



Adequacy of Financing of School Education in Punjab

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Abstract

Punjab, which is known as one of the richest states in India has not been able to intervene effectively in the area of school education in terms of financial allocations from its inception to till date, which resulted in devastating educational indices for Punjab's School Education. Punjab has never accorded priority to school education in its financial allocation policy. This lacuna of financial allocation policy has been reflected in the poor educational attainments of the State. Punjab's position based on literacy marks (21st) and NAS ranks 22nd commensurate to its inadequate financial allocations to school education as a percentage share of SDP. Moreover, the large share of financial allocations is non-plan in nature and a meager share was allocated under the head Plan expenditure. The analysis of the percentage allocation of outlay to general education in the five-year plan also narrates the same story, which indicates towards the government's inability to accord high priority to general as well as school education as the most important sector of the economy for Human Resource Development (a significant asset of the nation). Moreover, the post-reforms period also witnessed a sharp decline in the share of the education budget out of the state exchequer. Out of this inadequate budget, a very meager share was allocated to school education and the rest to elementary education. The limited increase in the education budget in real terms has in fact converted and reduced the education budget into a salary budget which constitutes 91 per cent of the total expenditure of the school education budget.

Keywords: *Adequacy; Financing; General Education; Punjab, School Education; Five Year Plans; Financial Allocation; State Domestic Product; Public Spending; Centrally Sponsored Schemes; Plan; Non-Plan*

Introduction

The present Punjab which emerged as a result of the trifurcation of the Maha-Punjab on the linguistic basis on 1st November 1966 as per the Punjab Reorganization Act (1966) of the government of India, is one of the most developed states of India. It is situated in North-Western India and has an area of 50362 square kilometers. It extends from the latitude 29.300 North to 32.320 North and longitudes 73.550

East to 76.500 East. It is bounded on the West by Pakistan, on the North by Jammu and Kashmir, on the North-East by Himachal Pradesh, and of in the South by Haryana and Rajasthan. According to the 2011 Indian Census, the population of Punjab is 27,704,236 (males 14,634,819 & females 13,069,417). Punjab has the highest Dalit population in India, which is 31.9% including both Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Scheduled Caste population is 28.9%, the highest percentage of any Indian state. Presently, Punjab has 23 districts, 5 divisions, 82 tehsils, 86 sub-tehsils, 145 development blocks, 9 Municipal Corporations, 97 Municipal Councils, 143 Municipal Committees, 74 cities, 143 towns, and 12581 villages and habitations. Roughly 62.5% of the people live in rural areas while the rest of the 37.5% are urban residents. (Census, 2011 & Punjab Budget Report, 2022)

One of the most developed states of the country, Punjab lies in a fertile, alluvial plain with its famous rivers Sutlej, Ravi, and Beas and an extensive irrigation canal system. The region is ideal for growing wheat and rice. During the 1970s, as a result of the success of the 'Green Revolution in wheat and rice, Punjab became an economically prosperous state of India. Punjab is popularly known as the "Granary house of India" or "India's breadbasket". It produces 10.26% of India's cotton, 19.5% of India's wheat, and 11% of India's rice. In worldwide terms, Indian Punjab produces 2% of the world's cotton, 2% of its wheat, and 1% of its rice. (ibid)

Punjab has made tremendous progress in every field of socio-economic life since its inception, although it has faced the dark phase of terrorism for one and a half-decade from 1980 to 1995. Punjab, which occupied 1st position in per capita income for three decades from 1960 to 1990, is now in 10th position among Indian states based on per capita income (Economic Survey of Punjab, 2020-21). Punjab, which bagged the Best Educational Infrastructure Index award in 2010-11 and 2021, has not been successful to establish a lead in one of the important sectors of Human Resource Development. Punjab's rank among the states of India on the bases of literacy mark is 21st with an overall literacy rate of 76.7%, male literacy of 81.5%, female literacy of 71.3% (ibid), and 22nd in the National Achievement Survey (NAS Report, 2017).

Public Funding for School Education in Punjab

Finance is a crucial element for the development and efficient performance of any sector of the economy. The major sources of financial allocations for school education are state funding, central funding under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) and revenue from the state school education department. Revenue of the school education department is too meager that its share of education expenditure is negligible. The state allocates its finance to different sectors of the economy under Five Year Plans and Annual Budget Plans in the form of Plan and Non- plan expenditures. The union government contributes its share to different state programs under two types of CSS. The first is 100% centrally funded schemes and the other is Central-State share-based schemes i.e. SSA, RMSA, MDM's, and Means-Cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme. Thus, the adequacy of school educational finance should be analysed in terms of total school educational expenditure i.e. sum total of the state funding and CSS funding.

Adequacy of Financial Allocations to School Education During Five Year Plans in Punjab

Present Punjab, came into existence, through its reorganization in 1966, the period, when due to various socio-economic factors including Indo-Pak War in 1965, the nation had declared its first plan holiday.

The fourth plan, which was to commence from 1966-67 could not be implemented and was postponed till 1969-70. During this period of plan holiday, annual plans were prepared for three years 1966-69. When the state came into existence, the major part of the first annual plan had already been incurred. Thus, the state had to make effort to make up for the huge loss, which came as a legacy to this

state as re-organisation of the state through two annual plans and proceeding Five Year Plans. In Punjab the backlog of educational development, which was off-tracked by the reorganization of the state, was enormous. The percentage of literacy was on the low side i.e. 26.7 per cent. The inequity in the literacy ratio of the state was so apparent. Thus, in order to be educationally sound and provide adequate access to equitable school education services to every citizen of the state, there was an urgent need for the expansion and improvement of education in the state through the Plans. The fourth five-year plan ((1969-74) was the first plan after the state's emergence. Table 1 sums up the position of the Outlays and Expenditure on general education during different Five-Year Plans in Punjab.

The data of the table reveals that in the fourth five-year plan considerable priority was accorded to general education for financial allocation out of the total plan outlay in the state by allocating 7.16 percent of the total outlay with the total sum of Rs.2100.00 lacs. The outlay came down to 2 per cent in the Ninth Plan from 7.16per cent in the Fourth Plan and 4.21 per cent in Fifth Plan. The percentage of the total outlay to the education sector had been consistently decreasing until the Seventh Plan.

Table 1: Showing approved outlay and expenditure on general education in Five Year Plans in Punjab (Rs. in Lacs).

Plans	Approved outlayon education	Total Plan Outlay	Expenditureon General Education	%age of Expenditure on Approved outlay	Percentage of the total outlay	Annual averageOutlay %age
Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74)	2100	29329.6	2307.69	109.85	7.16	1.4
Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78)	4327	102779.09	3056.43	70.62	4.21	0.84
Sixth Five Year Plan(1980-85)	5300	195571.95	5470.58	103.2	2.71	0.54
Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90)	7637	329237.58	6371.27	83.42	2.32	0.46
Eighth Five Year Plan(1992-97)	21683	657000	23714.82	109.36	2.62	0.52
Ninth Five Year Plan(1997-2002)	41310.49	1150000	60947.61 (1997-2001)	147.35	2.89	0.57
Tenth Five Year Plan(2002-2007)	141089.77	1865700	54097.14	38.34	7.56	1.51
Eleventh Five Year Plan(2007-2012)	189892	2892300	239447.37	126.09	6.56	1.31
Twelfth Five Year Plan(2012-2017)	1001746.3	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

Source: Compiled from Statistical Abstracts of Punjab (1970 to 2021), Various Reports of Five Year Plans and Annual Plans (1966 to 2017), available at www.pbplanning.gov.in

In the Eighth and the Ninth Five Year Plans, although there has been a marginal increase in the outlay, but the percentage was still very low as compared to the Fourth Plan and even the Fifth Plan. Hence, it is clear that the education sector was not being given as much priority as it was given earlier. However, the expenditure during the Ninth Plan, i.e., from 1997 to 2000 has exceeded the given outlay. Rs.60,947.61 lacs were spent on education in 1997- 2001 as against the allotted amount of Rs.41,310.49 lacs. The main reason was the implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission, wherein again the major amount was spent on salaries/state liabilities rather than educational development. In the Tenth Plan, a major jump to Rs.1,41,089.77 lacs was envisaged for the education sector to meet the requirements of the 93rd Amendment Act, 2002, and to implement Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to achieve the aim of Universalisation of Elementary Education(UEE) up to 2007 in partnership with Union government and to implement of the recommendations.

Table 2: Showing expenditure on school education and their percentage share in SDP of Punjab. (Rs. in Crore)

Session	Exp. On School Edu.	% age out of SDP	SDP
1966-67	16.34	1.80	909.36
1967-68	9.68	0.92	1054.57
1968-69	18.22	1.56	1165.94
1969-70	21.49	1.69	1275.00
1970-71	22.64	1.58	1436.00
1971-72	23.83	1.55	1534.00
1972-73	26.24	1.51	1737.00
1973-74	34.22	1.59	2156.00
1974-75	41.66	1.75	2380.00
1975-76	45.92	1.77	2599.00
1976-77	53.5	1.75	3062.00
1977-78	60.53	1.75	3455.00
1978-79	65.4	1.76	3719.00
1979-80	72.43	1.72	4220.00
1980-81	80.46	1.81	4445.00
1981-82	89.76	1.71	5261.00
1982-83	113.27	1.90	5957.00
1983-84	139.72	2.11	6622.00
1984-85	151.51	2.04	7439.00
1985-86	183.29	2.19	8386.52
1986-87	196.51	2.14	9173.76
1987-88	295.32	2.73	10816.37
1988-89	275.62	2.21	12494.79
1989-90	NA	NA	15054.93
1990-91	NA	NA	16784.62
1991-92	473.14	2.33	20317.86
1992-93	530.7	2.26	23441.17
1993-94	569.45	2.07	27549.54
1994-95	615.36	1.95	31523.66
1995-96	665.64	1.72	38615.00
1996-97	755.3	1.71	44198.00
1997-98	850.33	1.75	48704.14
1998-99	1085.35	1.95	55735.64
1999-00	1073.9	1.60	67161.97
2000-01	1776.15	2.38	74677.45
2001-02	1979.23	2.49	79610.70
2002-03	2221.14	2.70	82249.20
2003-04	2016.3	2.24	90089.00
2004-05	2387.52	2.47	96839.00
2005-06	2177.2	2.00	108637.00
2006-07	2403.22	1.89	127102.30
2007-08	NA	NA	152245.00
2008-09	2820.25	1.62	174039.00
2009-10	3289.12	1.67	197499.81
2010-11	3870.69	1.71	226204.07
2011-12	4424.15	1.71	259223.00
2012-13	5145.97	1.74	296007.00
2013-14	6144.27	2.09	294517.00
2014-15	8070.46	2.31	349825.74
2015-16	8787.98	2.21	398000.00
2016-17	6721.99	1.57	426988.1
2017-18	9224.15	1.99	471013.61
2018-19	9994.27	1.95	512510.93
2019-20	10942.57	1.91	574760
2020-21	11181.83	1.84	606530
2021-22	11589.24	1.91	607594

Source: Compiled from *Statistical Abstracts of Punjab (1970 to 2022, Various Reports of Five Year Plans and Annual Plans (1966 to 2022)* and *Various Annual Budget Reports of Punjab(1966 to 2022)* available at www.pbplanning.gov.in.

* BE-Budget Estimate data

The state government claimed that besides meeting the state liabilities of the 93rd Amendment Act 2002, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and implementation of the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission, during this plan period, it had taken care to ensure that the money released had been utilized to meet the objectives of development. But, the analysis of the data in table 1 reveals that the government was not successful to spend the total amount allocated to general education and spent only one-fourth of the actual allocation. This situation indicates the inefficiency of the state's school education financing policy as well as its implementation procedure.

There was another swing in the financial allocation to general education during the Eleventh Five Year Plan with the allocation of a total amount of Rs.189892.00 lacs to implement the Right to Education Act, 2009 and recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) 1993. Although the upward swing was noticed in approved outlay during the Eleventh Plan, but there was a slight decrease in the total share of general education out of total plan outlay as compared to Tenth Plan and it slipped down from 7.56 per cent to 6.56 per cent in Eleventh Plan. This situation clearly indicates that these financial allocations to general education were not adequate. The state had to spend a huge amount on the development of infrastructure of the school education resulting in over expenditure from the approved outlay of the Eleventh Plan of Rs.2892300.00 lacs. Although the state was successful to attain the first position among the Indian states for developing the best educational infrastructure as ranked by the SSA authority of Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), Government of India, New Delhi. During the Twelfth Five Year Plan, again increase was noticed in the approved outlays to general education out of the total plan outlay with a total amount of Rs.1001746.27 lacs. (table 1).

But the analysis of the data in table 2 also highlights that the annual percentage allocation of outlay was not adequate during the whole plan period and it remained less than (or equal to) 1.51 per cent of the total plan outlay, which indicates toward the government's inability to accord high priority to education (general and school education) as the most important sector of the economy for Human Resource Development (a significant asset of the nation).

Financial Allocations to School Education as a Percentage Share of State Domestic Product (SDP)

The annual allocations to elementary, secondary and general education as a percentage of SDP were not adequate during the whole period of investigation of the study (Table 2). The state's highest share of allocation during the whole.

Table 3: Showing Plan, Non-Plan and CSS distribution of financial allocations to School education in Punjab during 1966 to 2021.(Rs. in Crores *BE)

Session	PLAN	%age of Total Exp.	NON-PLAN	%age of Total Exp	CSS	%age of Total Exp	TOTAL
1966	N.A	N.A	16.34	100	N.A.	N.A.	16.34
1967	N.A	N.A	9.68	100	N.A.	N.A.	9.68
1968	3.68	20.20	14.88	81.67	N.A.	N.A.	18.22
1969	0.86	4.00	20.95	97.49	N.A.	N.A.	21.49
1970	1.29	5.69	21.68	95.76	N.A.	N.A.	22.64
1971	2.91	12.21	22.05	92.53	N.A.	N.A.	23.83
1972	4.41	16.81	22.83	87.01	N.A.	N.A.	26.24
1973	10.69	31.24	28.09	82.09	N.A.	N.A.	34.22
1974	4.34	10.42	38.9	93.37	N.A.	N.A.	41.66
1975	5.28	11.49	41.76	90.94	N.A.	N.A.	45.92
1976	7.75	14.49	47.89	89.514	N.A.	N.A.	53.5
1977	10.59	17.50	52.63	86.95	N.A.	N.A.	60.53
1978	12.91	19.74	55.09	84.24	N.A.	N.A.	65.4
1979	2.98	4.12	69.92	96.53	N.A.	N.A.	72.43
1980	3.58	4.45	77.16	95.90	N.A.	N.A.	80.46

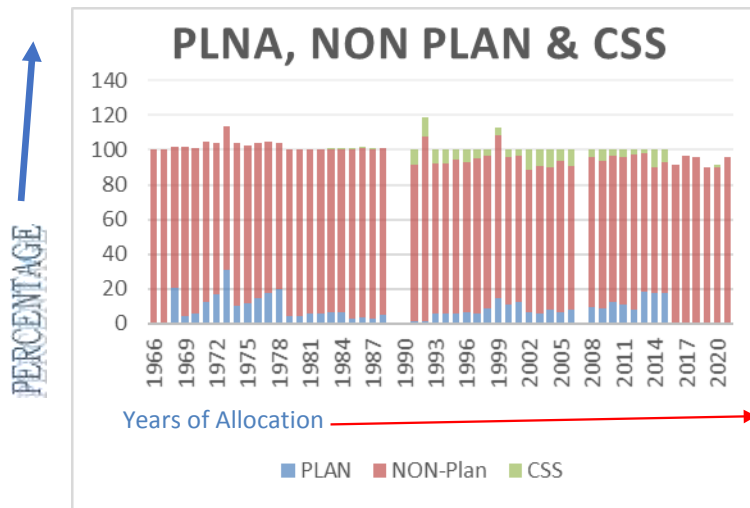
1981	5.34	5.95	84.62	94.27	N.A.	N.A.	89.76
1982	6.52	5.76	106.93	94.40	N.A.	N.A.	113.27
1983	9.31	6.66	130.59	93.47	0.02	0.01	139.72
1984	10.16	6.71	141.43	93.35	0.05	0.03	151.51
1985	4.98	2.72	178.83	97.57	0.25	0.14	183.29
1986	6.43	3.27	192	97.70	0.06	0.03	196.51
1987	8.94	3.03	288.32	97.63	0.07	0.02	295.32
1988	13.2	4.79	265.6	96.36	NA	NA	275.62
1989	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1990	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1991	5.55	1.17	427.94	90.45	39.74	8.40	473.14
1992	8.71	1.64	561.48	105.80	59.34	11.18	530.7
1993	34.62	6.08	490.76	86.18	44.07	7.74	569.45
1994	36.11	5.87	533.34	86.67	45.92	7.46	615.36
1995	40.08	6.02	587.64	88.29	37.92	5.70	665.64
1996	48.26	6.39	652.43	86.38	54.63	7.23	755.3
1997	51.57	6.06	755.87	88.89	42.91	5.05	850.33
1998	93.12	8.58	959	88.36	33.23	3.06	1085.35
1999	155.46	14.48	1008.67	93.93	47.31	4.41	1073.9
2000	190.28	10.71	1519.75	85.56	66.13	3.72	1776.15
2001	248.74	12.57	1666.12	84.18	68.5	3.46	1979.23
2002	151.31	6.81	1823.07	82.08	246.76	11.11	2221.14
2003	118.64	5.89	1714.57	85.04	183.08	9.08	2016.3
2004	181.94	7.62	1962.39	82.20	243.18	10.19	2387.52
2005	138.51	6.36	1897.64	87.16	141.05	6.48	2177.2
2006	199.551	8.30	1983.29	82.53	220.37	9.17	2403.22
2007	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2008	258.24	9.16	2439.1	86.49	122.92	4.36	2820.25
2009	278.2	8.46	2805.1	85.28	205.82	6.26	3289.12
2010	466.67	12.06	3281.27	84.77	122.74	3.17	3870.69
2011	488.72	11.05	3763.73	85.08	177.74	4.02	4424.15
2012	403.8	7.85	4599.96	89.39	142.22	2.76	5145.97
2013	1126.42	18.33	4897.45	79.71	120.38	1.96	6144.27
2014	1410.29	17.47	5835.11	72.30	825.08	10.22	8070.46
2015	1523.6	17.34	6629.6	75.44	634.78	7.22	8787.98
2016	NA	NA	6133.76	91.24	NA	NA	6721.99
2017	NA	NA	8387.3	90.93	NA	NA	9224.15
2018	NA	NA	9588.3	95.94	NA	NA	9994.27
2019	NA	NA	9860.81	90.11	NA	NA	10942.57
2020	NA	NA	10101.1	90.33	123.45	1.10	11181.83
2021	NA	NA	11095.83	95.74	NA	NA	11589.24

Source: Compiled from *Various Annual Budget Reports* of Punjab from 1966 to 2021.

*BE-Budget Estimate Data

**NA- Not Available

Fig. 1: Showing percentage distribution of Plan, Non-plan and CSS allocations to total financial allocations to elementary education in Punjab during 1966 to 2022.



period out of GDP to School Education was only 2.70 per cent. These least allocations sanctioned to school education indicate towards government's intentional strategy to accord low priority to school education, a crucial sector of Human Resource Development, which covers the 12 years of initial education. The allocation of percentage share of GDP to school education, continuously increased till 1990 although the rate of increase was very meager and not considerable. But after 1991, there was a squeeze in the financial resources as the country was facing a crunch of financial resources, it seems to be a result of the implementation of the neo-liberal economic reform policy of India, which emphasized on cut in public spending on social sector and subsidies to many other sectors. After 1991, a decline was noticed in the percentage share of GDP to school education till 2001, except the year 2002-03 when the percentage share of GDP to School education touches to peak with 2.70 per cent. In 2013-14, an upward swing in the allocation of percentage share of GDP to school education was evident, when GDP share to school education increased to 2.09 per cent and this trend continued till 2015-16. The second phase of the decline in allocation trends is witnessed after 2016-17 when a steep decline was noticed to 1.57 per cent from 2.21 percent in 2015-16. However, a slight increase was noticed in financial allocation onward 2017-18, but the total allocation remain less than 2 per cent. Further, analysis of the data of Table 2 highlights that the total allocations to school education as a percentage share of GDP remained between 0.92 to 2.70 percent, which clearly indicates that the Punjab govt. has accorded the least priority to school education, while allocating finances from its exchequers. This result in the adequacy of financial resource for efficient management of school education, for innovation and experimentation, for development and expansion etc. This inadequacy results in low academic achievements of the students and poor literacy performance of the state among the other Indian States.

Non-Plan and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) Distribution of Financial Allocations to Elementary Education in Punjab During (1966 to 2021)

Plan expenditure is that which is incurred on programs, which are detailed under the current Five year/Annual Plan of the centre or state. From the perusal of the data table 3, it has been observed that a meager share was allocated under the head Plan expenditure during the whole period under investigation. From 1966 to 1992 approximately more than 90 per cent of financial allocations to school education were non-plan in nature, which made it clear that nothing was left with the government for the development purpose during this period. It seems that it was the major reason behind the poor educational indices of the state and the state was never able to establish a lead based on

educational attainments as well as literacy marks among Indian states.

This situation improved from 1993 to 2015, when the non-plan share of financial allocation to School education out of the total state allocation declined from 90 to 72.32 and below, as a result, the share of plan expenditure went up from 6.88 per cent to 17 per cent in 2014 and 2015 after implementation of 93rd Amendment, SSA, RMSA and RTE Act, etc. This was also evident from the success of the state in achieving the target to provide an elementary school in a radius of 1 Km and in every village of the state in 2011 and 2021 when the state bagged the BEIA award. But, it is quite astonishing besides this achievement Punjab was not able to establish a lead based on literacy marks among the Indian States in Census 2011 and showed a decline from 16th position in 2001 to 21st position in 2011 and 22nd in NAS rank in 2017.

After 2016, the share of Non-plan financial allocation to school education again has risen to more than 90 percent. This trend remains continues to till date. This has converted the school education budget to merely a salary budget. The major reason behind this phenomenon might be due to the state's leading position in BEIA, which left the least scope for expansion of building infrastructure in school education. On the other side, Govt. of India closed SSA, and RMSA schemes and a huge share which was allocated to the state by the centre for Infrastructure building and for the purchase of other equipments has been stopped. Moreover, the state's overall increasing debt has a negative effect on its capacity to intervene effectively in school education through adequate financial allocations. This has resulted in pushing the school education into the trap of a financial crunch.

Conclusions

Punjab, which is known as one of the richest states of India, has not been able to intervene effectively in the area of school education in terms of financial allocations during the period of the pre-reform era, which resulted in devastating educational attainment indices of school education of the state. It is very much clear from the perusal of data that Punjab has never accorded priority to school education in its financial allocation policy. This lacuna of the financial allocation policy of the state has been clearly reflected in the poor educational attainments of the State. Punjab's position on the basis of literacy marks (21st) is commensurate with its inadequate financial allocations to school education as a percentage share of SDP. The analysis of the percentage allocation of outlay to general education in the five-year plan also reveals that the percentage allocation of outlay has not been adequate during the whole plan period, which indicates towards the government's inability to accord high priority to general education as the most important sector of the economy for Human Resource Development (a significant asset of the state).

The post-reforms period witnessed a sharp decline in the share of the education budget to the state budget. Moreover, the large share of financial allocations is non-plan in nature and a meager share was allocated under the head Plan expenditure. It seems to be the only reason that the state was never able to establish a lead on the basis of educational attainments of the students as well as literacy marks among Indian states besides being one of the most economically sound state of the nation.

The public spending on education in the state has not been in tune with its educational requirements, particularly in the context of weak educational outcomes and emerging challenges of human capital formation. It has been witnessed that the government of Punjab has devoted a relatively low share of the educational budget to school education, despite the fact that it covers twelve years of instructions and has good merit compared to the other levels of education. The analysis of the data shows that the policy of financing school education in Punjab has not endorsed the priority that must have been.

Summing up, it can be said that for Punjab to be an educationally advanced state not merely in infrastructure development, but also in educational attainments, demands an increase of financial

allocations for school education in absolute terms. Government should review the percentage share of allocations to different sectors of school education out of the total approved outlays. The state should make efforts to provide adequate finance by developing efficient financial management procedures to ensure equitable access to quality school education for all. There should be a large share of the Plan budget for developmental, experimental and research-related activities in school education which will directly lead to the enhancement of the quality of educational services in the region. Further, the quality of educational services is directly linked with the overall educational attainments of the state, which will help to establish the lead of the state in this sector and make the state an educationally advanced state.

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