ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVE

CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

BUDGET BRIEFS

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Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

GoI, 2017-18

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the Government of India's (GoI) flagship elementary education programme. Launched in 2001, it aims to provide universal education to children between the ages of 6 to 14 years. SSA is the primary vehicle for implementing the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), passed in 2009.

This brief uses government reported data to analyse SSA performance along the following parameters:

- Overall trends in allocations, releases, and expenditures
- Expenditure performance across key SSA activities
- Compliance with the RTE
- Learning Outcomes

Cost share and implementation: Funds are shared between GoI and state governments in a 60:40 ratio. For the eight Northeastern states and three Himalayan states, this ratio is 90:10.

Complete expenditure data is available for FY 2016-17.

HIGHLIGHTS

₹ 79,686 cr

GoI allocations for the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in FY 2017-18

₹ 23,500 cr

GoI allocations for SSA in FY 2017-18

SUMMARY & ANALYSIS

- In Financial Year (FY) 2017-18, GoI allocations for SSA stands at ₹23,500 crore, a 4 per cent increase over the previous FY. GoI SSA allocations remain far below the resource estimates made by MHRD. In FY 2016-17, while MHRD estimated a resource demand of ₹55,000 crore, SSA received only ₹22,500 crore, Revised Estimates (RE).
- Expenditure as a share of total approved budgets has been decreasing. In FY 2016-17, 66 per cent of the approved budget was spent, down from 70 per cent in FY 2015-16.
- There are signficant state differences in spending as a proportion of approved budgets. In FY 2016-17, while Maharashtra spent 84 per cent of its approved budget, West Bengal spent only 37 per cent.
- In FY 2016-17, SSA budgets towards quality related interventions accounted for only 9 per cent of total approved budgets and 69 per cent of this budget was spent. There are state differences. While Kerala allocated 38 per cent and spent the entire approved budget for quality; share of quality was low in Bihar at 4 per cent of which only 35 per cent was spent.
- According to the National Achievement Survey (NAS), only 36 per cent of Class V students across India scored more than 50 per cent in reading comprehension and 37 per cent scored more than 50 per cent in Mathematics in 2014.

Accountability Initiative, Centre for Policy Research, Dharam Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110021

Prepared by: **Avani Kapur,** *akapur@accountabilityindia.org*, **Mridusmita Bordoloi,** *mbordoloi@accountabilityindia.org* & **Ritwik Shukla**, *rshukla@accountabilityindia.org*.

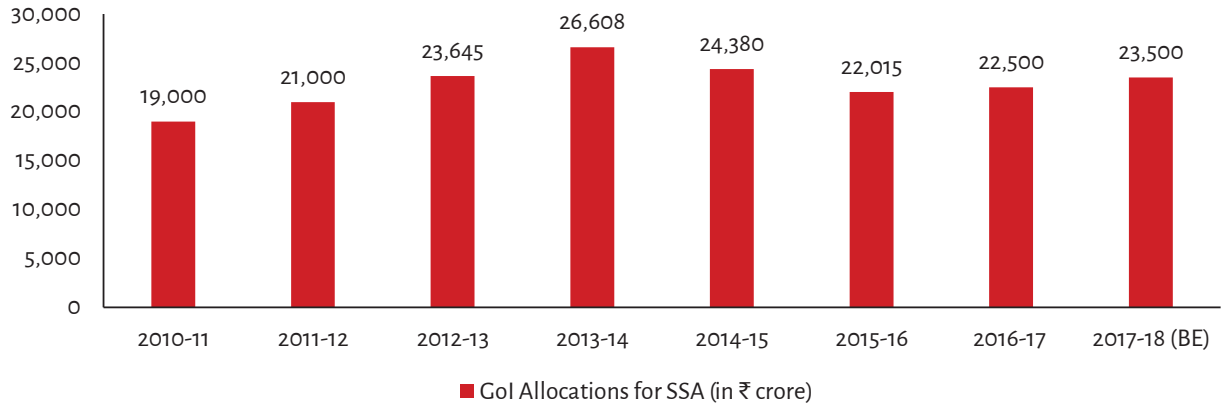
TRENDS IN GOI ALLOCATIONS AND EXPENDITURES

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a flagship programme for universal elementary education for children in the age group of 6-14 years, is the largest programme run by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

Allocations

- In FY 2017-18, GoI allocated ₹23,500 crore to SSA. This is a 4 per cent increase from the previous financial year.

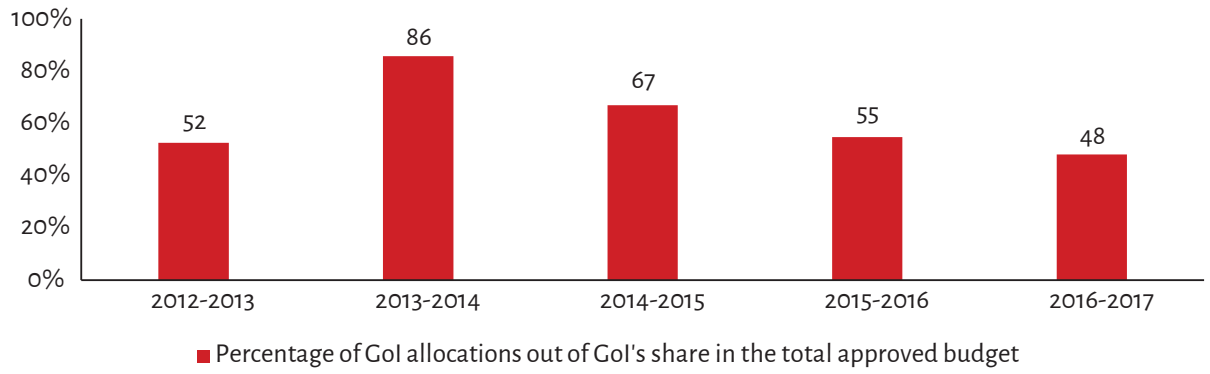
GOI ALLOCATIONS INCREASED BY 4 % BETWEEN 2016-17 AND 2017-18



Source: Union Expenditure Budget, Vol. 2, Ministry of Human Resource Development 2010-11 to 2017-18. Available online at: www.indiabudget.nic.in. Note: All figures are in rupees crore and include the Northeast component. Figures are in crore of rupees and are revised estimates, except for FY 2017-18 which are Budget Estimates (BE). Last accessed on 10 January 2017.

- There is a significant mismatch between funds requested by MHRD for the implementation of SSA and funds actually allocated to MHRD for SSA. In FY 2016-17, MHRD estimated a resource requirement of ₹55,000 crore for SSA. However, it received only ₹22,500 crore (RE), equivalent to 41 per cent of its demand. Similarly, in FY 2017-18, while the funds requested by MHRD remained the same at ₹55,000 crore, the GoI SSA budget for the year was ₹23,500 crore, Budget Estimates (BE).
- **SSA funds approved by MHRD:** Total budgets approved for SSA are based on Annual Work Plan and Budgets (AWP&Bs) submitted by state governments. These plans are intended to be an aggregation of school and district level plans. State allocations are finalised based on negotiations with MHRD, after consultation with individual state governments. Final approved budgets for a particular state include both state and GoI shares for that specific financial year. The GoI-state fund sharing ratio for SSA was revised in October 2015, to 60:40 (previously 65:35). The ratio for Northeast and Himalayan states is 90:10.
- There are significant gaps between funds proposed by states and those approved by MHRD. For instance, in FY 2011-12, states proposed a total of ₹81,886 crores in their AWP&Bs. However, MHRD approved ₹61,734 crores, equivalent to 75 per cent of the proposed budget. Similarly, in FY 2015-16, while states proposed a total budget of ₹91,485 crores, only ₹63,413 crores (69 per cent) was approved.
- Differences also exist between the GoI share approved in the AWP&Bs and the actual GoI allocations for SSA. In FY 2015-16, GoI allocations accounted for only 55 per cent of the approved GoI share. This number fell to 48 per cent in FY 2016-17.
- Under the revised fund flow mechanism introduced in FY 2014-15, GoI allocations are first released to state treasuries. Money is then routed to autonomous implementing bodies known as State Implementation Societies (SISs).

SINCE 2013-14, GOI ALLOCATIONS AS A PROPORTION OF GOI SHARE APPROVED FOR SSA HAS BEEN DECLINING

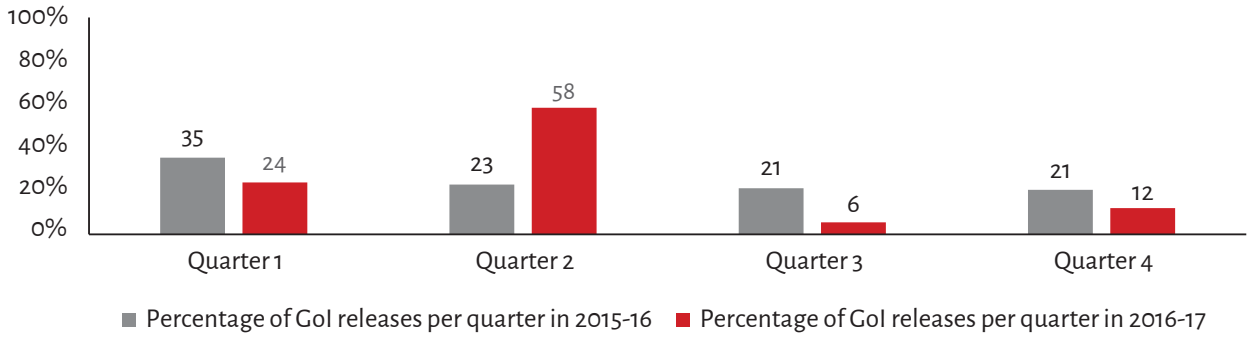


Source: Parliament of India, Rajya Sabha, Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, Report Number 283; Note: Actual Expenditure for FY 2016-17 as on 3 February, 2017. Last accessed on 21 December 2017.

Releases

- In FY 2014-15, 99 per cent of GoI allocations were released. This decreased marginally to 98 per cent in FY 2015-16 and further to 96 per cent in FY 2016-17. In FY 2017-18 till 30 November 2017, 71 per cent of GoI allocations had been released to states.
- According to the guidelines, funds are released by GoI in two instalments during the financial year. The first instalment is released in two tranches – one released in April – May, accounting for 25-30 per cent of the previous year's expenditure. The balance of the first instalment is released in June – July, subject to the state providing its matching share and the provisional utilization certificate of the previous year. The final instalment should be released in September – October, based on the pace of expenditure, receipt of commensurate state share, audited accounts, adjustment of outstanding advances, and the provisional utilization certificate for the current year.
- There have been improvements over the last few years in the pace of fund release. In FY 2015-16, 35 per cent of GoI's releases were released in the first quarter (April to June) and 21 per cent were released in the last quarter (January to March).In fact, 11 per cent of total releases were in March, the last month of the financial year. In contrast, in FY 2016-17, only 12 per cent of funds were released by GoI in the last quarter. However, the proportion of funds released in the first quarter decreased to 24 per cent.

IN 2016-17, 82% OF THE GOI RELEASES WERE RELEASED IN THE FIRST TWO QUARTERS, IMPROVING FROM 58% FROM 2015-16

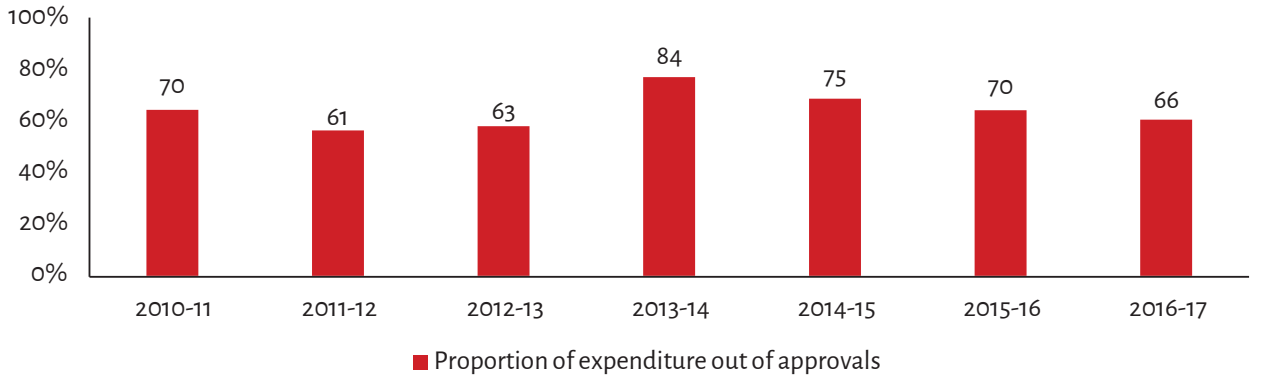


Source: School Education Grants in Aid, available at http://mhrd.gov.in/. Note: Does not include Sikkim and UTs (apart from Puducherry). Last accessed on 20 December 2017.

Expenditures

- The proportion of funds spent out of total approved budgets (GoI and state shares) has been declining since FY 2013-14. It fell from 84 per cent in FY 2013-14 to 66 per cent in FY 2016-17. In FY 2017-18, till 30 June 2017, ₹7,517 crore, equivalent to 9 per cent of the approved budget had been spent.

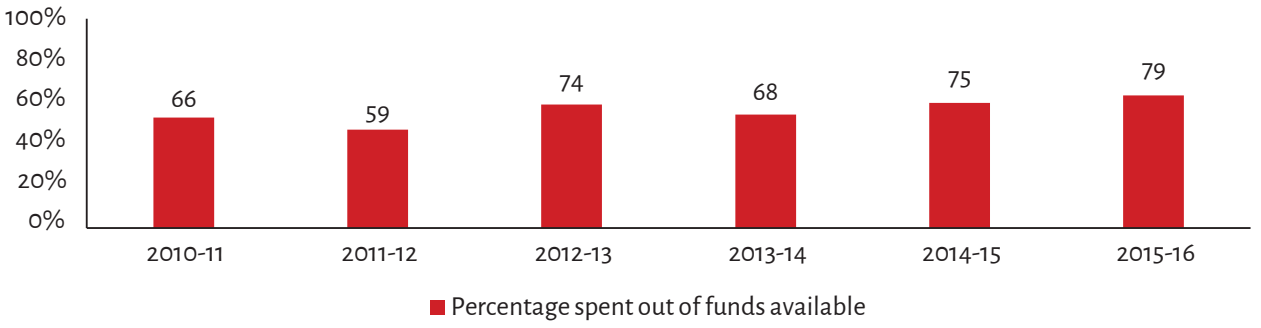
IN 2016-17, THE SHARE OF APPROVED BUDGET SPENT WAS 66%, DOWN FROM 70% IN 2015-16



Source: Approvals for 2010-11 to 2012-13 and expenditure for 2010-11 and 2011-12 are from Joint Review Mission Reports, downloaded from the SSA website till March 2016; Approvals for 2013-14 are from Lok Sabha unstarred question, answered on 9 May 2016; Expenditure for 2012-13 to 2014-15 are from Lok Sabha unstarred question 3635, answered on 21 December 2015; Approvals for 2014-15 to 2016-17 and expenditure for 2015-16 and 2016-17 are from Lok Sabha unstarred question no. 2237 answered on 28 July 2017. Last accessed on 28 December 2017.

- Expenditure by a state during a financial year depends on the total funds released by GoI (GoI share), the funds released by the state (state share), and the opening balance at the beginning of the financial year. According to the Comptroller Auditor General of India, between FY 2010-11 and FY 2015-16, opening balances ranged from ₹10,681 crores in FY 2010-11 to as high as ₹17,282 crores in FY 2014-15. Therefore, in order to understand the expenditure performance, it is important to look at expenditure as a proportion of total funds available. Expenditure as a proportion of funds available has increased in the last few years. In FY 2010-11, 66 per cent of funds available were spent. This increased to 75 per cent in FY 2014-15 and further to 79 per cent in FY 2015-16 (latest year available).
- Despite improvements in expenditure, cumulative opening balances across states remain high. According to data received from a Right to Information (RTI) request, states had accumulated an opening balance of ₹3,868 crore as on 1 April 2016 and ₹3,790 crore at the start of FY 2017-18.

FROM 2010-11 TO 2015-16, THE PROPORTION OF FUNDS UTILIZED OUT OF AVAILABLE FUNDS HAS REMAINED BELOW 80%

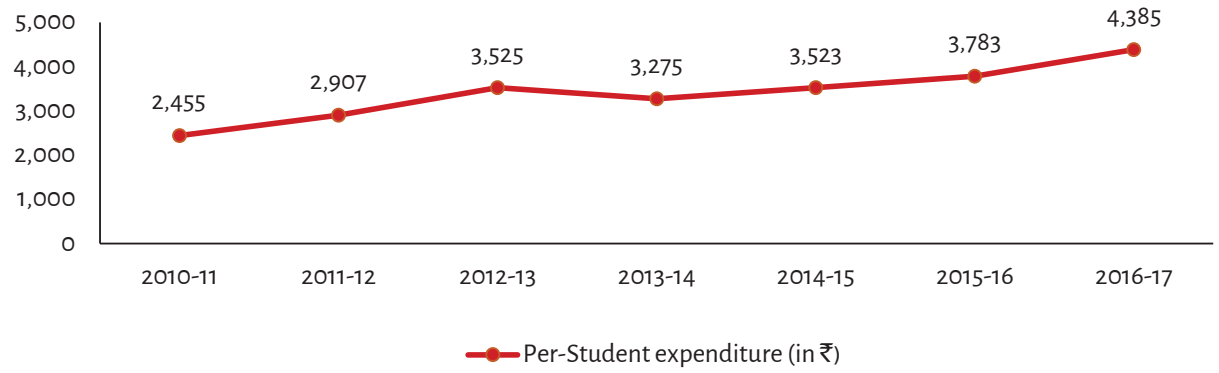


Source: Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on Implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. Note: data for the following states is missing – Meghalaya (2010-11); Madhya Pradesh (2011-12); Rajasthan (2012-13); Himachal Pradesh (2015-16); Maharashtra (2015-16); Uttarakhand (2015-16). There are differences in the expenditure numbers reported in the CAG report and those in Lok Sabha unstarred question, answered on 28 July 2017. For the sake of consistency, CAG expenditures are reported here against CAG funds available. Last accessed on 20 December 2017.

Per-Student SSA Expenditure

- Per-student SSA expenditures (including both GoI and state shares) are calculated by dividing total expenditure by the number of children enroled in government schools. Per-student SSA expenditures have been increasing since FY 2011-12. In FY 2016-17, per-student expenditure was ₹4,385, a 16 per cent increase over FY 2015-16. The change however, is also driven by the fact that enrolment in public schools has been declining.

16% INCREASE IN PER-STUDENT EXPENDITURE BETWEEN 2015-16 AND 2016-17



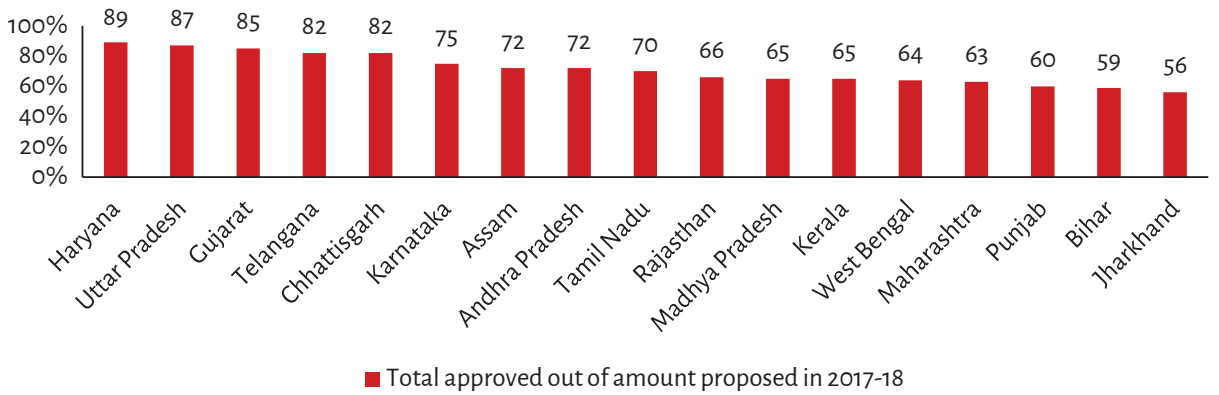
Source: Expenditure figures for 2010-11 and 2011-12 are from Joint Review Mission Reports; Expenditure figures for 2012-13 to 2014-15 are from Lok Sabha unstarred question 3635 answered on 21 December 2015; Expenditure figures for 2015-16 and 2016-17 are from Lok Sabha unstarred question no. 2237 answered on 28 July 2017; Elementary enrolment figures are from 'District Information System for Education' (DISE), National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA). Flash Statistics for 2010-11 and figures 2011-12 to 2015-16 from State Report Cards. For 2016-17 enrolment figures are from DISE raw data 2016-17 (for Telangana, enrolment for 2015-16). Last accessed on 28 December 2017.

TRENDS IN ALLOCATIONS AND EXPENDITURES AT THE STATE LEVEL

Approval of Proposed SSA Funds

- In FY 2017-18, there was substantial variation in the proportion of proposed SSA budgets approved by MHRD. For Jharkhand and Bihar, only 56 per cent and 59 per cent of the proposed amount was approved, respectively; while for both Telangana and Haryana 89 per cent of the proposed amount was approved.

IN 2017-18, 89% OF THE FUND PROPOSED BY HARYANA WAS APPROVED; ONLY 56% WAS APPROVED FOR JHARKHAND



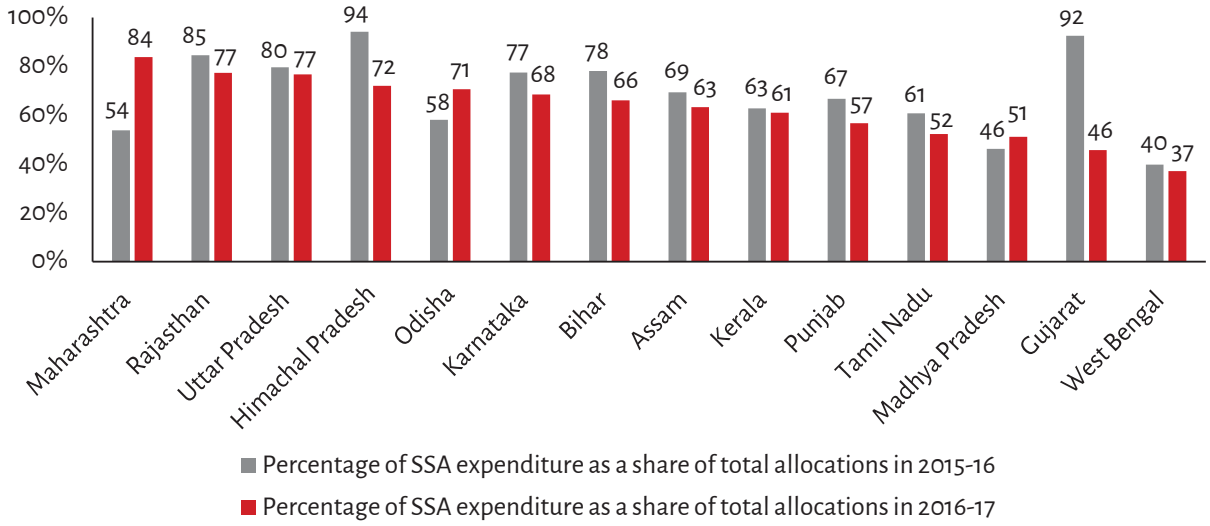
Source: SSA Portal, Project Approval Board (PAB) minutes and costing sheets, 2017-18; available on www.ssashagun.nic.in. Last accessed on 8 December 2017.

State-wise Expenditure

- There are significant state variations in expenditure incurred out of approved budgets. In FY 2016-17, Maharashtra spent 84 per cent of its approved budget. Expenditure out of approved budget was also high in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh at 77 per cent, respectively. In contrast, expenditure as a proportion of approved budget was low in West Bengal at 37 per cent.

- In comparison to FY 2015-16, expenditure as a proportion of approved budgets was lower in FY 2016-17 for most states. For instance, in FY 2015-16, Gujarat spent 92 per cent of its approved budget. This however decreased to 46 per cent in FY 2016-17. Similarly, expenditure out of approved budget in Himachal Pradesh declined from 94 per cent in FY 2015-16 to 72 per cent in FY 2016-17. Maharashtra however stands out with expenditure improving significantly from 54 per cent to 84 per cent during the same time period.

IN 2016-17, WHILE MAHARASHTRA SPENT 84% OF ITS APPROVED BUDGET, WEST BENGAL SPENT ONLY 37%

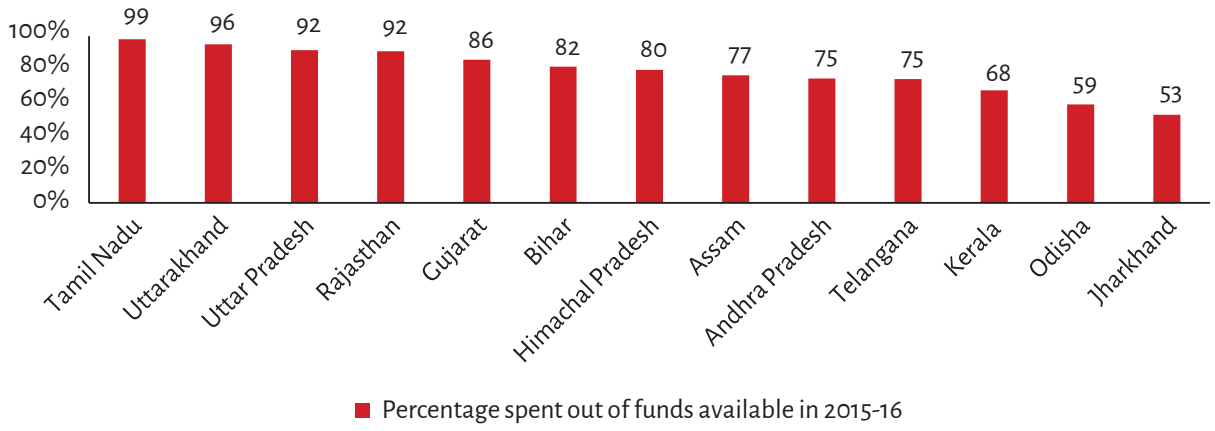


Source: Allocations and Expenditures have been taken from Lok Sabha unstarred question no. 2237 answered on 28 July 2017; Last accessed on 28 December 2017.

- There are significant differences between SSA budgets approved for states and the total funds actually available in a given year. Thus, a better way of measuring expenditure performance is by looking at expenditure as a proportion of total funds actually available to states. This includes funds released by both GoI and states, interest earned, and the opening balance available in the beginning of the financial year.

- There are significant state variations in the proportion of funds spent out of available funds. In FY 2015-16 (latest year for publicly available data on funds available), Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan spent 99 per cent, 96 per cent, and 92 per cent of SSA funds available to them, respectively. Utilization, however was low in Odisha (59 per cent) and Jharkhand (53 per cent).

IN 2015-16, WHILE TAMIL NADU SPENT 99% OF FUNDS AVAILABLE, JHARKHAND SPENT ONLY 53%

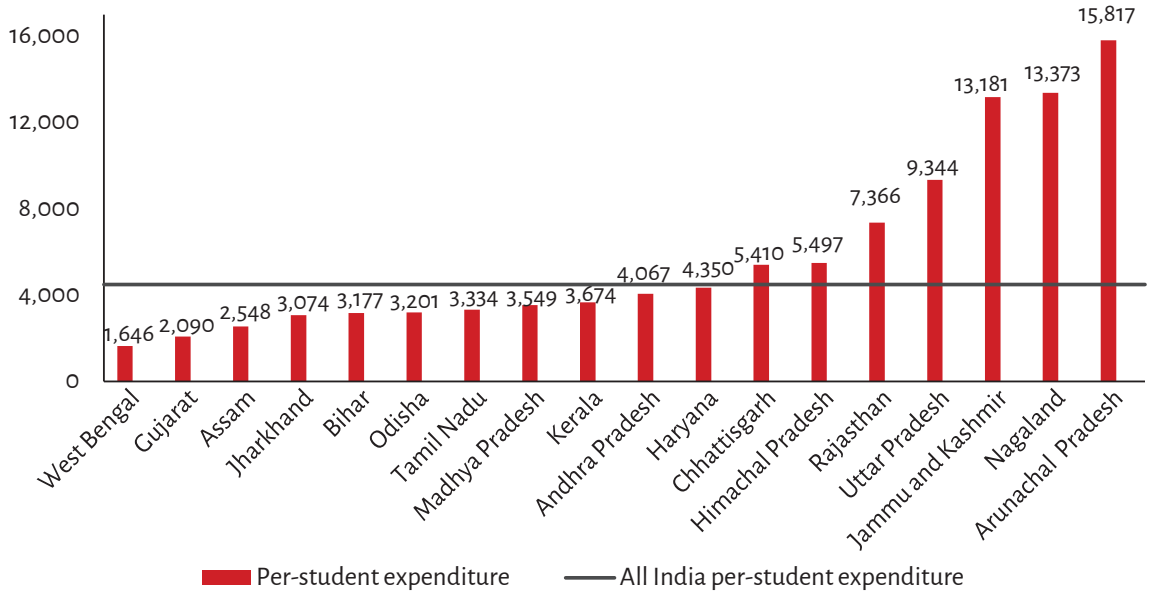


Source: Audit reports, 2015-16, available at http://ssashagun.nic.in/auditrpt.html. Last accessed on 20 December 2017.

State-wise Per-student SSA Expenditure

- In FY 2016-17, there were significant variations in per-student expenditures across states. Arunachal Pradesh recorded the highest per-student expenditure, followed by Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir, all of which were far above the all India per-student expenditure (₹4,385).
- On the other end of the spectrum, West Bengal and Gujarat spent ₹1,646 and ₹2,090 per student in FY 2016-17, respectively.
- The biggest increase in per-student expenditure between FY 2015-16 and FY 2016-17 was in Nagaland, increasing 42 per cent from ₹9,405 to ₹13,373. In the same period, per-student expenditure in Jammu and Kashmir decreased from ₹17,830 to ₹13,181. This fall was driven by a 31 per cent decrease in expenditure from ₹1,829 crore to ₹1,258 crore.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH RECORDED THE HIGHEST PER-STUDENT EXPENDITURE IN 2016-17, WHILE WEST BENGAL RECORDED THE LOWEST

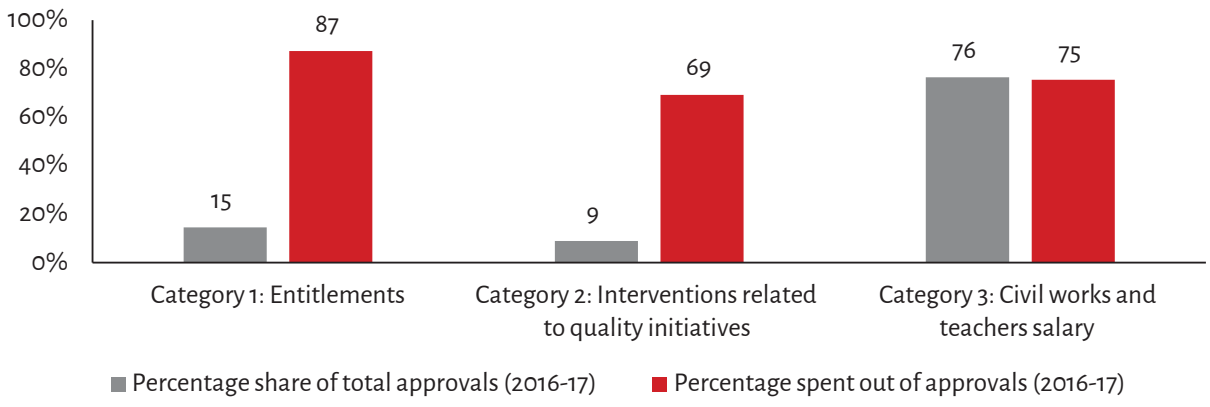


Source: Expenditure figures for 2016-17 are from Lok Sabha unstarred question no. 2237 answered on 28 July 2017; For 2016-17 enrolment figures are from DISE raw data 2016-17 (Telangana Enrolment for 2015-16 has been used for 2016-17). Last accessed on 28 December 2017.

COMPONENT-WISE BREAK-UP OF ALLOCATIONS AND EXPENDITURES

- A look at the proportion of the total approved budget going for different activities gives a sense of GoI and state priorities. In 2016, in order to prioritise spending on quality education, the SSA budget was categorised into three categories.
  - **Category 1** focuses on **Entitlements,** and includes allocations for free textbooks and uniform, school and maintenance grants, inclusive education, fee re-imbursement under RTE, residential schools and hostels, project management, among others.
  - **Category 2** focuses on **Interventions related to quality initiatives**. This includes expenses on teacher training, innovation, community mobilization, School Management Committee training, libraries, teacher learning material, mainstreaming of out-of-school children, transport, and academic support through block and cluster resource centres.
  - **Category 3** includes **civil works and teacher salaries**.
- According to AWP&Bs for FY 2017-18, the aim is to prioritise the first two categories and states should spend 30 per cent of their total expenditure on these two categories.
- A look at the proportion of the total approved budget and corresponding expenditure incurred on different categories gives a sense of GoI and state priorities.
- In FY 2016-17, civil works and teacher salaries (Category 3) constituted the majority share of total approved budget at 76 per cent, followed by entitlements (Category 1) at 15 per cent. Share of quality related interventions (Category 2) however, was only 9 per cent of the total SSA approved budget.
- The trend continues in FY 2017-18 with 76 per cent of total approved budget going for teacher salaries and civil works, 14 per cent for entitlements, 10 per cent for quality related interventions.
- There are differences in expenditure as a proportion of the budget approved for that component. For instance, in FY 2016-17, 87 per cent of approved budget for entitlements was spent. In contrast, despite prioritization of quality related interventions, only 69 per cent of the budget approved for quality was spent.

IN 2016-17, 9% OF THE TOTAL APPROVED BUDGET WAS ALLOCATED TO QUALITY, AND 69% OF THAT AMOUNT WAS SPENT

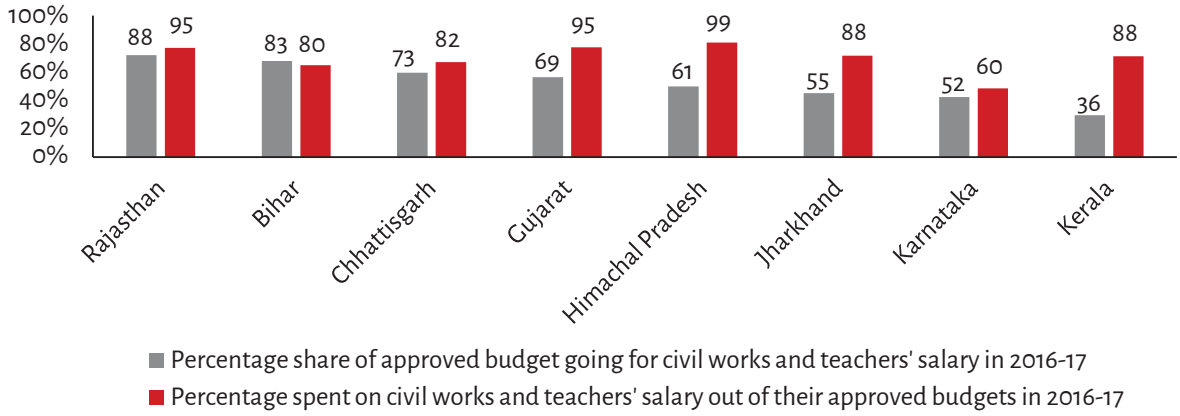


Source: Project Approval Board (PAB) minutes and costing sheets, 2017-18, available on www.ssashagun.nic.in. The component Major Repairs has been added to Category 3 instead of Category 1 as it is a part of civil works. Last accessed on 8 December 2017.

- There are, however, differences across states. In FY 2016-17, the share of civil works and teachers' salary out of total approved budgets was high in Rajasthan and Bihar at 88 per cent and 83 per cent, respectively. Moreover, expenditure as a proportion of the approved budget for civil works and infrastructure was also high in both states at 95 per cent and 80 per cent, respectively.

- In contrast, in Karnataka and Kerala 52 per cent and 36 per cent of the approved SSA budget was for civil works and teacher salaries. However, while Karnataka spent only 60 per cent of the approved budget for these activities, expenditure was high in Kerala at 88 per cent.

IN 2016-17, HIMACHAL PRADESH SPENT 99% OF THE FUNDS ALLOCATED TO CIVIL WORKS AND TEACHERS SALARY, WHILE KARNATAKA SPENT ONLY 60%

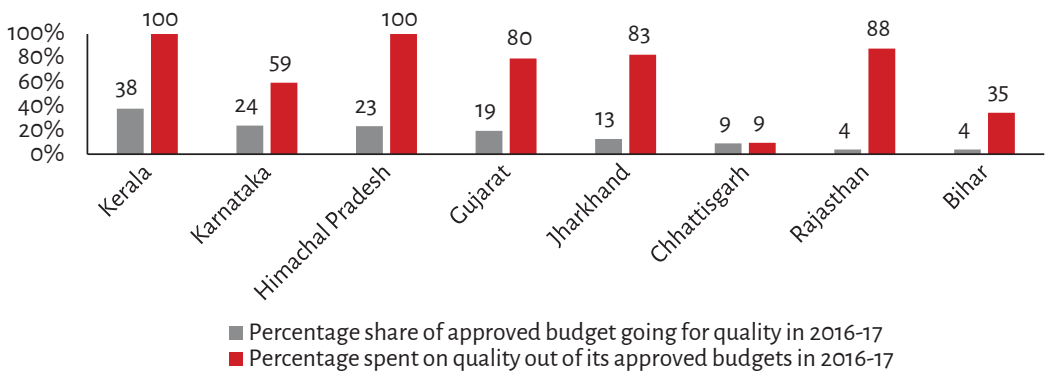


Source: Project Approval Board (PAB) minutes and costing sheets, 2017-18, available on www.ssashagun.nic.in. The component Major Repairs has been added to Category 3 instead of Category 1 as it is a part of civil works. Last accessed on 8 December 2017.

- States such as Kerala and Karnataka seem to have prioritized interventions related to quality initiatives. In FY 2016-17, the share of the approved budget going towards quality was 38 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively in both states. However, while Kerala spent its entire approved budget for quality. Karnataka spent only 59 per cent.

- The share of the budget for quality was low in Bihar at 4 per cent and only 35 per cent of it spent. Similarly, only 9 per cent of the total SSA approved budget in Chhattisgarh was on quality, and 9 per cent of it was spent.

IN 2016-17, KERALA SPENT 100% OF THE FUNDS ALLOCATED TO QUALITY , WHILE CHHATTISGARH SPENT ONLY 9%

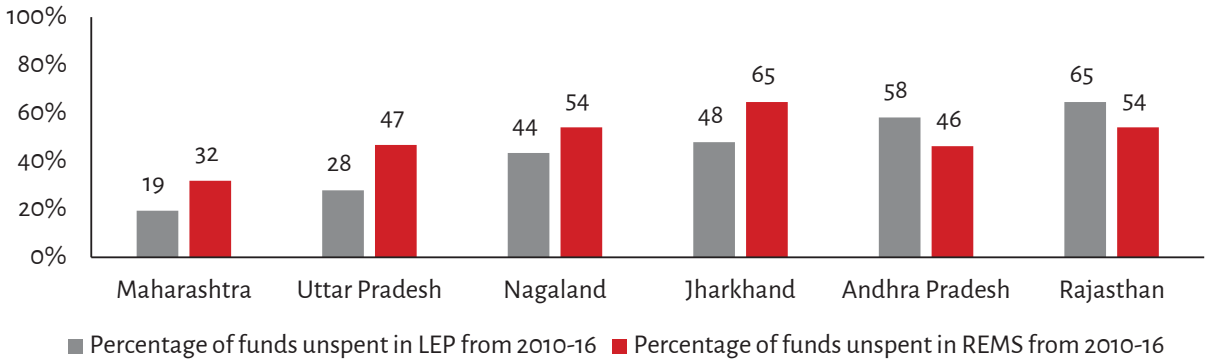


Source: Project Approval Board (PAB) minutes and costing sheets, 2017-18, available on www.ssashagun.nic.in. The component Major Repairs has been added to Category 3 instead of Category 1 as it is a part of civil works. Last accessed on 8 December 2017.

Learning Enhancement and REMS

- Two important components under SSA are the Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP) and Research, Evaluation, Monitoring, and Supervision (REMS).
- LEP funds are untied, and encourage states to innovate in order to improve learning outcomes. Similarly, under REMS, in addition to a focus on management, several components also focus on measuring quality. These include surveys on learning outcomes, State Learning Assessment Surveys (SLAS), child tracking, and Shala Siddhi (a school evaluation programme).

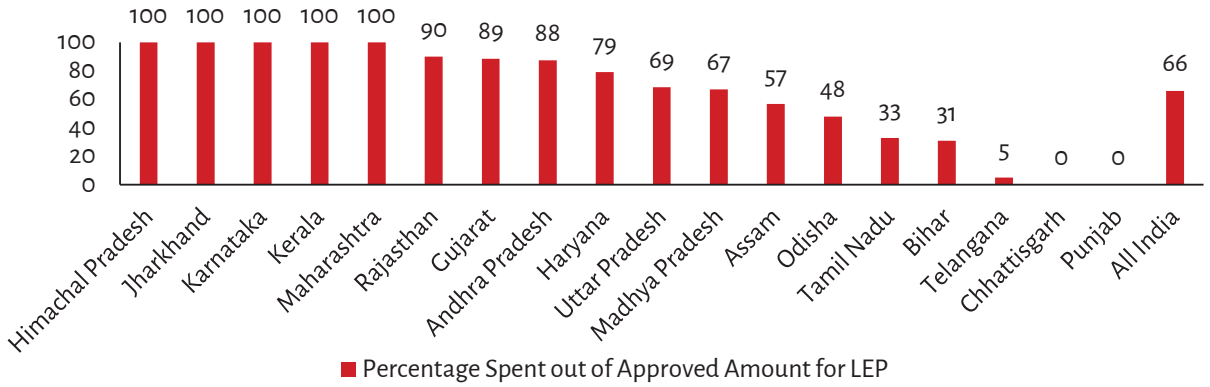
FROM 2010-16, THERE HAVE BEEN HIGH SHORTFALLS IN UTILIZATION OF FUNDS FOR LEP AND REMS



Source: Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on Implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009; Last accessed on 20 December 2017.

- Despite an increasing focus on quality of education, the utilization of funds for LEP and REMS has remained low. Between FY 2010-11 and FY 2015-2016, 65 per cent of LEP funds and 54 per cent of REMS funds remain unspent in Rajasthan. Similarly, 46 per cent of LEP funds and 65 per cent of REMS funds remained unspent in Jharkhand.
- Low utilization of funds for LEP seems to continue in FY 2016-17. LEP accounted for only 1 per cent of the total approved budget in FY 2016-17 and only 66 per cent of it was spent. There are however state differences. Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra spent the entire approved budget for LEP. Expenditure as a proportion of approved budget was low in Telangana, Bihar and Tamil Nadu at 5 per cent, 31 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively. In fact, Chhattisgarh and Punjab did not spend any of their LEP funds and West Bengal did not even allocate any budget for LEP in FY 2016-17.

IN 2016-17, HIMACHAL PRADESH SPENT 100% OF ITS APPROVED BUDGET FOR LEP, WHILE CHHATTISGARH SPENT 0%

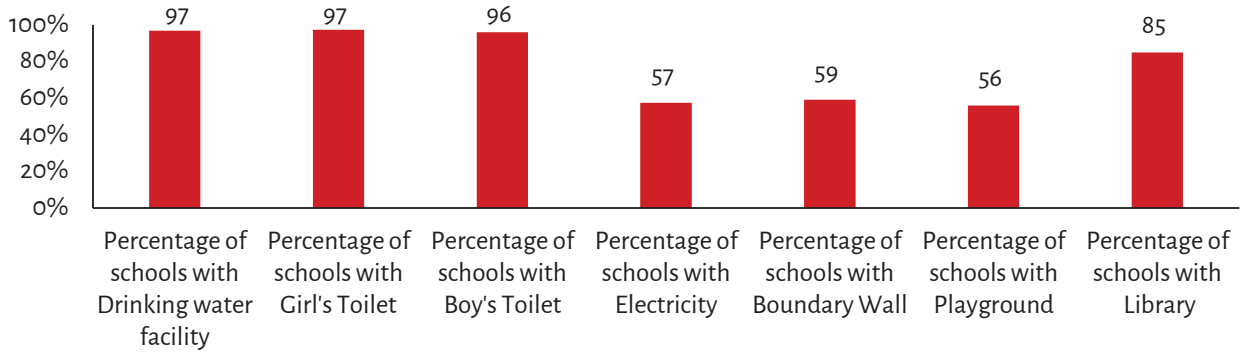


Source: : Project Approval Board (PAB) minutes and costing sheets, 2017-18, available on www.ssashagun.nic.in. Last accessed on 8 December 2017.

RTE COMPLIANCE

- In 2009, GoI passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) mandating minimum infrastructure and human resource requirements for states. SSA is the primary vehicle for implementing the RTE Act.
- As on September 2016, 97 per cent of government schools had a drinking water facility and a separate girls' toilet. However, gaps remain with respect to boundary walls, playground and electrification of schools.
- While the RTE mandates that no school shall have a teacher vacancy of more than 10 per cent and that SSA will support states in recruiting adequate number of teachers, the proportion of teacher vacancies continue to be high. As on March 2017, 18 per cent of total posts and 22 per cent of SSA teacher posts were vacant. The proportion of total vacant posts out of total sanctioned posts, were the highest in Jharkhand at 41 per cent, followed by Bihar at 34 per cent, and Uttar Pradesh at 30 per cent. These states had high proportions of vacancies out of total sanctioned posts as of August 2015 as well.

MEETING RTE GOALS



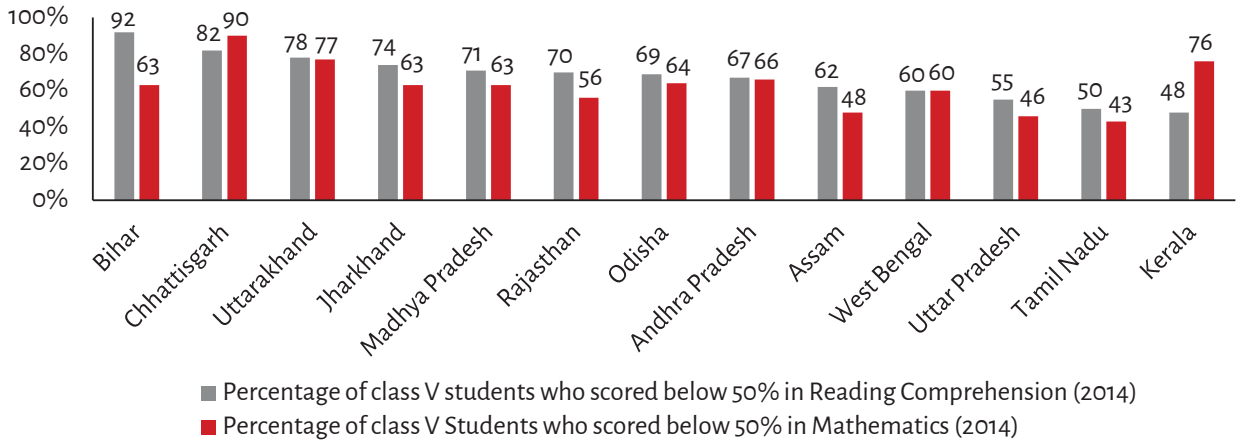
Source: Raw Data 2016-17, 'District Information System for Education' (DISE), National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA). Last accessed on 8 December 2017.

OUTCOMES

Learning Levels

- Since 2001, the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been conducting an all-India representative sample-based survey called National Achievement Survey (NAS). The objective is to track in-school learning achievements at the elementary level in three subjects: Reading Comprehension, Mathematics, and Environment Studies.
- State-wise numbers are currently available for the fourth round of NAS conducted for Class V students in 2014,
- As per NAS 2014, nationally only 36 per cent of Class V students scored more than 50 per cent in Reading Comprehension, 37 per cent scored more than 50 per cent in Mathematics, and 46 per cent scored more than 50 per cent in Environmental Studies.
- There are considerable variations across states. For instance, around 9 per cent students in Bihar and 18 per cent in Chhattisgarh scored more than 50 per cent in Reading Comprehension questions. In fact, 76 per cent of students in Bihar and 65 per cent of students in Chhattisgarh scored less than 35 per cent in Reading Comprehension. By contrast, 52 per cent students in Kerala and 50 per cent students in Tamil Nadu scored more than 50 per cent in Reading Comprehension.
- Some states do better in Mathematics than Reading Comprehension. More than 50 per cent of students scored more than 50 per cent in Mathematics in Assam, Karnataka, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. Similarly, in Bihar and Rajasthan, 37 per cent and 45 per cent of Class V students scored more than 50 per cent in Mathematics, respectively.
- Chhattisgarh was amongst the lowest performers across all three subjects whilst Tamil Nadu was one of the top performers.

NATIONALLY, 64% OF ALL CLASS V STUDENTS SCORED BELOW 50% IN READING COMPREHENSION

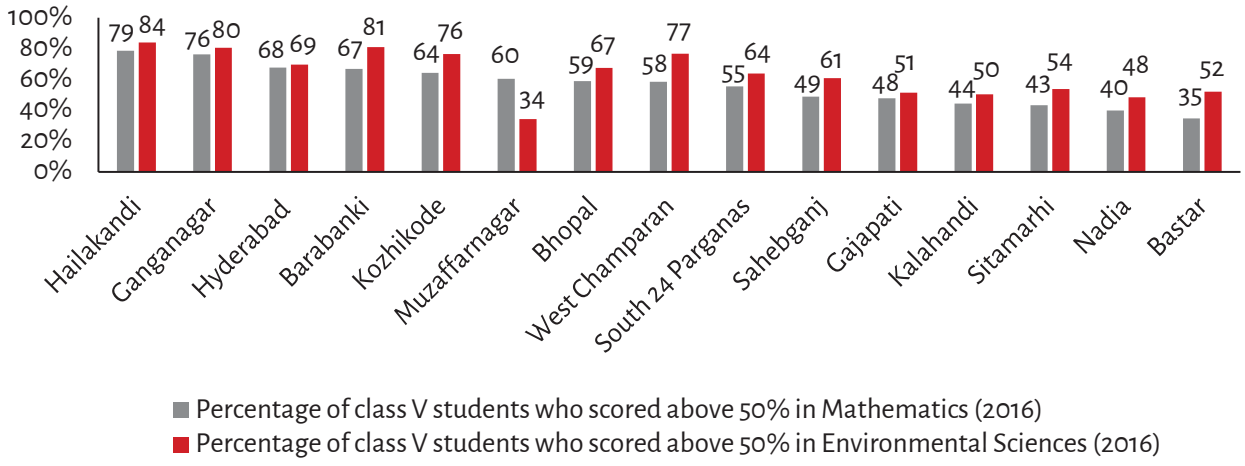


Source: : 'What Students of Class V Know and Can Do: A Summary of India's National Achievement Survey', Class V (Cycle 4), 2015, NCERT. Last accessed on 10 January 2017.

- In November 2017, the government rolled out NAS 2017, covering 22 lakh students from 1.1 lakh schools, across 700 districts in the country. NAS 2017 is one of the largest surveys conducted by GoI on learning levels.

- While state-wise numbers were not reported at the time of preparing the brief, this section looks at the results of 15 districts, based on MHRDs list of Special Focus districts. Special Focus districts are chosen on the basis of a high percentage of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, or Muslims populations.
- There are considerable variations across our sample of districts. For instance, 79 per cent students in Hailakandi, Odisha and 76 per cent in Ganganagar, Rajasthan scored more than 50 per cent in Mathematics questions. By contrast, only 40 per cent students in Nadia, West Bengal and 35 per cent students in Bastar, Chhattisgarh scored more than 50 per cent in Mathematics.
- In our sample, most districts do better in EVS than Mathematics. More than 50 per cent of students scored more than 50 per cent in Mathematics in 13 of the 15 districts in our sample.

IN 2016, ONLY 35% OF ALL STUDENTS TESTED SCORED MORE THAN 50% IN MATHEMATICS IN BASTAR, CHATTISGARH



Source: : NAS Districtwise Report Cards), 2017, NCERT; accessible at http://www.ncert.nic.in. Last accessed on 19 January 2017.