

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)  
from the Girls' Education Lens:  
An Initial Analysis



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# CONTENTS

<b>List of Figures</b>	02
<b>List of Tables</b>	03
<b>Preface</b>	04
<b>Acknowledgement</b>	05
<b>Executive Summary</b>	06
<b>I. Context</b>	09
I.a Existing Policies and Programs for Girls' Education	10
<b>II. Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SMSA): An Initial Analysis from Gender Lens</b>	12
II.a Scope and sample of the study	12
II.b Methodology	13
<b>III. Where Do We stand: Comparative Analysis of Educational Outcomes for Girl Children</b>	14
<b>IV. Planning to Budgeting Stages of SMSA- What Is There for Girls</b>	17
IV.a Overview of SMSA	17
IV.b How States are Designing Their SMSA Budget for Girls' Education?	19
IV.c How the States Are Distributing Resources for Girls' Education across Components?	22
<b>V. Is SMSA Structured Over the Experience of SSA and RMSA?</b>	25
<b>VI. Policy Recommendations</b>	31
<b>Reference</b>	34

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1.a** Performance of Select States vis-a-vis Girls' Education
- Figure 1.b** Performance of Select States vis-a-vis Girls' Education
- Figure 2** State wise Allocation for SMSA (Percent)
- Figure 3** Intervention for Girls' Education in Total Approved Outlay (including spillover) (Percent)
- Figure 4** Education Budget Targeted for Girls by Different Components (Percent)
- Figure 5** Intervention for Girls' Education in Total Approved Outlay- A Comparison of SSA and RMSA with SMSA(Percent)
- Figure 6** Per Girl Spending on Education (Rs.)

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1</b>	Select Schemes and Programs for Girls' Education
<b>Table 2</b>	Approved Outlay for SMSA by PAB (Rs. Crore)
<b>Table 3</b>	Output-Outcome Framework of SMSA - Indicators Specific to Girls' Education
<b>Table 4</b>	Proposed vs Approved Outlay for Select Components of Girls' Education
<b>Table 5</b>	Categorization of Components of Girls' Education in SMSA
<b>Table 6</b>	Approved Outlays: SMSA vs. (SSA and RMSA)
<b>Table 7</b>	A Comparison of Unit Costs across Schemes for Girl-Specific Interventions

## PREFACE

Gender equity in education is a development goal in its own right. The road ahead for education for women is long and winding. Much has been done on policies and program front ranging from increasing girl child's enrollment in school, retaining, training and educating them. Yet, the state of education of women's education in the country remains grim. The recent report by UNESCO on the state of global education (2016) stated that India is fifty years behind schedule in achieving the goal of universal education, and gender disparity in education is one of the major reasons for this fall back.

The government of India recently launched *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* (SMSA) for school education. The program aims to treat education holistically as a continuum from pre-school to class XII. Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the scheme. This report, a collaborative effort by the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) and Room to Read, attempts to explore the gender responsiveness of SMSA framework, particularly its planning and budgeting aspects. It brings to light the fact that girls need to be seen in a larger socio-cultural and economic context. There is a need to strengthen gender-responsive budgeting for SMSA.

We believe that an analysis of the scheme at this early stage could provide a baseline to generate insights needed to suggest corrective measures at different level for promoting equitable and quality girls' education.

We are grateful to colleagues at CBGA and Room to Read for their contribution to the study and to partners for their support in the process.

CBGA

Room to Read

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Any errors or omissions are solely my responsibility.

Protiva Kundu

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women represent half the resources and half the potential in any society. This potential remains unrealized when women are constrained by inequality and discrimination. The most common example to demonstrate the strong link between gender equality and development can be seen in the area of education. Gender equity in education is a development goal in its own right and government has a key role in ensuring that 'no one is left behind'.

India, had committed to attaining the target related to gender equity and empowerment, embodied in Millennium Declaration by 2015. However, gender parity in school education as one of the MDGs remains elusive. Again in 2015, India signed the 2030 agenda of sustainable development and one of the targets of its 17 goals remain 'by 2030, all girls' and boys' complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education with effective learning outcomes.

The last two decades have seen several policy measures to promote girls' education. Yet, gender disparities in education persist. Although the gender gap has narrowed at the elementary level, it remains significant at the secondary and higher education levels. In this discourse, *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* (SMSA) is the new centrally sponsored scheme launched in 2018 with an aim to improve school effectiveness measures in terms of 'equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes.' The underlying principle of the scheme is not only to reduce gender disparity but to bring about a basic change in the status of women.

Since SMSA is in its early stage, there is limited information available in the public domain about its implementation. However, there is information available on design of the scheme, planning and allocations for different interventions for girls' education. The questions thus come to mind is how sensitive is SMSA towards girls' education in its design?

This new integrated scheme is a merger of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE). This also becomes pertinent to ask whether SMSA is an improvement over SSA and RMSA in terms of its structural framework. This study is an attempt towards this end to unpack the structure and composition of SMSA from a gender lens.

Budget is one of the policy instruments which could measure the responsiveness of governments' commitments. Thus, taking example from 10 states – Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telengana, Uttarakhand and West Bengal – a representation of better and poor performing states in education, representing all the regions of the country, the study has examined the nature of interventions these 10 states has made while designing their school-education budget under SMSA.

Government interventions to promote access, enrolment or retention also benefit girls. However, evidence shows that general interventions are insufficient to address gender inequality. Additional and specific interventions for girls are needed. To capture the impact of government's interventions for girls' education, this paper has thus focused specifically to all those interventions under SMSA, which are exclusively targeted towards girls. The Annual Work Plan & Budget (AWP&B) of the study states shows that states have budgeted resources specific to girls' education mostly under a head termed 'Gender and Equity'. The interventions under this head include construction and strengthening of KGBV and interventions to promote girls empowerment especially adolescent girls through training in martial art/self defence, career guidance programs for girls etc. Besides 'Gender and Equity' component, states also have budgeted for provisions like hostels and some monetary and non-monetary incentives to girl children for increasing the retention rate.

As the scheme proposes giving flexibility to the States to plan and prioritize their interventions within the scheme norms and the overall resource envelope available to them, thus it is important to understand how states are designing their resources for girls' education. It has been observed that share of outlay for girl specific interventions in the total approved outlay of SMSA varies from four percent in Uttarakhand to 34 percent in Telangana. This to some extent indicates the priority of girls' education across study states. One common observation across states is prioritization of resources for two components - residential schools and RTE entitlement for free uniform to girls.

Violence against girl is more common in schools. This 'normalized masculinity' is rooted in Societal practices, gender stereotypes, discrimination and devaluation of girls. Studies have shown that behavioral transformation, change in pre-defined societal norms, cultural practices etc. can help to reduce this incidence of violence, and education is one of the significant agencies of this social change. Though, the framework of SMSA has recognised the very existence of gender-violence in school, the interventions adopted for safety and security of girls in school remains restricted in self-defence training and motivational camps.

Adolescent girls and those from disadvantaged communities continue to form the bulk of out-of school children. However, there is no budgetary provision to mainstream these out of school children at secondary level in the scheme guideline. But a larger concern is the visible resource gap between what states have demanded to Project Approval Board (PAB) and what has been approved by PAB across all the interventions specific to girls' education.

Whether SMSA is built over the experience of SSA and RMSA? A comparison of the guidelines of SSA, RMSA and SMSA and associated financial norms for different interventions in the respective schemes do not reflect the professed goal of this restructuring exercise. The existing interventions in SSA and RMSA have been continued more or less in the same form under SMSA.

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Basic education for equality entails the necessity of “empowering” women by giving them a range of socio-cultural competencies and tools, beyond the narrow conceptualisation of reading and writing skills. However, the discourse on girls' education even in the SMSA, has not moved significantly beyond “quantitative” and formal notions of parity (gender parity in enrolment, retention, dropout rates). Girls are largely seen as a stand-alone category. The journey to gender parity and universal education will continue to be slow and perilous unless supported by gender-responsive budgeting.

# I. CONTEXT

India has made considerable strides during the last couple of decades in terms of access to school, development of school infrastructure, enrolment of out of school children and improved pupil teacher ratios. However, gender parity in school education as one of the MDGs remains elusive. In 2015, while India signed the 2030 agenda of sustainable development, one of the targets of its 17 goals is 'by 2030, all girls' and boys' complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education with effective learning outcomes'. A new report by UNESCO on the state of global education (2015)<sup>1</sup> recently stated that India is fifty years behind schedule in achieving the goal of universal education, and gender disparity in education is one of the major reasons for this fall back.

Notwithstanding the above situation girls' education has been a priority in the policy framework since the early days of the independence. The Indian Constitution acknowledges the social, economic and educational discrimination and deprivation that women and girls have experienced. Hence, states were directed to promote the educational and economic interests of girls. The National Policies on Education also (1968, 1986/1992) underscore girls' education.

In recent years, the girl-to-boy student ratio is higher in government schools as compared to private school and the ratio is increasing with increase in levels of education. For example, as per DISE 2016-17, at elementary level, against 5.4 crore boys, the number of girls' enrolled was 5.6 crore, whereas at the secondary level the enrolment for girl was 88 lakh whereas the number for boys was 83 lakh. Interactions and information from the field reveals how parents believe that the private schools offer a better education leading to better career prospects and hence they are more willing to pay for their sons' education than their daughters'. Indirectly hence, government financing for school education goes to cater more to girl children. However, as parents are making a choice between fee paying school and free school, it is difficult to conclude that more number of girls can be attributed to decreasing gender disparity. Gender disparity of course cannot be limited only to enrolment; it must be achieved in retention, participation and learning achievement.

Arguments for girls education are backed up by large body of literature that shows how educating a girl is helpful in meeting many of the most important challenges in human development, with innumerable social and economic benefits to societies and nations. These arguments revolve around 'social reform for economic growth' paradigm. For example, a 10 percent increase in girls attendance in school can increase the gross domestic product (GDP) growth by three percentage points (USAID, 2014); a girl with 12 years or more schooling is less likely to have teenage pregnancy, less likely to have shorter interval between children and less likely to have more than two children during her lifetime (IIPS, 2017), and so on. These aspects are important, however, education needs to

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<sup>1</sup> Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges, Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO 2015

be seen more than being a vehicle for economic growth. It needs to be a process of and a pathway to empowerment. A girl needs to go through this process of education because it is her right to gain the intrinsic benefits of education for herself as a person, so that she can live her life fully with an ability to make informed choices, so that she has a set of skills which can help her negotiate important life decisions.

### **Ia. Existing Policies and Programs for Girls' Education**

One of the important aspects of achieving SDGs is to ensure gender parity in education both at elementary and secondary level and the Government is the key to ensuring that 'no one is left behind.' Over the years, the government's commitment to education has been articulated through several laws and policies, starting with the constitutional provision for free and compulsory education until the age of 14. The National Policy on Education, 1986 highlighted the issue of the gender imbalances in educational access and achievement and recommended for empowerment of girls for their participation in the education process. To bridge the gender gap in school education, at different points of time various ministries and departments have introduced a number of schemes specific to girls' education (Table 1). One of the earlier interventions for women empowerment through education, was *Mahila Samakhya* program launched in 1988 for women of rural India. In 2001, *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), another centrally sponsored scheme was with a goal to universalize elementary education with a focus on promoting girls education through infrastructure building. The National Program for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL), launched in September 2003 had additional provisions for enhancing the education of underprivileged girls at the primary level through intense community mobilisation, development of model schools in clusters, gender sensitisation of teachers, development of gender-sensitive learning materials, early childhood care and education facilities and provision of need-based incentives for girls. In 2004, *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas scheme* (KGBV) was implemented for setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities. To address the cause of sibling care, the ECCE centres under ICDS were started to cater to children below six years of age hoping to create support for girls and to promoting girls' education. Some major centrally sponsored schemes supported by the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to promote enrolment of girl child in the secondary stage are Girls Hostel schemes, National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education and *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA). In the process of reducing the number of centrally sponsored scheme, from 2015-16 onwards some of the programs were discontinued and most of the schemes are subsumed under SSA and RMSA (Table 1).

**Table 1: Select Schemes and Programs for Girls' Education**

<b>Strategies for Girls' Education</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>ICDS</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres</li></ul></li><li>• <b><i>Mahila Samakhya</i></b></li><li>• <b><i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)</i></b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Free uniform</li><li>- Free text books</li><li>- Providing escorts to girls from scattered habitation</li><li>- Recruitment of female teachers and gender sensitisation of teachers</li><li>- Residential and non-residential bridge courses for OOSC</li><li>- National Program for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL) (Activity closed)</li><li>- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) (Merged with SSA)</li></ul></li><li>• <b><i>Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)</i></b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Girls Hostel</li><li>- Providing escorts to girls from scattered habitation</li><li>- National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education (Merged with RMSA)</li></ul></li><li>• <b>National Child Labour Project (NCLP) school for child workers</b></li><li>• <b>Scholarship and merit link awards to girl children from SC, ST and minority community</b></li></ul>

## SAMAGRA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SMSA): AN INITIAL ANALYSIS FROM GENDER LENS

Government of India recently launched *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* (SMSA) for school education. The program aims to treat education holistically as a continuum from pre-school to class XII. Towards this goal, the program is designed by subsuming three existing schemes – *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE) in it. From July, 2018-19 states have started implementing the scheme on the ground. As a first step, between May-June of this financial year, various states have prepared the required outlays to run the scheme and presented to the Project Approval Board (PAB) of the SMSA.

The SMSA framework recognizes gender as a critical cross cutting equity issue. Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the scheme. The equity agenda spelt out in the scheme is a move from incentives and provision-based approach to outcome-based approach (MHRD, 2018a).

### II.a Scope and Sample of the Study

At this stage information on design of the scheme, planning and allocations etc. is available for SMSA. The new design of clubbing the three major schemes into one omnibus program needs a deeper dive to ascertain the different aspects of the scheme and its viability. In this backdrop, this brief study is an attempt to unpack the planning and budgeting process associated with this new scheme for girls' education from a gender lens.

Taking examples from 10 states – Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telengana, Uttarakhand and West Bengal – a representation of better and poor performing states in education, representing all the regions of the country, this paper is an exploratory analysis of the planning and budgeting process associated with SMSA to understand how is girls education being promoted and what are the pathways being set out. Has the scheme addressed some important aspects of girls' education in its design and strategic interventions? Does SMSA build on the experience of SSA and RMSA in terms of designing and financial norms?

As 2018-19 is the first year for implementation of SMSA, hence, this initial analysis has looked at specifically two financial indicators, viz. approved outlay for SMSA by the PAB across states and total allocation for the scheme by Centre and respective states. 'Approved Outlay' is available in programmatic document, which is the amount of money approved by Project Approval Board to run a program based on the annual workplan submitted by states, whereas 'Allocation' is available in the budget documents, which is amount of money approved by Ministry of Finance to the line ministry to run a program.

Questions about how states have allocated resources for different interventions specific to girls' education, how much money has been released both by Centre and states and what is the pattern of fund utilization in the first two quarters of this financial year are aspects

which will mark the next stage of this analysis – once implementations gets further on the ground and such information starts to get available in the public domain.

However, an analysis at this early stage, of the structure of the SMSA, planning and budgeting for the scheme by different states in 2018-19 could provide a baseline to generate insights needed to suggest corrective measures at different level for promoting equitable and quality girls' education.

## **II.b. Methodology**

To capture the impact of government's interventions for girls' education, this paper has focused specifically to all those interventions under SMSA, which are exclusively targeted towards girls. There are a large number of interventions like appointment of female teachers, free text books, escort services to children from scattered habitations, residential and non-residential bridge courses for out of school children in the SMSA, which are very much gender-responsive in nature. However, in the absence of gender-disaggregated financial data for these indicators, the study has solely focused on the girl-specific interventions.

The following methodology is adopted to address the proposed research questions.

1. An in-depth analysis of the proposed framework of SMSA to understand the structure of the program in details.
2. A detailed analysis of minutes of Project Approval Board (PAB) meetings of SMSA for 2018-19 across ten states to gauge the budgetary outlays approved for different interventions of education specific to girl children.
3. To draw a comparative picture on the structure and pattern of approved outlay between SMSA and SSA and RMSA together, a detailed analysis of framework of SSA and RMSA and the PAB minutes of SSA and RMSA for 2017-18 in the ten study states will be carried out.

## WHERE DO WE STAND: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR GIRL CHILDREN

How a state designs and allocates its resources for girls' education depends on a number of indicators. Good policy measures strike a judicious balance between different types of input, output and outcome indicators to establish the link between means and ends.

Before examining the planning and budgeting associated with SMSA, this section maps the position of the girls in the education ladder in the 10 study states. A set of indicators representing different dimensions of education such as management, infrastructure, access and quality have been used to gauge state's performance in girls' education at elementary and secondary level (Figure 1.a & 1.b). The mapping of the indicators across states helps to identify the gaps where interventions need to be located in promoting girls' education.

**Figure 1.a: Performance of Select States vis-a-vis Girls' Education**

States	Management		Infrastructure		Access			
	Share of enrolled girls' at elementary level in govt. school (%)	Share of enrolled girls' at higher secondary level in govt. school (%)	Schools with functional drinking water facility (%)	Schools with functional girls toilet facility (%)	Net Enrolment Ratio for girls at elementary level	Net Enrolment Ratio for girls at higher secondary level	% girls studying science at higher secondary level	Households living within 5 km of secondary school (%)
Andhra Pradesh	58.2	23.0	80.5	89.8	80.4	26.1	48.6	84.9
Bihar	93.8	88.5	86.0	83.5	100.0	17.4	33.2	86.1
Chhattisgarh	74.6	74.4	89.5	95.8	93.7	35.6	50.3	91.0
Delhi	74.1	74.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	52.5	36.9	100.0
Madhya Pradesh	62.2	60.5	81.5	92.3	85.3	28.2	43.4	76.6
Maharashtra	46.8	2.9	96.1	97.6	92.6	46.3	43.0	77.3
Rajasthan	56.5	50.8	85.9	97.7	86.5	27.1	31.3	87.6
Telangana	48.7	29.9	75.7	97.3	88.3	22.7	55.6	91.2
Uttarakhand	47.6	57.6	81.3	91.1	87.6	44.6	38.7	86.6
West Bengal	88.6	93.0	88.5	95.9	91.6	34.7	39.3	95.2
<b>India</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>37.7</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>94.3</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>87.8</b>

Note: States arranged in alphabetical order;

Source: NUEPA, 2017a, 2017b (management, infrastructure); MOSPI, 2015 (access);

**Figure 1.b: Performance of Select States vis-a-vis Girls' Education**

States	Quality			
	Average drop-out rate at elementary level (%)	Average drop-out rate at secondary level (%)	Transition Rate: elementary to secondary (%)	Transition Rate: Secondary to Higher Secondary (%)
Andhra Pradesh	2.2	NE	97.5	NE
Bihar	9.7	40.2	73.4	22.5
Chhattisgarh	3.8	24.7	87.8	59.4
Delhi	0.0	9.7	99.3	93.8
Madhya Pradesh	6.7	27.7	80.5	62.0
Maharashtra	17.2	34.1	80.5	62.0
Rajasthan	4.7	17.5	97.1	83.8
Telangana	3.9	35.8	94.7	59.2
Uttarakhand	4.3	11.5	93.2	78.5
West Bengal	4.9	26.7	94.1	68.5
<b>India</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>87.9</b>	<b>66.5</b>

Note: States arranged in alphabetical order; NE- Not Estimated, NA- Not Available;  
Source: NUEPA, 2017a, 2017b (quality);

A mapping of all 10 states on 12 indicators, representing four dimensions of the education system, portrays a mixed picture of girls' education. While around two-third of girl children are enrolled in government schools at elementary level, the number reduced to 38 percent at higher secondary level. Bihar, Chhattisgarh, which are also economically poor/backward states, also catering to a large number of girl children in government schools. With implementation of Right to Education Act and *Swachhata Vidyalaya* program, most states are able to provide for drinking water facility and, a separate toilet for girls in all schools. This has reduced the incidence of drop out and has improved the net enrolment ratio (NER) of girls at elementary level. However, the all India average of NER is only 31.4 and in states like Bihar, Telangana, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, the NER at higher secondary level is less than 30 percent.

High drop-out rate and low transition rate, especially at secondary and higher secondary level is the key challenges for girls' education. A consistent feature that merits attention is in most cases the states which are also economically and educationally backward, perform

below the national average at all levels of education. Drop-out rate and low transition rate at secondary and higher secondary level is the key challenges for girls' education. At higher secondary level, the gender disparity is more prominent in science education. Of the total enrolment in science stream at higher secondary level, only 42 percent are girls and rest 58 percent are boys. This is clearly an indicator of under-representation of girls in science education in India.

**Drop-out rate and low transition rate at secondary and higher secondary level is the key challenges for girls' education.**

# IV.

## PLANNING TO BUDGETING STAGES OF SMSA - WHAT IS THERE FOR GIRLS

### IV.a Overview of SMSA

SMSA has been envisioned as a holistic approach towards school education - an overarching program for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class XII. The main outcomes of the Scheme are envisaged as Universal Access, Equity and Quality, promoting Vocationalisation of Education and strengthening of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs). Towards this direction, the scheme aims to work on 11 pillars of education including administrative reform, enhanced funding for education, Quality of Education, Digital Education, Strengthening of Schools, Focus on Girl Education, Focus on Inclusion, Focus on Skill Development, Focus on Sports and Physical Education and Promotion on Regional Balance (MHRD, 2018a).

For 2018-19, in most states the Project Approval Board (PAB) meeting was held between May and June where states presented their annual plan and budgets for implementation of SMSA for the financial year, 2018-2019 to PAB. On the basis of their proposed budgets the PAB has approved an outlay to run the program (Table 2).

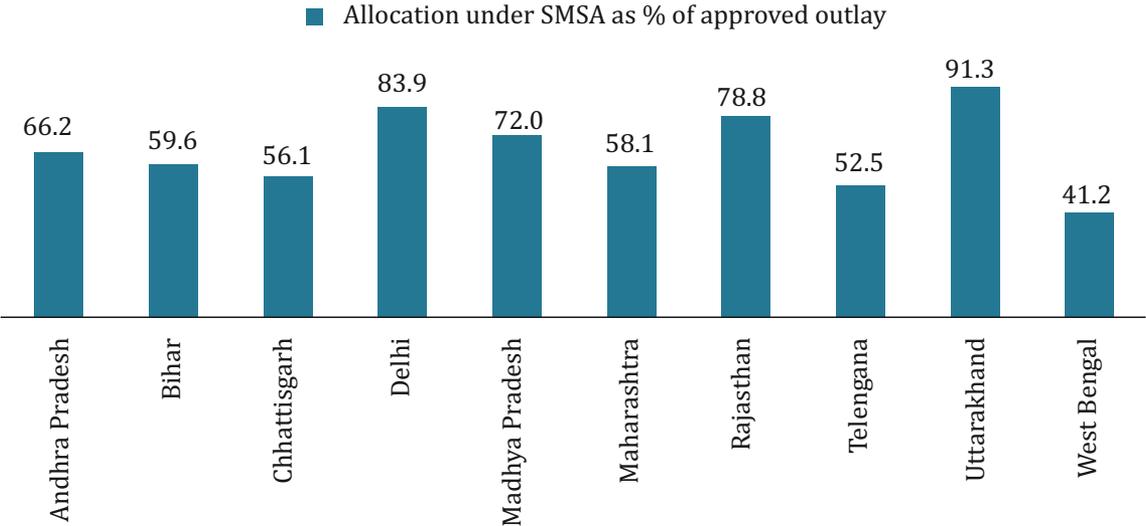
**Table 2: Approved Outlay for SMSA by PAB (Rs. Crore)**

States	PAB Meeting held	Approved Outlay (Rs. Crore)			
		Elementary	Secondary	Teacher Education	Total
Andhra Pradesh	9th May	1901.2	853.0	19.8	2774.0
Bihar	20th June	7371.6	1354.3	23.0	8748.9
Chhattisgarh	21st June	1649.6	942.6	37.7	2630.0
Delhi	13th June	258.7	210.6	42.2	511.5
Madhya Pradesh	6th June	4209.9	1310.9	50.6	5571.4
Maharashtra	10th May	1854.5	569.2	58.2	2481.9
Rajasthan	14th June	4095.5	1565.9	84.1	5745.5
Telangana	17th May	1498.8	761.1	25.4	2285.3
Uttarakhand	7th June	597.0	367.7	90.4	1055.1
West Bengal	21st June	3878.0	525.0	22.3	4425.8

Note: The total budget includes spillover; Source: MHRD, 2018d

Against the budget estimate the Centre and state government have allocated resources for implementation of the program at ground level. Figure 2 below shows the pattern of allocation by Centre and States together for SMSA across states as proportion of approved outlay for SMSA. It reveals that no study state has been allocated 100 percent of the approved outlay. The share varies from 91 percent in Uttarakhand to 41 percent in West Bengal (Figure 2). The minutes of the PAB meeting says that the board has recommended that *'the State should meet the balance amount from its own resources including the additional funds devolved under the 14th Finance Commission. As per Section 7(5) of the RTE Act, 2009, the State Government shall after taking into consideration the sum provided by the Central Government above and the mandatory matching State share, provide the balance funds necessary to fulfill the estimate for the implementation of the Act'*. The revised estimates for 2018-19 will tell us whether states have channelized additional resources for SMSA from their own resources or not.

**Figure 2: State wise Allocation for SMSA (Percent)**



Source: MHRD, 2018d

**Pattern of allocation across states reveals that no study state has been allocated 100 percent of the approved outlay under SMSA.**

## IV.b How States are Designing Their SMSA Budget for Girls' Education?

Girls are not a homogenous category and gender does not operate in isolation but in conjunction with other social categories, resulting in girls' having to experience multiple forms of disadvantage. The dimensions of location (rural-urban), caste, class, religion, disabilities etc. intersect with gender to create a complex reality. Acknowledging the diversity, for a better targeted outcome for girls' education, the framework of the SMSA has clearly defined an output-outcome framework with deliverable goals for 2018-19 and 2019-20. The indicators chosen specific to girls' education are gender parity index at elementary level and gender gap in enrolment in secondary and higher secondary level (Table 3).

**Table 3: Output-Outcome Framework of SMSA – Indicators Specific to Girls Education**

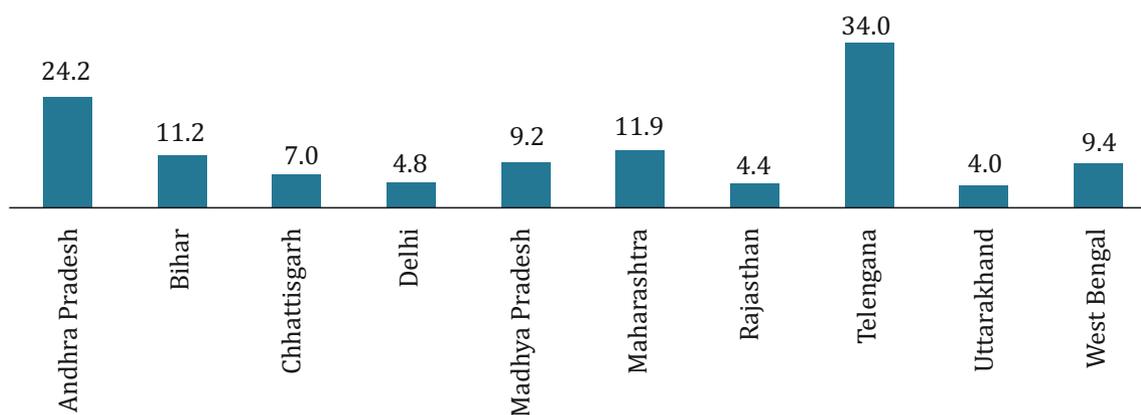
Level of education	Indicators	Output/Deliverables		
		2015-16 (Baseline)	2018-19	2019-20
Elementary	Gender Parity Index (GPI)	0.94	0.96	0.97
Secondary	Gender Gap in enrolment	5%	4%	4%
Higher Secondary	Gender Gap in enrolment	5%	4%	4%

Source: MHRD, 2018c

### Interventions under SMSA specific to girls' education

The framework of SMSA identifies interventions like opening of schools in the neighborhood; uniforms to all girls up to Class VIII; provision of gender segregated toilets in all schools; teachers' sensitization programs to promote girls' participation; provision for self-defence training for the girls from classes VI to XI; Stipend to CWSN girls from class I to Class XII; Upgradation of KGBVs for Girls from classes VI - VIII to classes VI – XII and Construction of residential quarters for teachers in remote/hilly areas/in areas with difficult terrain. Following the guidelines, the states also have allocated resources for a set of interventions for promoting girls' education in their annual plan. The AWP&B shows that all the study states have budgeted resources specific to girls' education mostly under a head called 'Gender and Equity' component. The interventions under this head include construction and strengthening of KGBV and interventions to promote girls empowerment especially adolescent girls through training in martial art/self defence, career guidance programs for girls etc. Other than interventions under 'Gender and Equity' component, states also have allocated for provisions like hostels and some monetary and non-monetary incentives to girl children to increase the retention rate.

**Figure 3: Intervention for Girls' Education in Total Approved Outlay (including spillover) (Percent)**



Source: MHRD, 2018c

Figure 3 shows of the total approved outlay for SMSA, how much is going for interventions specific to girls' education. The share varies from four percent in Uttarakhand to 34 percent in Telengana. Telengana has re-allocated a larger chunk of previous years' unspent balance for girls' education in the current year. This has increased the share of budget for girls' education in total SMSA budget for the state in 2018-19. However, a one to one mapping of performance indicators across states (Figure 1a & 1b) and approved outlay for girls' education in respective states clearly shows a mismatch between need and resource approval. States like Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh which are otherwise performing poorly in terms of educational outcomes of girl children are also the states with lesser share of approved resources for girls' education.

The Scheme proposes to give flexibility to the States to plan and prioritize their interventions within the Scheme norms and the overall resource envelope available to them. However, a scrutiny of what states demanded to PAB and what has been approved by PAB shows a gap across all the components. Table 4 highlights the difference for two specific interventions – 'gender and equity component' and free uniform for girls. As uniform for girls till class VIII is an entitlement under RTE, for most of the states, more than 90 percent of the demand has been approved by PAB and in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telengana, the approval was 100 percent. However, under 'Gender and equity component', the share varies from as low as 43 percent in Telengana to 104 percent in Madhya Pradesh.

Moreover, a part of the central release of funds to states for SMSA is performance linked. Out of nine indicators selected to measure the performance of the state, two indicators are specific to girls' education. Of the total 100 percent performance linked allocation, 7.5 percent would be allocated for GPI at elementary level and 7.5 percent would be for GPI at

secondary level (MHRD, 2018b).<sup>2</sup> For example, in Rajasthan, districts like Jaisalmer, Sirohi, Jalor, the gender gap in Gross enrolment ratio (GER) is 22 percent, 18 percent and 12 percent respectively. The implementation of performance linked allocation, at one hand may encourage these districts to take initiatives to improve the situation of girls' education. At the same time, if they fail to improve the GPI, then these districts will get lesser money which will affect the distribution of resources across component and hence a possibility of poor performance in the next year. The whole process clearly indicates the resource gap from planning to budget to allocation stages of SMSA in its implementing year.

**Table 4: Proposed vs Approved Outlay for Select Components of Girls' Education**

States	Gender and Equity component		Uniform for girls (Rs. Crore)		Approved outlay as % of Proposed Outlay for school uniform	Approved outlay as % of Proposed Outlay -Gender component
	Proposed Outlay (Rs. Crore)	Approved Outlay (Rs. Crore)	Proposed Outlay (Rs. Crore)	Approved Outlay (Rs. Crore)		
Andhra Pradesh	59.4	45.3	96.4	90.2	94	76.3
Bihar	382.7	348.5	623.2	610.3	98	91.1
Delhi	4.3	2.7	-	-	-	63.6
Madhya Pradesh	183.4	191.1	213.8	213.8	100	104.2
Maharashtra	73.7	37.3	146.7	146.7	100	50.6
Telangana	1172.7	502.9	65.3	65.3	100	42.9
Uttarakhand	17.5	17.4	20.6	20.3	99	99.4
West Bengal	43.9	40.6	353.0	328.7	93	92.4

Note: Proposed outlays for other girl-specific interventions like girls' hostel, separate ladies toilets are not available; In Madhya Pradesh, PAB asked MP to construct higher number of KGBVs than the state planned for and approved larger resources for the same; Source: MHRD, 2018d

**A resource gap in different interventions for girls' education observed from planning to budgeting to allocation stages of SMSA for many of the study states.**

<sup>2</sup> 30 % for NAS scores at class III, V, VIII and X, 10% for separate cadre of headmasters, 10% for teacher transfer policy for a minimum tenure in rural area, 10% for percentage school covered under 'Shala siddhi', 10% for elementary for adverse PTR in elementary govt. school, 10% for subject wise PTR at secondary level and 5% for GER for STs.

### IV.c How the States Are Distributing Resources for Girls' Education across Components?

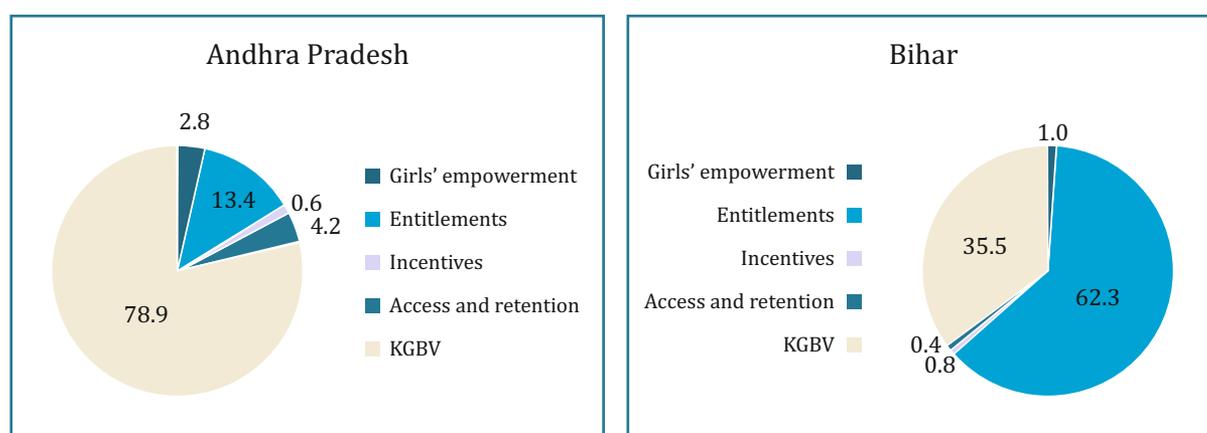
The share of approved outlay for girls' education in total approved outlay for SMSA to some extent reflects the priority of states in terms of improving girls' education. However, it does not tell us even within girls' education, which component is getting priority? Whether a state wants to allocate more resources in girl friendly infrastructure building or will focus on arresting drop-out rate through providing various monetary and non-monetary incentives to children. To make the analysis simple, the approved outlay for all girl specific interventions reported in PAB minutes for every state have been broadly classified into five categories- Girls' Empowerment, Entitlements, Incentive, Access and Retention and KGBV. Table 5 provides the list of components covered under these five categories.

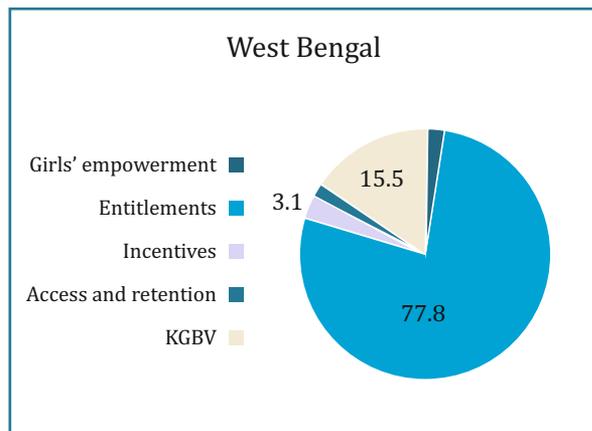
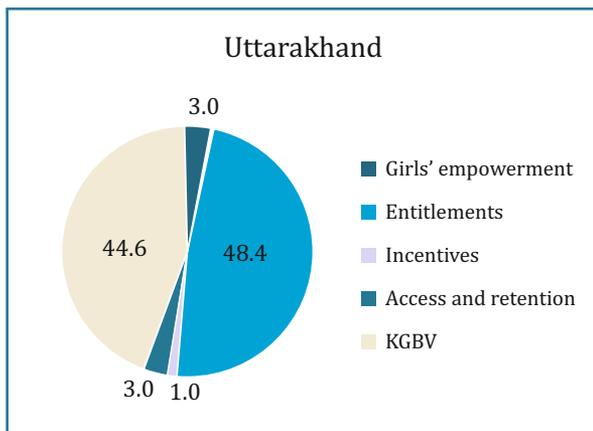
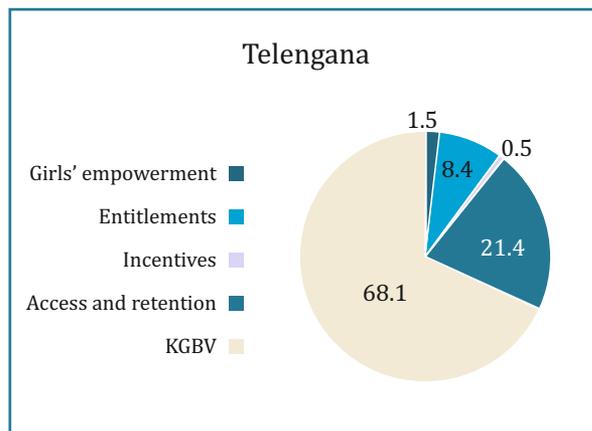
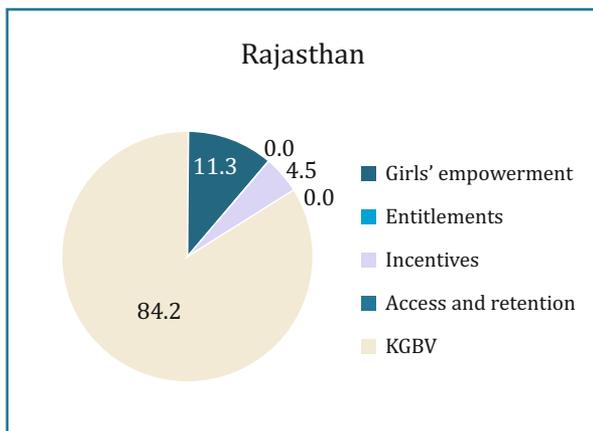
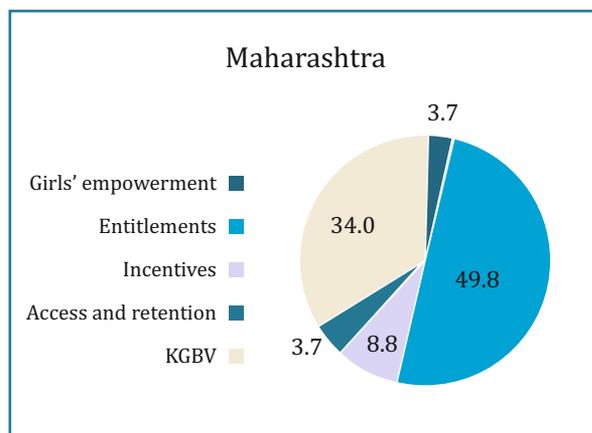
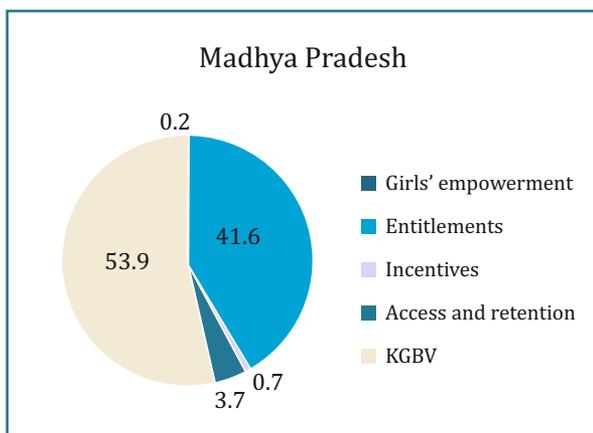
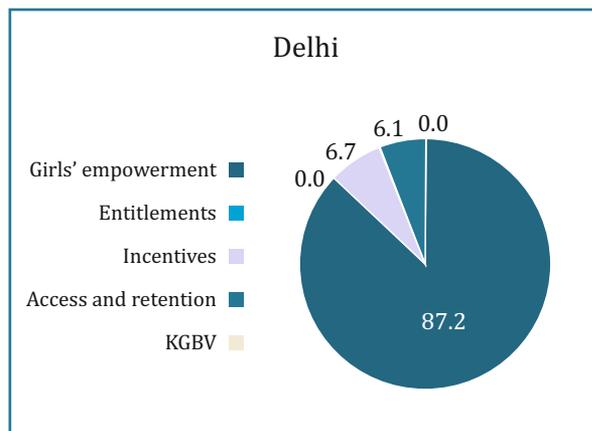
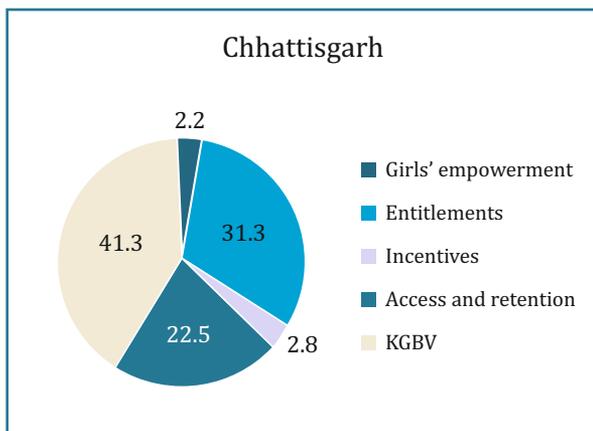
**Table 5: Categorisation of Components of Girls' Education in SMSA**

Broad Category	Interventions included
<b>Girls' Empowerment</b>	Training in marshal art/self defence, Career guidance program for girls, PBBBB, Resource material and behavioral change, Kishori Manch, sensitization and special training for strengthening female teacher forum
<b>Entitlements</b>	Free uniform for girls
<b>Incentives</b>	Stipend for CWSN girls
<b>Access and Retention</b>	Girls' toilets, Girls' hostel, Furniture for girls' hostel
<b>KGBV</b>	A combination of interventions like infrastructure, meal, scholarship etc.

Note: CWSN- Children with Special Needs; PBBBB- Pade Bharat Badhe Bharat; Source: Author

**Figure 4: Education Budget Targeted for Girls by Different Components (Percent)**





Source: MHRD, 2018d

## **Larger share of resources for KGBV and RTE entitlements**

Figure 4 shows that in nine states, KGBV and RTE entitlement for free uniform to girls are the two components getting larger share of resources approved for girls. Delhi has no KGBV school and the state has its own policy of providing uniforms to girl children. Thus the state has not booked any resources under these two heads.

Many of the states cited the presence of stand-alone secondary school as one of the factors for high drop-out at secondary level especially for girls. The CABE Sub-Committee (2017) constituted to look into the issues related to 'Girls' Education' also has recommended 'to encourage Residential Schooling facility for girls and upgradation of the existing KGBVs up to class XII'. Thus, it was obvious that states would demand more resources for KGBV. The share for KGBV is higher because of construction cost and associated recurring cost for maintaining the school need substantial resources. However, this pattern of resource distribution also indicates that states are not addressing the concern that residential schooling at an early age is not a desirable option.

## **Interventions for safety and security for girls**

In recent years, safety and security of girls, especially those studying in residential school emerges as a major concern. Tackling the issue of safety is more challenging as most of the time cases of abuse and incidents of harassment do not get reported. The latest KGBV evaluation observed absence of boundary wall and security guards in many KGBVs across the country (NITI Aayog, 2015). The issue of security and safety of girls addressed in the scheme through self-defence and martial art training in schools and all study states have budgeted for interventions like self-defence and martial art training for three months for children studying in class VI-XII; career guidance program and orientation program pertaining to hygiene for empowering girl children.

## **Interventions that lack attention**

Studies have shown that if there are no other options, especially for girls from deprived situations, there is a need of teachers with specialized training (Jha et.al, 2015). Surprisingly, except Rajasthan, no other states have planned budget for sensitization and special training for strengthening female teacher forum. PAB of the study states also do not report any budgetary interventions for residential quarters for teachers in remote/hilly areas/in areas with difficult terrain.

**KGBV and RTE entitlement for free uniform to girls are the two components getting larger share of resources approved for girls; except Rajasthan, no other states have planned budget for sensitization and special training for strengthening female teacher forum.**

This section of the paper tries to make a comparative analysis of SMSA with SSA and RMSA from gender lens for the following indicators:

1. Share of girls' specific interventions in total approved outlay
2. Per girl spending
3. Unit cost of different interventions

The rationale for the integration of the new schemes, as stated by the government, is 'addressing the issue of duplication of efforts and personnel towards implementing similar interventions and achieving similar objectives', which eventually will result in better allocation and optimal utilization of budgetary and human resources (MHRD, 2018a). However, efficient allocation and utilization are only achievable if there is perspective planning in designing of the scheme. An inclusive and equitable quality education from pre-school to senior secondary stage in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) could be achieved only if the new scheme is able to identify where are the gaps, where more interventions are needed and allocate resources accordingly.

Before making the comparison of the three schemes in terms of educational intervention from gender lens, it is important to draw a comparative picture of the approved Outlays of SMSA in 2018-19 with approved outlays of SSA and RMSA together in 2017-18.

**Table 6: Approved Outlays: SMSA vs. (SSA and RMSA)**

States	Approved Outlays for SSA and RMSA (Rs. Crore)	Approved Outlays for SMSA (Rs. Crore)
Andhra Pradesh	3854	2774
Bihar	12003	8749
Chhattisgarh	3917	2630
Delhi	502	512
Madhya Pradesh	7755	5571
Maharashtra	3125	2482
Rajasthan	7859	5746
Telangana	3079	2285
Uttarakhand	1243	1055
West Bengal	5274	4426

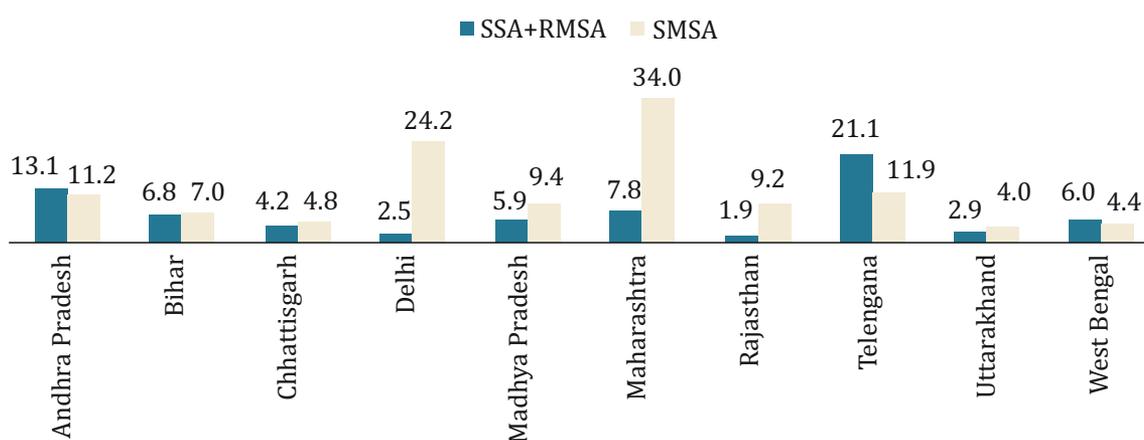
Source: MHRD, 2017b; 2017c; 2018d

Table 6 shows that except Delhi, in all other states the approved outlay under SSA and RMSA in 2017-18 was higher than the Outlays approved under SMSA in 2018-19. If the estimated budget for Teacher Education is added with the SSA and RMSA, the difference would be much bigger. Given the existing gaps in all levels of education across all components including teacher, infrastructure etc. (Kundu et.al, 2016), it could be expected that the approved outlays for SMSA would be higher or at least would remain the same as was in SSA and RMSA in 2017-18. The only possible explanations for the change in the funding pattern could be following:

- 1) Cost rationalization by reducing allocation on budgetary line items common for SSA and RMSA;
- 2) instead of SMSA, states prefer to allocate resources for their own education schemes and hence demanded lesser budget to PAB for SMSA;
- 3) Centre's commitment of resources for SMSA is lower than what was earlier in SSA and RMSA and hence, states had to settle for a lower outlay despite higher demand for resources

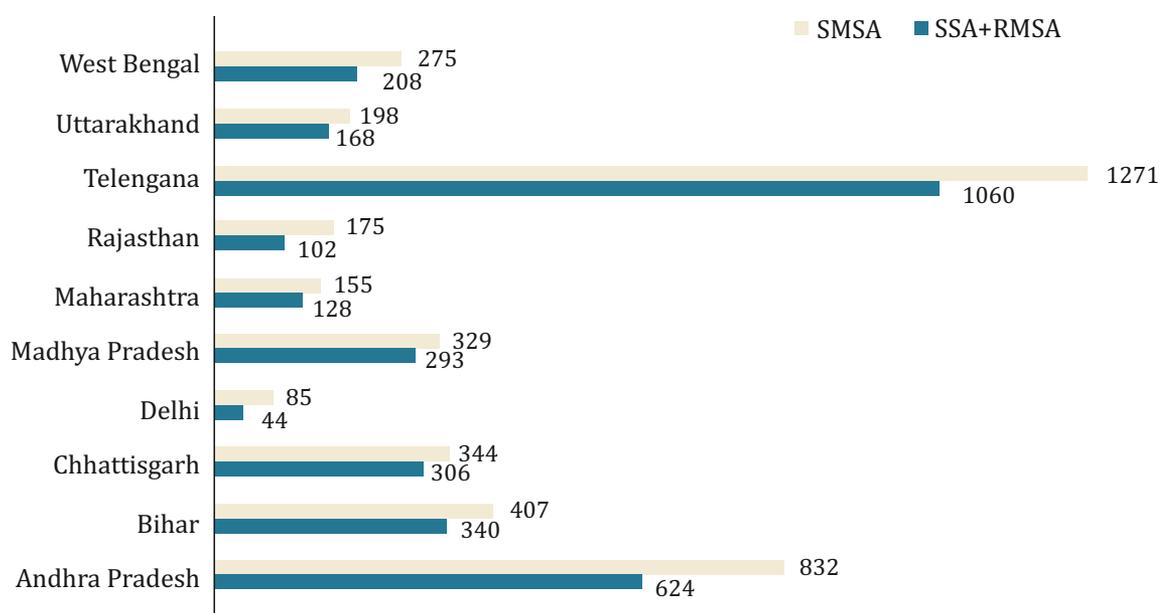
While the overall resource pie for SMSA is smaller as compared to SSA and RMSA together earlier, it is natural that it would have direct impact in the distribution of resources across components. Figure 5 shows a comparison of approved outlay for girls' specific intervention in SMSA with the outlay approved for the same under SSA and RMSA in 2017-18. Barring Andhra Pradesh, Telengana and West Bengal, in rest of the seven states, the share of approved outlay for girl children in SMSA has increased in comparison to SSA and RMSA. While in Delhi, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the increase is quite substantial, in Bihar and Chhattisgarh the increase is marginal between 2017-18 and 2018-19. However, given the change in the denominator, it is difficult to conclude whether these seven states are actually prioritizing girls' education under SMSA.

**Figure 5: Intervention for Girls' Education in Total Approved Outlay- A Comparison of SSA and RMSA with SMSA (Percent)**



Source: MHRD, 2017b; 2017c; 2018d

**Figure 6: Per Girl Spending on Education (Rs.)**



Note: projected population of girl children age 6-17 by MHRD for 2016-17; Source: MHRD, 2017b; 2017c; 2018d

### Per girl spending

Per child spending can be considered a better indicator to capture the change in SMSA over SSA and RMSA in respect to girls' education. Per girl spending captures relative resource availability across states given the variation in girl population across states. Figure 6 shows that in all the 10 states, per girl spending under SMSA have increased over SSA and RMSA. While the per girl approved outlay under SSA and RMSA was varying from Rs. 44 in Delhi to Rs.1060 in Telengana; for SMSA the outlay varies from Rs. 85 in Delhi to Rs. 1271 in Telengana. This implies that interventions for girls' education received higher priority under SMSA as compared to SSA and RMSA. The increase in per unit spending is largely due to expansion of coverage of KGBVs till class XII.

It is noteworthy that per girl spending in a *Kendriya Vidyalaya*, which is also considered as the 'model school' for providing quality education spends around Rs. 35000 per annum. The other model residential school of Union government is Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), where per girl spending is around Rs. 85000. Whereas in KGBVs, which are also the government run residential school and the schools designed mostly to fulfill the 'equity' commitment of providing education to the disadvantaged girls spent around Rs. 13604 per girl/annum (Jha et.al, 2015).

### Unit cost across schemes for girl-specific interventions

The direct costs (e.g. school fees where they exist, uniforms, transportation) and opportunity costs (e.g. time could have spent working or helping family) of school often impact boys and girls differently. Many non-experimental studies using household survey

data find that girls' schooling is more sensitive to cost, however defined, than is boys' schooling (see for example Glick and Sahn, 2007). For example, in Kenya, higher school fees increase dropout probabilities for girls but have no effect on boys (Lloyd, Mensch, and Clark, 2000).

Low and unrealistic unit cost of different interventions under SSA and RMSA is one of the major bottlenecks in efficient utilization of resources. Many states in the PAB meetings had pointed out that state schedule of rate (SSOR) determined for civil works under SSA and RMSA are so low that it becomes difficult for the states to pursue any civil work. Table 7 is an attempt to review whether by design SMSA is an improvement over SSA and RMSA in terms of financial norms.

**Table 7: A Comparison of Unit Costs across Schemes for Girl-Specific Interventions**

Activities	SMSA	SSA	RMSA
<b>Provision of 2 Sets of Uniform upto class VIII</b>	Rs. 600/child/ annum	Rs. 400/child/annum	No Provision
<b>Girls' Hostel and KGBVs</b>	For building as per SSOR.	KGBVs, Construction of Building including boundary wall, Water and sanitation facilities, electric installation, Bedding , TLM and equipment including library books, Furniture/ Equipment (including kitchen) as per SSOR	Residential Girls Hostels' as per SSOR
<b>Recurring Cost under KGBVs and Girls' Hostels</b>	The existing guidelines for KGBVs and Girls Hostels will continue.	Food/Lodging Expenditure per girl child@ Rs. 1500 per month , Electricity/ Water per year, Rs. 60000 only, Medical care @ Rs. 750 per child per annum, Toiletries and sanitation @ Rs 100 per month for each girl , Newspaper/ magazines and sports @ Rs.2,000	Food/Lodging Expenditure per girl child@Rs.1500 per child per month, Stipend for girl student@ Rs.100 per month per student, Medical care @Rs. 1250 per girl per annum, Maintenance per year @ Rs. 75000 Electricity/Water per

		per month, Rs.1.2 lakh for Supplementary TLM, stationery and other educational material, Miscellaneous @Rs. 40000	year, Rs.1 lakh Supplementary TLM, stationery and other educational material, Rs. 1000 per girl per annum, Miscellaneous @ Rs. 75000
<b>Self - Defense Training for Girls</b>	Upto Rs. 3000 per month for 3 months per school for schools having classes VI to XII	Supported under the Innovation Fund	Physical/Self Defense Training @ Rs.300/- per child per annum
<b>Stipend for CWSN Girl</b>	Provision of up to Rs. 3000 per child, per year for children with special needs, studying in government, government aided and local body schools as per specific proposal. This will include aids and appliances, teaching material, stipend for CWSN girls @ Rs. 200 per month for 10 months.	Provision of Rs. 3000 per child per year for children with special needs	Support under student oriented component of Rs. 3000 per child per year
<b>Special projects for equity</b>	Financial Support will be provided under State Specific project as per the allocation of flexi fund under quality to the state subject to viable proposal received from the State/UTs.	Innovation fund for equity of Rs 50 lakh per district per year will be available for innovation projects for Intervention for SC/ST children, Minority and Urban Deprived children	Retention drive for special focus area, adolescent education, interaction with community leader etc. as proposed by the state. Budget for the activities based on the need of the interventions

Note: Civil work constructions under SSA and RMSA were followed as per the State Schedule of Rates (SSoR). The scheme had a provision of ceiling upto 33% in SSA program funds and upto 60% in RMSA program for civil works; Source: MHRD,2018a

The table identifies a single change in unit cost under SMSA as compared to SSA. The provision for two uniforms to girls studying up to class VIII was increased from Rs.400 per annum to Rs. 600 per annum. Not only there is any new interventions specific to girls in SMSA, the unit costs also remain unchanged in all the interventions. In fact, Rs. 9000 per school per year for self-defense training under SMSA is probably a lower unit cost than Rs. 300 per child per annum under RMSA. The design of SMSA neither have addressed the concern related to low unit cost nor taken into consideration the socio-regional disadvantages in determination of unit cost.

The policy design never recognized the possibility and need for varied per child cost and unit cost to cater to multiple disadvantages that persist among children because of variation in social and administrative supports needed to bring children to school. Studies have shown the need for higher per child cost to retain a girl in school in comparison to a boy. However, SMSA neither has addressed the concern related to low unit cost nor taken into consideration the socio-regional disadvantages in determination of unit cost.

**The design of SMSA neither have addressed the concern related to low unit cost nor taken into consideration the socio-regional disadvantages in determination of unit cost.**

## VI. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to make to and stay in school, a girl has to battle out many challenges – at a personal level, at the level of family and at the level of the community. Interventions in girls education underline certain key areas of strategic input – that of enhancing the agency of the girl, that of changing norms around her and creating an enabling environment for her. These aspects together can free a girl to journey through her life as a free and self-realized human being. As a nation, this needs to be our priority. We need to reflect whether powerful tools as budgets are being based on these necessary pillars for girl's education. Are they propagating movement of resources in transforming directions?

The study has analysed the newly launched *Samara Shiksha Abhiyan* across 10 select states with an attempt to unpack the planning and budgeting process associated with this new scheme from a gender lens. In light of the findings, the study suggests some possible and immediate policy measures that the Union Government and states can implement to provide quality school education that is accessible to all girl children studying in school.

### **Need to adopt a holistic approach in policy design**

Applying a gender lens to the process of plan development, plan preparation, and plan appraisal – can ensure that this will promote effective actions that advance gender equality. Having articulated gender and equity as one of its thrust area, the scheme limits itself to items that do not impinge on social norms change and enabling environment for the girls in a manner that is transformative. Systemic bottlenecks, content and process of education system and socio-economic and cultural barriers are the three major issues challenging girls' education. Thus, policy design for girls needs to be seen in a larger socio-cultural and economic context. However, a review of the framework of SMSA finds a continuation of the existing interventions under SSA and RMSA for promoting girls' education. The discourse on girls' education in SMSA is still very much restricted to measuring improvements in indicators like gender parity in enrolment, drop-out rate or retention rate. The output-outcome framework in the scheme guidelines set gender parity index as the measure of achievement in girls' education. In the wave of privatization, where households are choosing to send their sons to private schools and daughters to government schools, even higher gender parity index in government school is an illusion. The reasons for gender disparity and high drop out of girls which are very much imbibed in the health, nutrition, violence, socio-cultural-economic framework needs recognition for measuring true progress in girls' education.

### **Need to focus on secondary and senior secondary schooling**

Even within the limited focus on quantitative indicators, the scheme failed to identify more relevant issues which need big push. The educational outcome indicators of the 10 states highlights that girls are more vulnerable at secondary and higher secondary stages of

school education in terms of access and retention. It could have been more significant if the scheme squarely focused on the secondary and higher secondary level of education. However, other than expansion of KGBV from class VIII to XII, no new interventions have been thought of for improving girls' attainment under SMSA. Moreover, the movement to strengthening residential schooling also related to creating a private in the public – a sort of a domain that traditionally young and old women have been kept in. The expectation that the scheme will set out specific pathways that will also address the challenge of girl students at a secondary or a senior secondary who are living a life in their own community also needs to be underlined as a priority.

Engagement with more nuanced issues such as minuscule representation of girls in science stream at higher secondary level, gender in equality in curriculum and within classroom/school are issues do not feature in the discourse. The guideline is completely silent about adolescent girls who are out of school. As per Census 2011, around 3.3 crore girls of (6-17) age group were out of school, and 63 percent of them never entered a classroom. Around 39.4 percent of adolescent girls in the 15-18 age group are not attending any educational institution, and around two third of them are either engaged in household activities, are dependents, or, are engaged in begging, etc. (NCPCR, 2017). Despite of this large number of out of school children, the scheme has interventions for bringing back OOSC only at the elementary level. However, even this intervention does not acknowledge the cost of bringing back a girl child to school vis-à-vis a boy and hence the unit cost of mainstreaming a boy and a girl child is same under the scheme.

### **Need to step up allocation for the scheme**

The guidelines of SMSA which proposes to give flexibility to the States to plan and prioritize their interventions within the Scheme norms and the overall resource envelope available to them is certainly a positive departure from SSA and RMSA. However, a state level analysis of financing pattern associated with SMSA reveals that there is a gap between the resource demanded, resource approved by PAB and resource allocated by Centre and states for SMSA overall as well as for different interventions specific for girls under the scheme. Except Andhra Pradesh, Delhi and West Bengal, in all other states the approved outlay under SSA and RMSA was higher than the outlay approved under SMSA. However, the per girl spending figures across 10 states shows that interventions for girls' education received higher priority under SMSA as compared to SSA and RMSA. The pattern of resource allocation in girl-specific interventions across different component shows in most states residential school and RTE entitlement for free uniform top the charts as key areas of investments to promote girls education. However, the other critical interventions like safety and security of girls, recruitment of female teachers, gender- sensitizing training for teachers are either sparsely allocated or no allocation.

### **Need to enhance unit cost for girls' specific interventions**

As the data for resource allocation and utilization across different interventions for girl' education under SMSA not available yet, it is difficult to comment on how successful is the scheme by design in optimal utilization of budgetary and human resources. However, a comparative analysis of unit cost of different interventions under SSA, RMSA and SMSA reveals that other than free uniform, the new scheme adopted the same financial norms as was under SSA and RMSA. It is already diagnosed that low unit cost under SSA and RMSA is one of the major bottlenecks for inefficient fund utilization and hence poor implementation of the schemes. There is a need to enhance the unit cost for better functioning of the scheme in ground.

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## About CBGA

CBGA is an independent, non-profit policy research organisation based in New Delhi. It strives to inform public discourses through rigorous analysis of government budgets in India; it also tries to foster people's participation on a range of policy issues by demystifying them.

For further information about CBGA's work, please visit [www.cbgaindia.org](http://www.cbgaindia.org) or write at: [info@cbgaindia.org](mailto:info@cbgaindia.org)



## About ROOM TO READ

ROOM TO READ is an innovative non-profit leader dedicated to transforming the lives of millions of children in developing countries by focusing on literacy and gender equality in education. Working in collaboration with local communities, partner organizations and governments, we develop literacy skills and a habit of reading among primary school children. We also support girls to complete secondary school with the relevant life skills to succeed in school and beyond.

For further information about ROOM TO READ's work, please visit [www.roomtoread.org](http://www.roomtoread.org)