2007-08, the state's annual contribution to SSA came to 3.03 per cent of its total allocation for Child Education. This amount seems too little to match the 35 per cent funding requirement.

## SSA Allocations at State, District and Schools

Though the major funding for the SSA comes from the Union Government, regular release of the state's share is crucial. On an average, during our period of study, the state's annual contribution to SSA came to 3.03 per cent of the total allocation for Child Education. This amount seems too meagre to match the 35 per cent funding requirement. As we shall see, this fear is borne out by our study.

**Table 5: State Share in SSA Out of the Total Budget for Child Education (Rs lakh)**

Year	Total Budget for Child Education	Total State Share for SSA	Percentage of state share for SSA in the total budget for Education
2005-06	482,898.25	10,000	2.07
2006-07	554,924.09	15,000	2.7
2007-08	597,787.69	25,000	4.18

Source: Detailed Demands for Grants, West Bengal State Budget, for 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08/2008-09.

If we examine the financial allocation, release and expenditure for the SSA at the state level, we'd see that the approved budget was always less than the proposed one. Also, the amount actually released to the State Implementation Society has been consistently less than the amount approved by the project approval board. Worse, even the actual expenditure was less than funds released in two of the three years of the study period.

**Table 6: SSA Allocation, Release and Expenditure at the State Level (Rs lakh)**

Year	Proposed Budget	Approved Budget	Fund Released			Expenditure
			Central Share	State Share	Total Released	
2005-06	181,209.35	105,944.58	32,024.00	12,899.92	44,923.92	48,828.91
2006-07	151,192.56	146,487.37	63,912.59	20,578.93	84,491.52	93,259.60
2007-08	162,281	143,876.18	90,381.30	48,505.30	138,886.6	102,200.21

Source: <http://ssa.nic.in/financial-management/allocation-releases-and-expenditure> Proposed budget for West Bengal and Murshidabad under SSA 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08

It is clear from table 6 that in none of the years the entire approved budget was released. The lower release of the total grant might have been because of under utilisation of the previously released amount or the less than scheduled release of the state share (25 per cent of the total approved fund till 2006-07 and now 35 per cent).

As table 7 shows, only 58.46 per cent of the proposed budget was approved in 2005-06 and only 42.4 per cent of the approved funds were released. The next year, though 96.88 per cent of the proposed budget was approved, only 57.67 per cent

of the approved budget was released. It is only in 2007-08 that 96.53 per cent of the approved funds were finally released. This implies that the release of funds increased in tandem with the higher utilisation of the approved budget. This proves underutilisation of the approved funds is one of the major causes of lower funds release from the central government.

The state government has been sluggish in both release and use of funds for SSA. It released only 12.17 per cent of the approved budget in 2005-06 and a slightly higher 14.04 per cent in 2006-07, compared to its scheduled share of 25 per cent. In 2007-08, finally, the state came close to meeting its obligation of contributing 35 per cent, when it released 33 per cent. Even then, only 73 per cent of the released funds were spent--the maximum utilisation of government funds in these three years.

**Table 7: Comparison between Proposed and Approved Budgets, Funds Released and Expenditure in West Bengal SSA (per cent)**

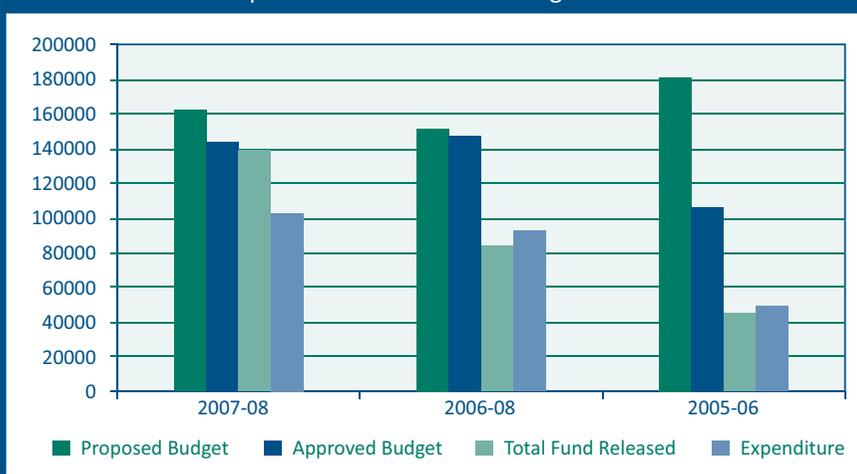
Year	Budget approved (share of Proposed Budget)	Funds Released (Share of Approved Budget)	Expenditure (Share of Approved Budget)
2005-06	58.46	42.4	46.08
2006-07	96.88	57.67	63.66
2007-08	88.65	96.53	71.03

Source: Proposed budget for West Bengal and Murshidabad under SSA, 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08  
[http://ssa.nic.in/financial-management/allocation-releases-and-expenditure,](http://ssa.nic.in/financial-management/allocation-releases-and-expenditure)

## Allocation and Expenditure under SSA in Murshidabad District

Both these tables also show that the state government has been sluggish in both release and use of funds for SSA. It released only 12.17 per cent of the approved budget in 2005-06 and a slightly higher 14.04 per cent in 2006-07, compared to its scheduled share of 25 per cent. In 2007-08, the state came close to meeting its obligation of contributing 35 per cent, when it released 33 per cent. However, even then, as Table 7 shows, only 73 per cent of the released funds were spent--the maximum utilisation of government funds in these three years. Even the central share came to only 63 per cent in that year (see table 6).

**Figure 1: Comparison between Proposed Budget, Approved Budget, Funds Released and Funds Spent under SSA in West Bengal**



On an average, the allocation for SSA in Murshidabad district was 9.57 per cent of the total Approved Budget for the state in the three-year period of study. The allocation crossed 10 per cent in 2006-07 but decreased sharply to 8.96 per cent the next year. In nominal terms, the amount of the approved budget for the district went up by 40.97 per cent in the three-year period, much slower than the rate of increase logged by the total SSA budget for the state, which was 53.17 per cent.

Murshidabad is home to 7.92 per cent of the total number of children in the age group of 5-13 years in the state, but 13.72 per cent of the total out-of-school children in the same age group. Within the district, 20.21 per cent of the total number of children aged 5-13 years are out of school<sup>11</sup>. This fact is obviously ignored by the SSA administration in the state; why else

11 Financial Monitoring Report of SSA West Bengal 2008-09 by Institute of Public Auditor India, Data Source- Calculated from Census 2001, Annual work Plan & Budget 2008-09 and GIS Mapping

**Table 8: SSA Allocation for Murshidabad District during 2005-06 to 2007-08 (Rs lakh)**

Year	Approved Budget for West Bengal	Approved Budget for Murshidabad	Percentage allocated for Murshidabad
2005-06	105,944.58	10,311.27	9.73
2006-07	146,487.37	14,864.63	10.15
2007-08	162,281	14,537.69	8.96
Average allocation for Murshidabad in total approved state budget during 2005-06 to 2007-08			9.57

Source: <http://ssa.nic.in/financial-management/allocation-releases-and-expenditure>, Proposed budget for West Bengal and Murshidabad under SSA 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08, Approved Annual Work Plan and Budget for SSA, West Bengal (district-wise) for 2005-06 to 2007-08, Financial Monitoring and procurement audit of SSA by Institute of Public Auditors of India.

would it be so niggardly with the funds released for the district or its spending.

Table 9 shows how even the meagre approved amount has not been spent in Murshidabad in our study period. In fact, on an average, the spending was not even 60 per cent of the approved amount. Expenditure improved from only 36.73 per cent of the allocation to a respectable 77 per cent by the end of our study period.

We did not have access to the proposed budget for SSA by Murshidabad District. We were informed that the District SSA Office did not keep a copy of the proposed budget after receiving the approved budget. As a result, we could not work out the percentage share of the proposed budget for the district that was actually approved by the State Office and the Central Project Approval Board.

**Table 9: Approved Budget and Expenditure of SSA in Murshidabad District**

Year	Allocation (Rs lakh)	Expenditure (Rs lakh)	Percentage of allocation spent
2005-06	10,311.27	3,787.39	36.73
2006-07	14,864.63	8,588.01	57.77
2007-08	14,537.69	11,236.43	77.29

Source: Approved Annual Work Plan and Budget for SSA West Bengal (District-wise) for 2005-06 to 2007-08, Financial Monitoring and Procurement Audit of SSA by the Institute of Public Auditors of India.

## Trend of Allocation under Different Components of SSA

If we examine the financial allocation by components of SSA, we find that civil works<sup>12</sup> are always on top of the list. Excluding that, teachers' salary<sup>13</sup> comes up consistently among the three components that get top priority from the state in terms of financial allocation. Even at the district level, teachers' salary gets the top billing followed by Intervention for Out-of-School Children (EGS/AIE)<sup>14</sup>. At the third level, the honours are shared by textbooks and teachers' training, which have been upstaged by Project Management Cost in recent times.

Similarly, as table 11 shows, when it comes to funds allocation, 'Community Training and Mobilisation' get the least priority at both the State and district levels. 'Teaching Learning Equipment', 'Block Resource Centre', 'Innovative activities'<sup>15</sup> and 'Research and Evaluation' too were found to be the least preferred areas to spend money on, indicating little respect for meeting the objectives of the SSA and honouring its cherished goals.

12 In most years, Civil Works have the highest share of the allocation for SSA at both state and district levels.

13 SSA lays down that every primary school must have a minimum of two teachers and every upper primary school, one teacher for each class. In West Bengal, SSA funds for Teachers' Salary only support part-time teachers (Para-teachers) who are employed on a contractual basis and paid less than a regular teacher.

14 Under Intervention for Out-of-school children, SSA funds are allotted to open and run alternative schools in unserved habitations, such as an EGS/AIE centres under the Education Guarantee Scheme and the Alternative Innovative Education scheme.

15 Innovative activities mean special provision for Early Childhood Care and Education, Girls Education, Education of SC/ST group and Computer Training in Schools.

Table 10: SSA Components with Top Priority in Funds Allocation (excluding civil works)

	West Bengal	Murshidabad
2005-06	Teacher's Salary	Teacher's Salary
	Intervention for Out-of-School Children	Intervention for Out-of- School Children
	Text Book	Teacher's Training
2006-07 2007-08	Teachers' Salary	Teacher's Salary
	Intervention for Out-of-School Children	Intervention for Out-of-School Children
	Project Management Cost	Project Management Cost

Table 11: SSA components at State and District Level with Least Priority in Funds Allocation

	West Bengal	Murshidabad
2005-06	Community Training and Mobilisation	Community Training and Mobilisation
	Research and Evaluation	Innovative Activities
	Block Resource Centre	Block Resource Centre
2006-07	Teaching Learning Equipment	Teaching Learning Equipment
	Community Training and Mobilisation	Block Resource Centre
	Block Resource Centre	Community Training & Mobilisation
2007-08	Community Training and Mobilisation	Block Resource Centre
	Block Resource Centre	Research and Evaluation
	Teaching Learning Equipment	Innovative Activities



Mansinghapur upper primary school.



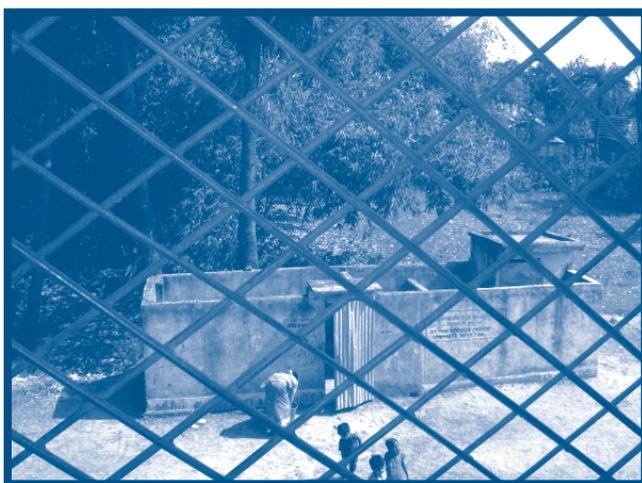
Kitchen shed is not usable.

Murshidabad is home to 7.92 per cent of the total number of children in the age group of 5-13 years in the state, but 13.72 per cent of the total out-of-school children in the same age group. Within the district, 20.21 per cent of the total number of children aged 5-13 years are out of school. This fact is obviously ignored by the SSA administration in the state; why else would it be so niggardly with the funds released for the district or its spending.

Table 12: Component-wise Allocation in West Bengal and Murshidabad (Rs lakh)

Component	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Allocation for West Bengal	Allocation for Murshidabad	Allocation for West Bengal	Allocation for Murshidabad	Allocation for West Bengal	Allocation for Murshidabad
Teachers' Salary	35,138.68	4,874.67	21,786.48	2,406.72	37,845.70	4,652.46
Textbooks	5,538.65	360.80	4,666.71	332.24	3,671.92	262.51
TLE	1,726.75	25.00	0	0.00	800.00	100
BRC (other than civil works)	477.57	23.15	236.28	4.68	351.05	24.83
CRC (other than civil works)	1,062.78	38.42	727.33	45.32	1,366.35	113.72
Maintenance	2,023.10	151.85	2,933.65	184.20	2,572.66	160.85
IED	1,282.48	55.72	1688.39	111.78	1,155.65	57.3
School Grant	1,138.26	83.96	1045.66	75.16	1,185.60	73.64
Teacher Grant	1,648.25	147.62	1599.69	133.57	1,409.00	109.34
Civil Works	29,188.55	2,279.00	72,302.33	8,180.00	69,006.16	7,289.7
EGS/AIE (Intervention for Out-of-School Children)	14,261.42	1,455.91	26,221.15	2,690.41	7,604.34	931.48
Teacher's Training	5,807.70	480.97	2,951.77	242.70	2,520.08	214.63
Community Training	165.91	13.99	160.18	13.37	190.91	13.44
Innovative activities (including ECCE, Computer Education & Education for girls and SC/ST)	793.01	22.00	975	50.00	999.99	50
Research and Evaluation	464.98	32.94	731.82	48.85	829.92	47.87
Management Cost (Dist)	3,792.64	265.27	6,043.94	345.63	6,145.73	435.92

Source : <http://ssa.nic.in/financial-management/allocation-releases-and-expenditure>, Proposed budget for West Bengal and Murshidabad under SSA 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08, Approved Annual Work Plan and Budget for SSA-West Bengal (district-wise) for 2005-06 to 2007-08, Financial Monitoring and Procurement Audit of SSA by Institute of Public Auditors of India.



Common Toilet at Mansinghapur UP school.

The trend of allocation for the different components of SSA during the three-year period more or less follows the same pattern in the state as well as the district. What is glaringly obvious though is that the allocations have not been made according to the priorities and needs of the district but according to the state priorities and available funds. Compared to the state levels, Murshidabad district has a higher proportion of out-of school children, lower literacy rate than the state, several villages without any school, and higher pupil-teacher ratios till the upper primary level. Correcting these lacunas would have mandated higher allocation for interventions such as Integrated Education for the Disabled, Innovative Activities, Community Mobilisation and Teachers' Salaries, among others, but that is not what the figures show.

Table 13: Pattern of Utilisation of Allocated Funds in West Bengal and Murshidabad

Component	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Percentage of allocation spent in state	Percentage of allocation spent in district	Percentage of allocation spent in state	Percentage of allocation spent in district	Percentage of allocation spent in state	Percentage of allocation spent in district
Teachers' Salary	13.12	5.14	48.99	46.00	51.66	56.36
Textbooks	75.66	99.94	67.24	0.00	97.73	89.26
TLE	32.68	99.99	----	-----	46.62	0.00
BRC (excl. civil works)	80.10	66.09	104.86	292.53	66.68	46.31
CRC (excl. civil works)	20.06	119.96	79.27	80.06	40.21	23.69
Maintenance	79.44	102.54	77.29	98.81	89.44	96.72
IED	60.33	69.04	51.39	78.36	75.64	96.09
School Grant	99.73	87.04	98.08	97.48	95.36	99.38
Teacher Grant	64.34	47.95	88.53	70.50	94.48	98.71
Civil Works	83.29	99.26	76.60	80.47	89.10	99.55
EGS/AIE centres	39.23	5.68	33.41	0.99	43.35	21.20
Teacher's Training	8.42	11.41	35.78	35.05	68.14	92.55
Community Training	94.55	71.64	87.45	74.87	120.99	66.44
Innovative Activities (including ECCE, Girls' Education, Computer Education and SC/ST Education)	61.52	139.32	59.64	70.30	67.62	0.00
Research and Evaluation	68.16	65.00	43.67	25.65	44.21	46.25
Management Cost (Dist)	57.83	107.69	96.79	69.88	58.54	60.98

Source: <http://ssa.nic.in/financial-management/allocation-releases-and-expenditure>, Proposed budget for West Bengal and Murshidabad under SSA 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08, Approved Annual Work Plan and Budget for SSA West Bengal (district wise) for 2005-06 to 2007-08, Financial Monitoring and Procurement Audit of SSA by Institute of Public Auditors of India.

Table 13 gives a comparative estimate of the rate of utilisation of the allocated funds at state and district levels. It records massive underutilisation at both the state and district levels in several areas, except in the civil works component where both were able to utilise 80-99 per cent of the allocation. In the case of teachers' salaries, for instance, in 2005-06, the unutilised part of the allocation is an astonishing 87 per cent in the state and 95 per cent in the district. The utilisation ratio improves in the next two years, but only to around 50 per cent of the funds. If only half the money was spent, it implies that 50 per cent fewer than planned teachers were recruited, affecting the quality of teaching, especially in the schools with already high student-teacher ratios. Underutilisation of funds was also reported at district level in Teacher's Training, Integrated education for the Disabled, Intervention for Out-of-School Children (EGS/AIE), and Research and Evaluation.

Records kept in schools surveyed say all funds received by them on different heads have been spent fully. They also say that they have been directed to mention full utilisation of the amount received in the utilisation certificate, probably for reasons of problem-free future grant allocation.

## Trend of Allocation and Expenditure at Sub-district and Schools

In both the two blocks under study, Sagardighi (rural) and Berhampur South (urban), the School Inspector and the Block Coordinator of SSA were not ready to furnish the allocation and expenditure statements. The school coordinator informally told us that neither they nor the Block Office made any plan or a budget but collected the child-related data from

schools in a prescribed form and submitted it to the District Office which made the plan. The district office then allocated the funds to the block office, which in turn disbursed them to the schools concerned. Every disbursement is entered into a register and accompanied by a signed statement of receipt by the school authority. Thus, it is clear that in these two blocks of Murshidabad district, no planning has been done in school or block level in the years studied.

However, records kept in schools say all funds received by them on different heads have been spent fully (the reason why table 14 doesn't have an expenditure column). Our study team was also told by the schools that they had been directed to mention full utilisation of the amount received in the utilisation certificate, probably for reasons of smooth future grant allocation.

This blanket directive on utilisation has led to some interesting situations. For instance, Gosaigram Primary School received a total of Rs 6,20,990 in 2006-07 for Civil Works, which includes construction of new building, extra classroom, toilet and ramp for disabled students. However, field visit by our team found that the construction had yet to be completed due to some 'political' problems. All the same, in the official records, the amount for additional classrooms has been shown as fully utilised though the current status of the civil works is that one building is half-constructed. The school has also shown on record funds sanctioned and spent for a ramp for the disabled students but we could not find it in the school nor any disabled student.

Financial data or record was not available in many schools on the expenditure under the heads of Para-Teacher Salary and Teacher Grant.

**Table 14: Funds Received and Utilised by the Schools Surveyed (in Rs)**

Rural Block – Sagardighi						
	Schools	Civil Works	School Grant	Maintenance Grant	Teacher's Grant (TLM)	Teachers' Salary (Para-teacher)
2005-06	Gosaigram Primary School	0	2,000	5,000	1,500	No Para-Teacher
	Ghugridanga Primary School	170,000	2,000	5,000	1,000	No Para-teacher
	Mansinghapur Adivasi Primary School	0	2,000	5,000	1,500	No Para-Teacher
	Gobordhandanga High School	0	2,000	5,000	5,000	No Para-Teacher
	Ghugridanga High School	0	2,000	5,000	Data not available	10,666
2006-07	Gosaigram Primary School	620,990	2,000	5,000	1,500	No Para-Teacher
	Ghugridanga Primary School	170,000	2,000	5,000	1,500	No Para-Teacher
	Mansinghapur Adivasi Primary School	0	2,000	5,000	2,500	Data Not available
	Gobordhandanga High School	170,000	2,000	5,000	13,500	Data not Available
	Ghugridanga High School	0	2,000	5,000	No data	111,419
2007-08	Gosaigram Primary School	0	2,000	5,000	1,500	No Para-Teacher
	Ghugridanga Primary School	0	2,000	4,000	1,500	No Para-Teacher
	Mansinghapur Adivasi Primary School	185,000	2,000	5,000	2,500	Data not Available
	Gobordhandanga High School	0	2,000	5,000	10,000	27,870
	Ghugridanga High School		2,000	4,200	13,500	Data not Available

Urban Block – Behrampur South

Schools	Civil Works	School Grant	Maintenance Grant (TLM)	Teacher Grant	Textbooks Grant	IED Grant Grant	SC/ST Education	Teacher's Salary (Para-teacher)
2005-06	Tarun Sangha Primary School	0	2,000	5,000	1,000	0	0	No Para-Teacher
	Baharampur Girls' Mahakali Pathshala	60,000	2,000	No data	3,000	10,000		15,395
	Indraprastha Prathamik Vidyalaya	0	2,000	5,000	1,500	0	0	No Parateacher
	Biharilal Pralhadsundari Primary School	0	2,000	5,000	500	0	0	No Parateacher
	Tarun Sangha High School	0	2,000	5,000	1,000	0	0	No Data
2006-07	Tarun Sangha Primary School	0	2,000	0	1,000	0	0	No Para-Teacher
	Baharampur Girls Mahakali Pathshala	170,000	2,000	No Record	16,873	0	600	105,000
	Indraprastha Prathamik Vidyalaya	340,000	2,000	5,000	1,500	0	0	No Para-Teacher
	Biharilal Pralhadsundari Primary School	0	2,000	5,000	500	0	0	No Para-Teacher
	Tarun Sangha High School	0	2,000	5,000	13,500	0	0	No Record
2007-08	Tarun Sangha Primary School	0	2,000	4,000	1,500	0	0	No Para-Teacher
	Baharampur Girls Mahakali Pathshala	880,000	2,000	No Record	No Record	0	0	290,323
	Indraprastha Prathamik Vidyalaya	0	2,000	5,000	1500	0	0	No Para-Teacher
	Biharilal Pralhadsundari Primary School	0	2,000	4,200	1,000	0	0	No Para-Teacher
	Tarun Sangha High School	0	2,000	5,000	13,500	0	0	No Record

Source: School Registers and Utilisation certificates

The mandatory utilisation certificate of funds seemed to be in place in urban block schools too, where we were similarly informed that the amounts received had been fully utilised by the schools. Among our sample, the Baharampur Girls' Mahakali Pathshala received maximum grants under SSA, in fact far higher than what other schools received although this school didn't always keep a record. Schools also could not furnish adequate data on Maintenance Grants and para teachers' salaries. Construction didn't seem to be a priority as only two among five schools received civil works grants in the study period.

Table 15: Facilities Available in Schools Surveyed

Facilities		Mansinghapur Adivasi School (Primary)	Gobordhondanga High School (Upper primary)	Goshaigram Primary School	Ghugridanga Primary School	Ghugridanga High School
Sagarighi Block	Drinking water	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Separate toilets for boys and girls	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
	No. of students	183	1588	180	133	535
	No. of teachers	5	27	3	3	20
	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	36.6	58.81	60	44.33	26.75
	Boundary wall	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Playground	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
	Seating (Benches and desks)	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
	Mid-day meal	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Facilities		Tarun Sangha Primary School	Tarun Sangha Upper Primary School	Indraprastha Prathamik Bidyalay (Primary School)	Biharilal Prahladsundari Primary School	Baharampur Girls Mahakali Pathshala
Behrampur South Block	Drinking water	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Separate toilets for Girls and Boys	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
	No. of students	70	117	90	40	700
	No. of teachers	3	10	3	2	31
	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	23.33	11.17	30	20	22.58
	Boundary wall	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Playground	No	No	No	No	No
	Seating facility	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Source: Interview with the school teachers and observations during field visit

Table 15 shows clearly that infrastructure facilities and teaching conditions are much better in the urban block schools than in the rural. In fact, the rural schools were sadly lacking in many of the essential infrastructure to facilitate imparting of proper education and dropouts, such as benches to seat students, a boundary wall, separate toilet for girls, and more teachers. Goshaigram Primary School, for instance, does not have a boundary wall despite being located just next to the railway station, making it very dangerous for small children. Despite innumerable oral and written requests to the block office, such an urgent necessity remains absent.

Pupil-teacher ratios too are very high in rural areas, much higher than in the urban schools. While the PTR in the latter is between 11 and 30, in the former it is between 36 and 60. Three of the five rural schools have pupil-teacher ratios above 40 and two above 50.

Among the rural block schools, in fact, we found none of the primary schools had a boundary wall, a separate toilet for girls, or wooden benches and desks for studying, though all the Upper Primary schools except one had them. However, none of the schools, urban or rural, believed in the 'luxury' of a playground.

Pupil-teacher ratios too are very high in rural areas, much higher than in the urban schools. While the PTR in the latter is between 11 and 30, in the former it is between 36 and 60. Three of the five rural schools have pupil-teacher ratios above 40 and two above 50. Quality of teaching in these schools would be anybody's guess.

The Upper Primary schools (classes V-VIII) in the rural areas had also dispensed with the mid-day meal system even though students of Class V are eligible. In the urban areas, however, four schools, including one high school, provide mid-day meal.

## Bottom-Up Planning in SSA: Myth and Reality

From the limited interaction with the members of the West Bengal state SSA office, it is apparent that they believe the process of planning in the SSA is “bottom-up” on the ground. In other words, the school/VEC prepares the plan that is passed on to the block level, then collated at the district level and finally integrated at the state level, as per the guidelines. Yet, in the district of Murshidabad, we did not find this process working. As noted earlier, the schools are not making any plans at all, only supplying the data to the block and district office. As a result, the proposed district plan and budget too are prepared without involving any parent, VEC member or schools.

The VEC/WEC meeting is irregular; even when they take place, attendance is very poor. In the urban areas three schools together constitute the WEC. . Once a year, when the money comes in for civil work, to discuss the modalities of spending it. The PTA meeting is held twice a year, and the MTA meeting 4-5 times a year.

Nor did we find the schools maintaining a child register or updating the record of every child of the village/ward, which is supposed to be the primary basis of grassroots planning. There is thus no environment or planning effort at the grassroots level aimed at making education conducive to children. Visits by the School Inspector are very rare, never more than once a year.

### What the Parents and Students Say

We conducted focused group discussions with mothers and children in different villages of the Sagardighi Block of Murshidabad. The broad findings are as follows:

- Mothers have no knowledge of the Village Education Committee’s purpose and work although they are members of the local VEC.
- They complained about excessive holidays in the school, mostly for no rhyme or reason. They are also not aware of the number of approved holidays in a year.
- They believe that the schools were more interested in feeding mid-day meals than teaching.
- They complained most about the quality of education. In their words, the teachers just wrote things on the blackboard for children to copy and did not really check if the students had learned anything.
- They have no idea about the names of government offices/departments that are sanctioning money for running the schools.

The students echoed the complaints about teaching and holidays. Additionally, they informed that the school was closed every time teachers went for a meeting and this happened often. They hated sitting on the floor of the schools, which remained wet most of the time, and wanted to sit on benches. They admitted they mostly copied from the blackboard or books or took down dictations. Only sometimes, the teachers would give them writing tasks. They rarely used any games, charts or TLMs in the class to make studying interesting.

## Profile of Schools

Goshaigram Primary School (Rural) has 180 students, both girls and boys, though only 168 students are regular. There is no follow-up system in the school for children who have dropped out or are irregular. That is because the three teachers already have a heavy workload apart from teaching--having to manage so many students, completing the administrative work and visiting block offices regularly.



Newly built building of Gosaigram Primary School.



Preparation of mid-day meal at the School.

The headmaster of the school is a postgraduate, the second teacher is a graduate and the third teacher, a tribal (Santhal), has completed senior school. We found during the school visits that the headmaster did not include the Santhal teacher in discussions and meetings. He referred to himself as “blue blood” and said the Santhal teacher was not capable enough to teach the children. During the interview too he mentioned that he did not involve the Santhal teacher in the administrative work.

The common method of teaching is reading and writing, with accent on the latter. The headmaster felt books and written work were more important and convenient than the TLM. The VEC meetings are held once every month. Although few parents take part, other members are active. In fact, the construction of the building could not be completed (though funds utilisation certificate was submitted) because of tensions between the members of the VEC, who subscribed to two different political parties.

Mansinghapur Adivasi Primary School (Rural) is located in a tribal area and most of the students too are from the tribal community. It has 183 students and five teachers, including two newly recruited para teachers. Despite some dropout, the school has seen increased enrolment and children, including girls, are quite regular in attendance, partly because of the attraction of the midday meal. The teacher-student ratio too is balanced though teaching suffers due to teachers being involved in serving the midday meal and administrative tasks and classes are often merged for convenience.

The para teachers are supposed to come only four days a week, so it becomes a problem to teach children on the remaining two days. The headmaster feels that ideally, para teachers should assist the teachers and students, helping out the weak and backward, but instead they end up taking full classes on their own. The Headmaster is a post-graduate and teachers are graduates with additional education degrees, but the para teachers have either completed secondary school or higher secondary.

The school has three classrooms and one storeroom. The need for a boundary wall has been communicated to the school inspector several times, but no funds have been sanctioned yet. A gated boundary wall discourages truancy and keeps away thieves; the school had hand-pump and sundry other things stolen earlier.

There are two disabled children in the school. One is visually challenged and the other orthopedically challenged. This fact is also mentioned in the DISE records. Yet, the school doesn't receive any special funds or facility for them. The children are asked to follow the instructions of the teacher and the teacher tries to help by making them sit on the front row.



Children are being taught under the open sky at Ramnagar Shishu Shiksha Kendra, Murshidabad since the school (right) is being used as a store house.

Biharilal Pralhadsundari Primary School (Urban) has poor infrastructure, low student attendance and might well be closed down in future. The students belong to so-called 'untouchable' communities and most of them are first-generation learners. At present, there are only 40 students in the school, most of them girls. The number of students has been on the decline from about 60-70 earlier, mainly because the mid day meal facility has been stopped due to lack of staff to supervise the operation.

The functioning of the school has been highly irregular, due to various reasons such as illness of teachers, their preoccupation with administrative work and SSA trainings, and leakage of roof in one of the two classrooms during rains. During the rainy season the schools remains closed for scenod day. Worse, the school is located in the second floor of a building which houses a 'dharmashala' (a cheap hostel) on the ground floor, and reflects years of neglect and lack of maintenance. There's a balcony which is on the verge of collapsing (on the children) as they enter or exit the building. There is no toilet facility in the building and no drinking water as well. The hand-pump was stolen but has not been replaced a year ago. There is no boundary wall and a dirty open space graces the entrance.

The headmistress was the only teacher for the school for two years till a new teacher was appointed six months ago. There are no para teachers too. For convenience, the headmistress uses many TLMs as that's the only way to handle multi-grade teaching. Despite this huge load, the child register is maintained only till mid 2007. However, the headmistress returned the funds sanctioned for building a toilet in 2008, because she didn't want to shoulder the accountability on her lone shoulders.

Tarun Sangha Upper Primary School (Urban) is run at the same premises as the Tarunsangha Primary School, in the afternoon. This is a common feature of many schools in urban Baharampur, where both the types of schools function in the same building at different times. The staff, administrative structure and students are different but the infrastructure remains the same.

The total number of students is 117, including two disabled, but only 80 attend classes regularly. There are three rooms in which four classes are held; one room is partitioned into two classrooms. Tables and benches in some classes as well as roofs need repair. Drinking water comes from the hand-pump though there are separate toilets for girls and boys. There is no playground but an open space outside the school.

Accessing documents from this school proved difficult due to the appointment of a new Headmaster, who was neither willing to talk or show us any documents or divulge any information about the school. We were given to understand that many documents were not in office, including details of school development grants, maintenance grants, TLM grants and utilisation certificate. We were just shown details of the book grant of the current year.

Regular and massive underutilisation was recorded both at the state and district level. Only in civil works, the state and district were able to utilise 80-99 per cent of the allocated funds on average. In 2005-06, around 87 -95 per cent of the funds for Teachers' Salary was not utilised which improved to 50 per cent in the next two years. That means half the required number of teachers were recruited, making students suffer.

## Summary of the Findings

- During the period of study (2005-06 to 2007-08), the Government of West Bengal allocated on an average 3.03 per cent of its budget for child education for the state share of SSA. This meagre allocation was unable to meet the state share for SSA<sup>16</sup>.
- The government of West Bengal in our study period (2005-06 to 2007-08) miserably failed to provide the full quota of its share of the approved budget for SSA.
- The state was also not able to utilise the total funds released for SSA. In 2005-06, it could utilise 46.06 per cent of the total released funds, in 2006-07, 63.66 per cent, and in 2007-08, 71.03 per cent of the funds.
- During the study period, the district of Murshidabad was allocated on an average only 9.57 per cent of the total state budget for SSA, even though 13.72 per cent of the total out-of-school children (5-14 years) are from Murshidabad.
- While the state budget for SSA increased by 53.17 per cent between 2005-06 and 2007-08, at the same time the SSA budget for Murshidabad district increased only by 40.97 per cent.
- The district too fared badly in funds utilisation. In 2005-06, only 36.73 per cent of the allocated fund was utilised. The rate of utilisation improved gradually to 77 per cent of the allocation in 2007-08.
- According to the financial allocation pattern for SSA, besides Civil Works, Teachers Salary, Intervention for Out-of-school Children, and Project Management Cost received top priority for funding, while Community Training and Mobilisation, Research and Evaluation, Development of Block Resource Centres received the least.
- Regular and massive underutilisation was recorded both at the state and district level. Only in civil works, the state and district were able to utilise 80-99 per cent of the allocated funds on average. In 2005-06, around 87 -95 per cent of the funds for Teachers' Salary was not utilised which improved to 50 per cent in the next two years. That means half the required number of teachers were recruited, making students suffer.
- The schools studied (and visited) mainly received grants for civil works, school grant, Teachers Grant (for TLM) and Teachers' Salary (Para-Teacher). All schools showed 100 per cent utilisation of funds received under SSA heads to the district office as well as their own books of accounts because, as they told us off the record, they had been directed to do so, whatever the percentage of utilisation.
- From our interactions with school teachers, inspectors (Block level SSA Coordinator), VEC members and parents, we found no evidence of proper grassroots planning taking place, which is one of the basic tenets of the SSA. All the planning is done at the district level, without any involvement of parents, VEC, schools or even the School Inspector in the entire process. All the latter is expected to do is provide a few data. No child register was available in any of the ten sample schools. Meetings of Mother-Teacher Associations and Village/Ward Education Committee are irregular. Even the members of VEC/WEC are unaware about their roles and responsibilities.

<sup>16</sup> SSA envisages contribution from GOI vis-à-vis Govt. of West Bengal in the ratio of 85:15 for the Ninth Plan (till 2001-02), 75:25 during the Tenth Plan till 2006-07, in the Eleventh Plan it would be 65:35 for the first two years (2007-08 and 2008-09), 60:40 for 2009-10, 55:45 for 2010-11 and 50:50 for 2011 onwards. Financial monitoring and procurement audit of SSA by Institute for Public Audit India, New Delhi.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	
AE	Actual Expenditure
AIE	Alternative and Innovative Education
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
AWP&B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BE	Budget Estimate
BRC/CRC	Block/Cluster Resource Centre
BRTE	Block Resource Teacher Education
CAG	Comptroller and Auditor General
DISE	District Information System for Education
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
JRM	Joint Review Mission
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resources Development
MPH	Medical and Public Health
MWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
NCLP	National Child Labour Project
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPE	National Policy of Education
NPEGEL	National Programme of Education for Girls at Elementary Level
NUEPA	National University of Educational Planning and Administration
OBC	Other Backward Castes
PAB	Project Approval Board
PRI	Panchayat Raj Institutions
PTA/MTA	Parent-Teacher Association/ Mother-Teacher Association
RCH	Reproductive and Child Health
RE	Revised Estimate
SPMU	State Project Management Unit
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
TLM	Teaching Learning Materials
VEC/WEC	Village/Ward Education Committee
UEE	Universal Elementary Education
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child

HAQ: Centre for Child Rights is a ten-year old New Delhi-based civil society organisation that 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. HAQ believes that child rights and children's concerns have to be mainstreamed into all developmental planning and action and must also become a core development indicator.

To carry forward this mandate, HAQ undertakes research and documentation and is actively engaged in public education and advocacy. 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. It works with existing networks, builds alliances and partnerships with other actors/stakeholders such as the bureaucrats, parliamentarians, judges and lawyers, police and media.

HAQ seeks to serve as a resource and support base for individuals and groups dealing with children at every level. It not only provides information and referral services but also undertakes training and capacity building for all those working with children or on issues concerning them, and for the children themselves.

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.

**Publications** | Kandhamal's Forgotten Children: A Status Report. | India's Childhood in the "Pits": A Report on the Impacts of Mining on Children in India | Blind Alley: Juvenile Justice in India (2009) | Still out of focus: Status of India's children (2008) | Handbook on Children's right to adequate housing | Combating Child Trafficking (A User's Handbook) | Budget for Children (set of four publications on child budget analysis) for India, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Orissa (2007) | Child Protection: A handbook for Panchayat Members (English and Hindi) | Status of Children in India Inc. 2005 | Says a Child...Who Speaks for my Rights? ( A series of books analysing parliamentary questions and debates from 2003 to 2008 in English and Hindi) | My God is a Juvenile Delinquent (Not a HAQ publication but is available in HAQ) | Stop Child Trafficking: A handbook for Parliamentarians | Children in Globalising India: Challenging our Conscience (2003) | Children bought and sold: We can stop it! (Hindi and English)(2003) | Children and Right to Adequate housing: A guide to international legal resources (2002) | India's Children and the Union Budget (2001)

**HAQ: Centre for Child Rights**

B 1/2, Malviya Nagar, Ground Floor, New Delhi - 110017, India  
T: +91-11-26677412/3599 | F: +91-11-26674688  
E: info@haqcr.org | W: www.haqcr.org

**Society for People's Awareness (SPAN)**

66/2, Sarat Chandra Dhar Road, Kolkata - 700090  
T: 91-33-2564-3305, 91-33-2566-3709  
E: info@spanvoice.org | W: www.spanvoice.org