

Disability Budgets in India

Tracking Allocations and Spending Patterns over the years



About Pacta

Pacta is a Bengaluru (India) based boutique law and policy think tank dedicated to supporting civil society organizations, universities, and non-profit initiatives. It has an unflinching commitment to- provide legal and policy consulting support for public service delivery.

Acknowledging the crucial role of research and scholarship for social development, Pacta engages in law and policy research through self-driven and collaborative projects. Focus areas are – Philanthropy, Disability, Education, Gender and Information Technology.

Acknowledgements

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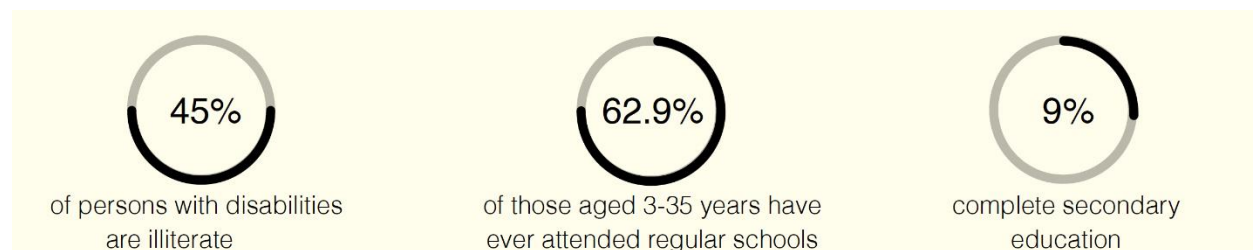
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Disability Budgets in India

Tracking Allocations and Spending Patterns (2016-2023)

India is a signatory to the Salamanca Statement, assuring equal opportunity to people with disability. Further the United Nations CRPD also makes these assurances. India's federal law – the Rights of Persons with disabilities Act, 2016¹ casts responsibility upon the appropriate state instrumentalities to take effective measures to ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others. India's law and policy as it pertains to people with disability is robust, well-intentioned, and wholesome. However, without matching budgetary and fiscal commitments, the law and policies remain confined in utopian theory.

Persons with disabilities remain at the periphery of development indicators. For instance, in education:



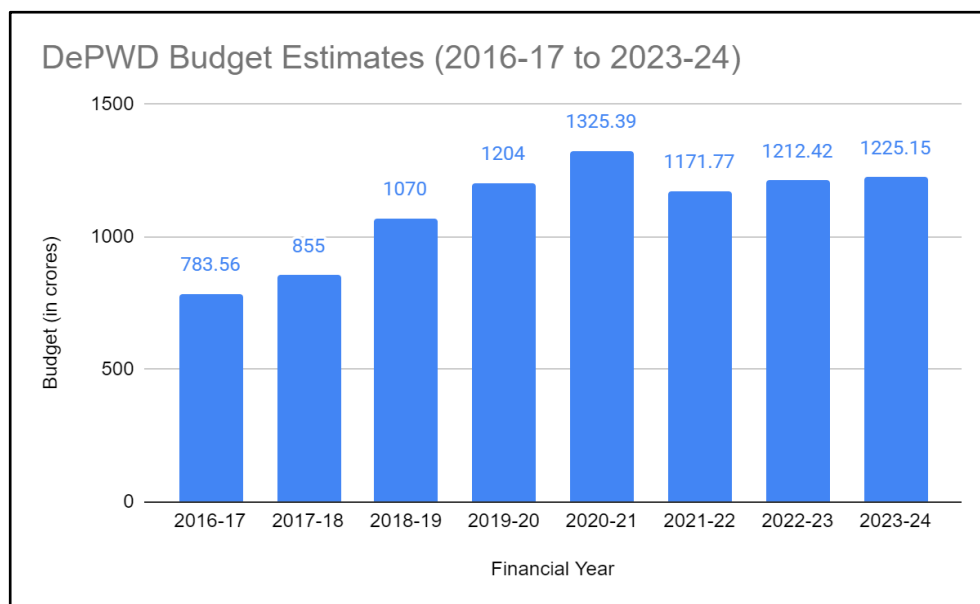
In this report, we examine budgetary trends post 2016 (the year the new disability rights law was enacted) to shine a light on the direction in which inclusion of persons with disability is likely to progress towards. We examine cross-ministerial federal budgetary allocations for disability and present a scheme-wise analysis of key federally orchestrated disability schemes.

Budget for Disability: Allocation in MSJE, MoRD, MoHFW

- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DePWD) in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) works for the empowerment of persons with disabilities in India.
- Apart from MSJE, two other ministries have dedicated allocations in their budgets for disability-specific spending. These are the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
- In the case of MoRD, the allocation is done for the Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS).

¹ Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016). https://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A2016-49_1.pdf

- In the case of MoHWF, allocation is generally made for two institutions- the National Institute of Mental Health and NeuroSciences, Bengaluru, and the Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Inst. of Mental Health (LGBRIMH), Tejpur.



I. Skew within the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment: Increase in DePWD budget lower than Increase in the budget for MSJE

Figure 1: Budget for DePWD over the years
(Source: Expenditure Budget 2016-17 to 2023-24, GoI)

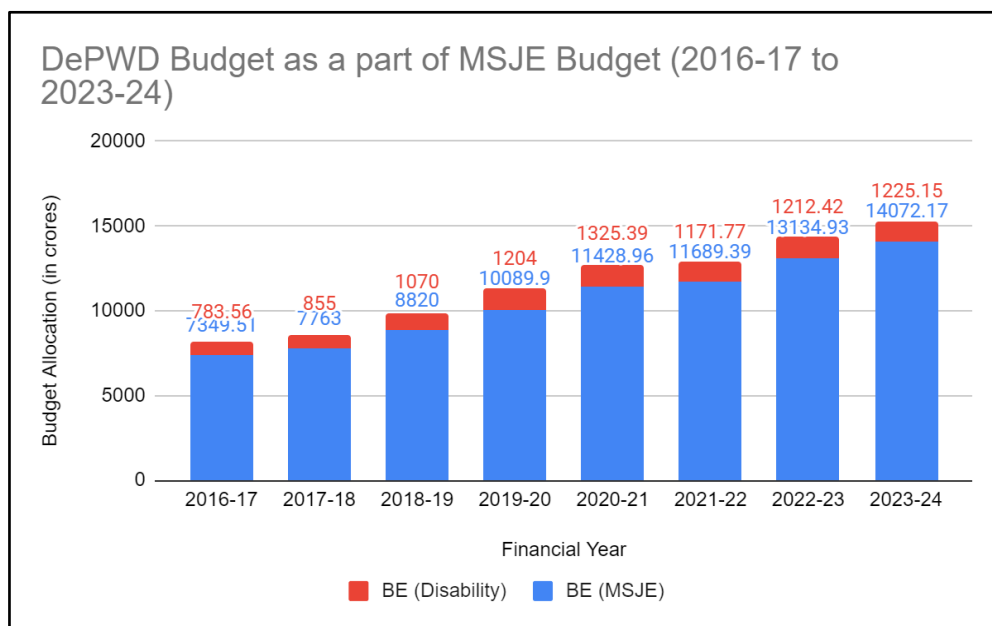


Figure 2: Budget for DePWD as part of MSJE Budget over the years
(Source: Expenditure Budget 2016-17 to 2023-24, GoI)

- The allocation to DePWD under the Union Budget has increased over the years. Between 2016-17 and 2020-21, there has been an increase of around 70%. However, after 2020-21, the budget stagnated.
- Between last year's and this year's budgets, there has only been an increase of 1.05%.
- While the DePWD budget did not see much of an increase between 2022-23 and 2023-24, the budget for MSJE increased by 7% between last year and this year.
- Similarly, MSJE allocation increased by 12% from 2021-22 and 2022-23 while the DePWD budget increased by only 3.5% in the same period.

II. Ministry of Rural Development: Allocation remains stagnant. But increase in Disability Budget lower than Increase in Ministry Budget

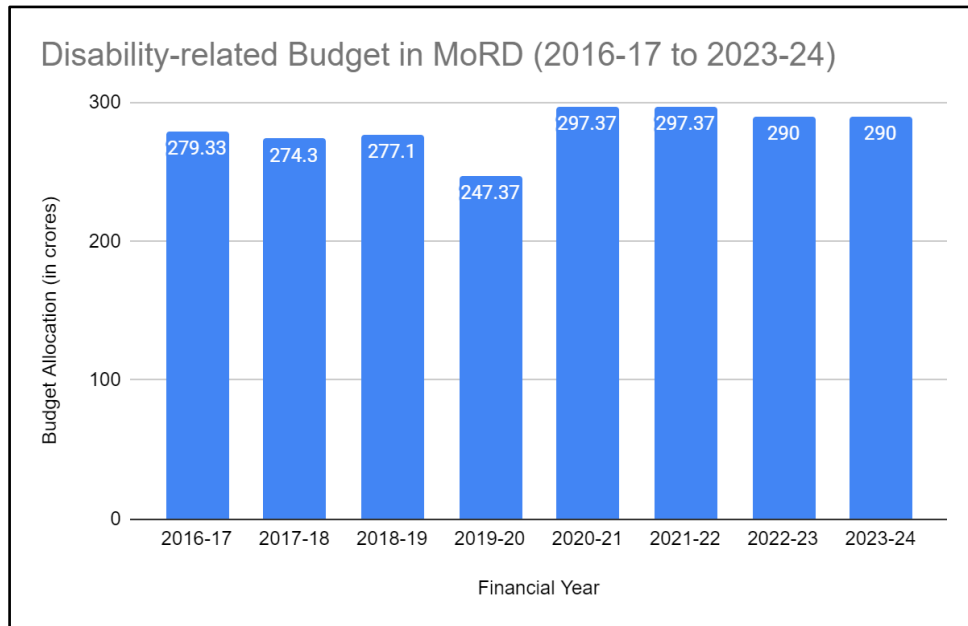


Figure 3: Disability-related budget in MoRD over the years
(Source: Expenditure Budget 2016-17 to 2023-24, GoI)

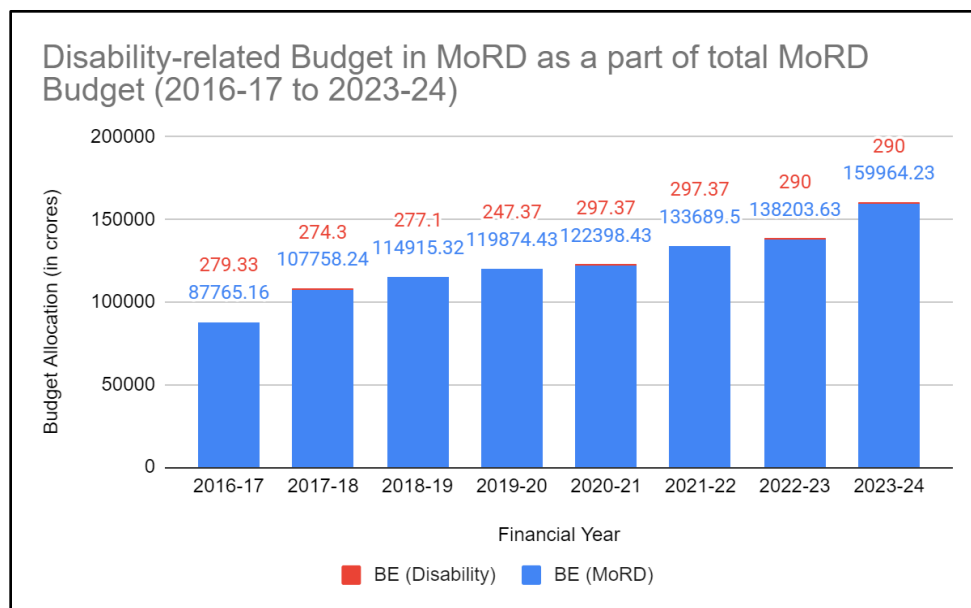
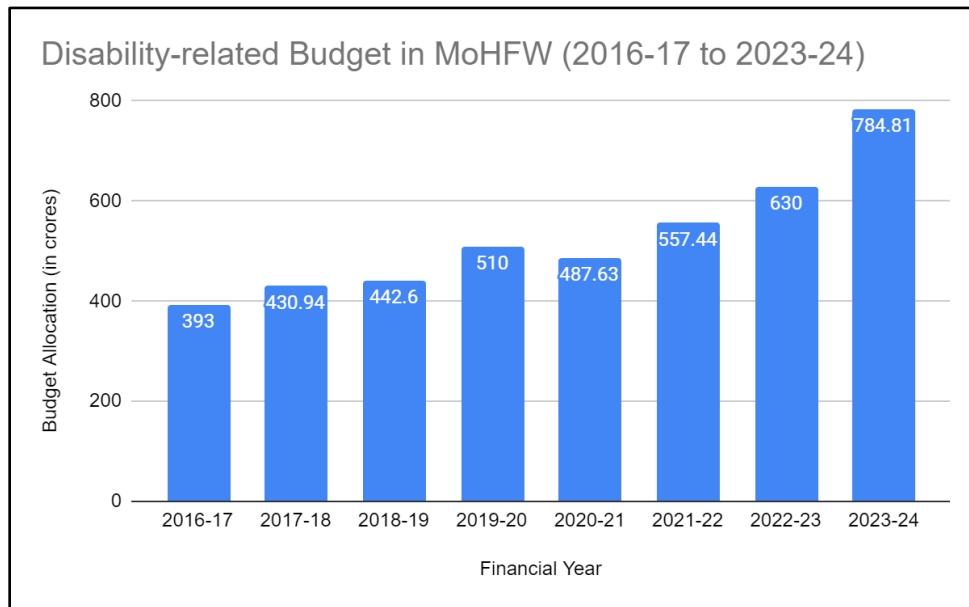


Figure 4: Disability-related budget in the MoRD as part of the total MoRD budget over the years

(Source: Expenditure Budget 2016-17 to 2023-24, GoI)

- The allocation to the Department of Rural Development in the union budget has risen progressively over the years. The IGNDPS budget, however, has been more or less the same over the last 5-6 years.
- This year, there has been an **increase of almost 16%** in the budget for the Department of Rural Development. Despite the increase in allocation to the department, the allocation to the disability scheme remains the same at Rs. 290 crores.

III. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare: Increase in Disability Budget higher than



Increase in Ministry Budget

Figure 5: Disability-related budget for MoHFW over the years
(Source: Expenditure Budget 2016-17 to 2023-24, GoI)

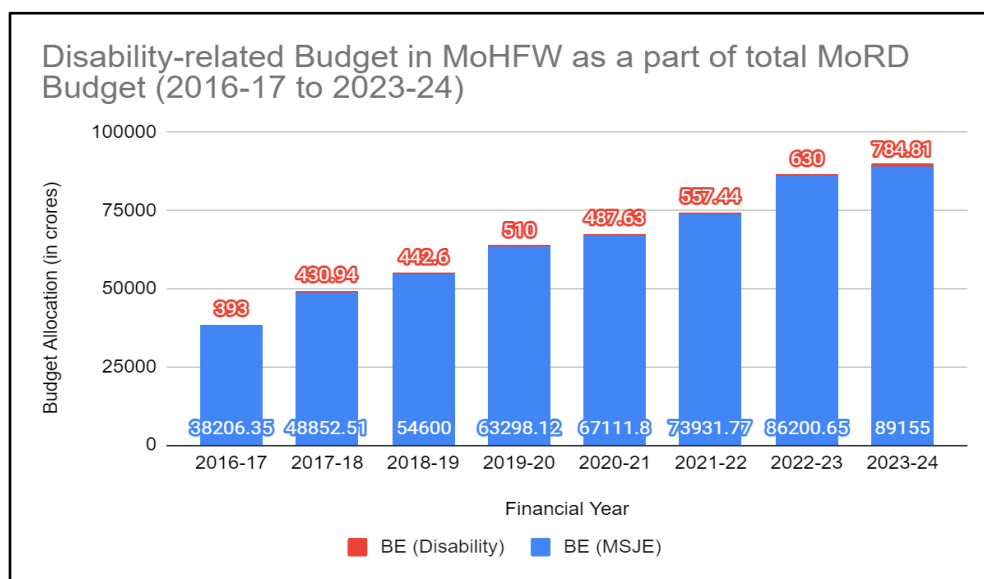


Figure 6: Disability-related budget in the MoHFW as part of the total MoHFW budget over the years (Source: Expenditure Budget 2016-17 to 2023-24, GoI)

- The disability budget within MoHFW has seen a gradual rise over the years, unlike in the case of MoRD and DePWD.
- Between last year's and this year's allocation for the National Institute of Mental Health and NeuroSciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, and the Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Inst. of Mental Health (LGBRIMH), Tejpur there is **around 25% rise**.
- The total allocation to the Department of Health and Family Welfare has in the meanwhile **increased by around 4%** from last year to this year.

DePWD Budget: Changes in Scheme-wise Allocations

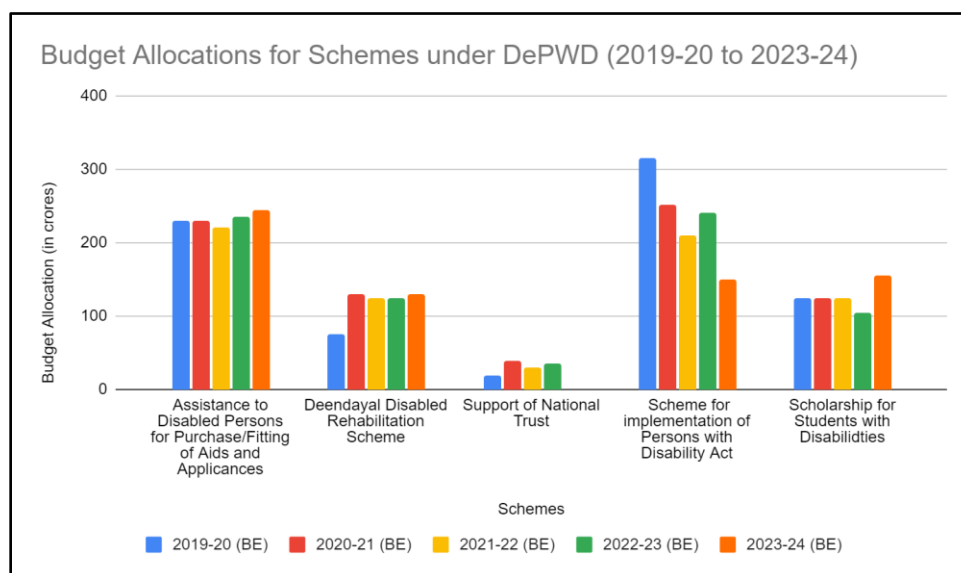


Figure 7: Budget allocations for disability-related schemes in the DePWD over the years
(Source: Expenditure Budget 2019-20 to 2023-24, GoI)

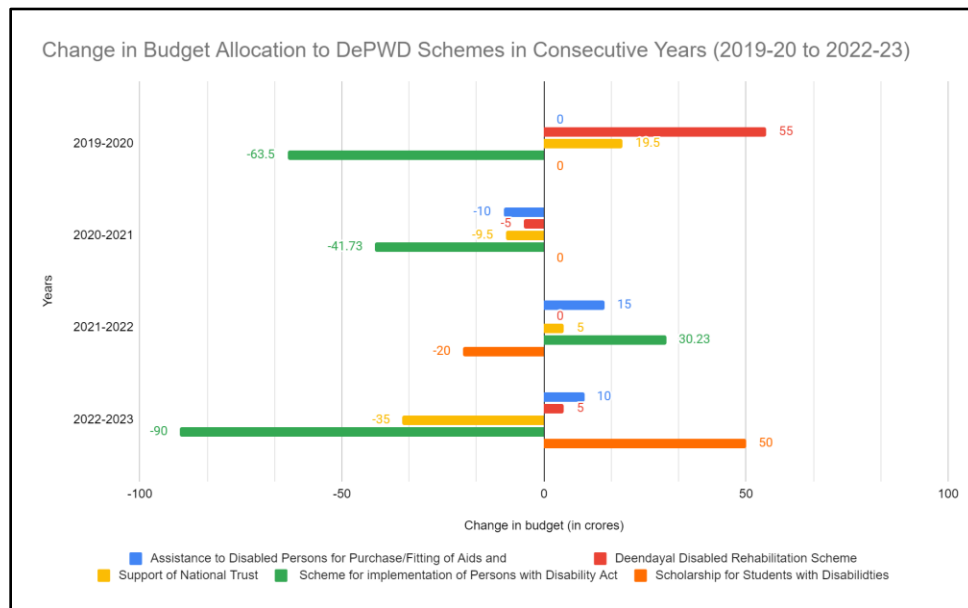


Figure 8: Change in budget allocation to different schemes under DePWD
(Source: Expenditure Budget 2019-20 to 2022-24, GoI)

- In the current year, the **budget for three schemes has increased** from the previous year. These schemes are Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/ Fitting of Aids and Appliances, Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme, and Scholarship for Students with Disabilities.
- On the other hand, the **allocation towards two schemes has reduced** from the previous year. These include the Support of the National Trust and the Scheme for Implementation of the Persons with Disability Act.
- In the case of Support of the National Trust and the Scheme, **the budget reduction amounts to 90 Crores**. The allocation for the Scheme for implementation of the Persons with Disability Act has seen similar reductions in the past as well.
- Between 2019-20 and 2020-21, there had been **a reduction of 63.5 Crores**. Similarly, between 2020-21 and 2021-22, the budget for the Scheme for implementation of the Persons with Disability Act saw **a dip of 41.73 Crores**.

The Utilization of Disability Budgets

I. DePWD: Disability Budget Utilization

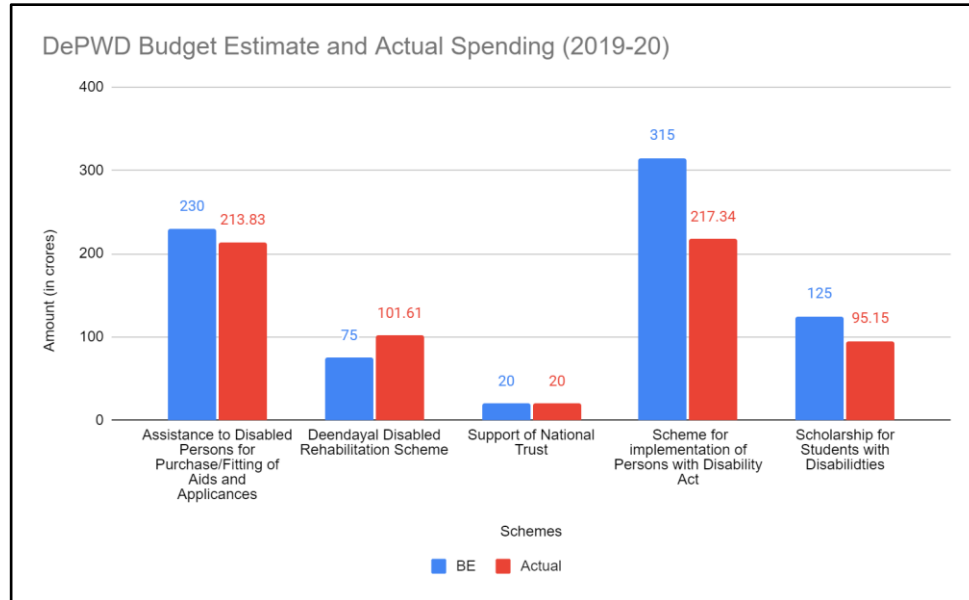


Figure 9: Budget estimate and actual spending for schemes under DePWD
(Source: Expenditure Budget 2019-20, GoI)

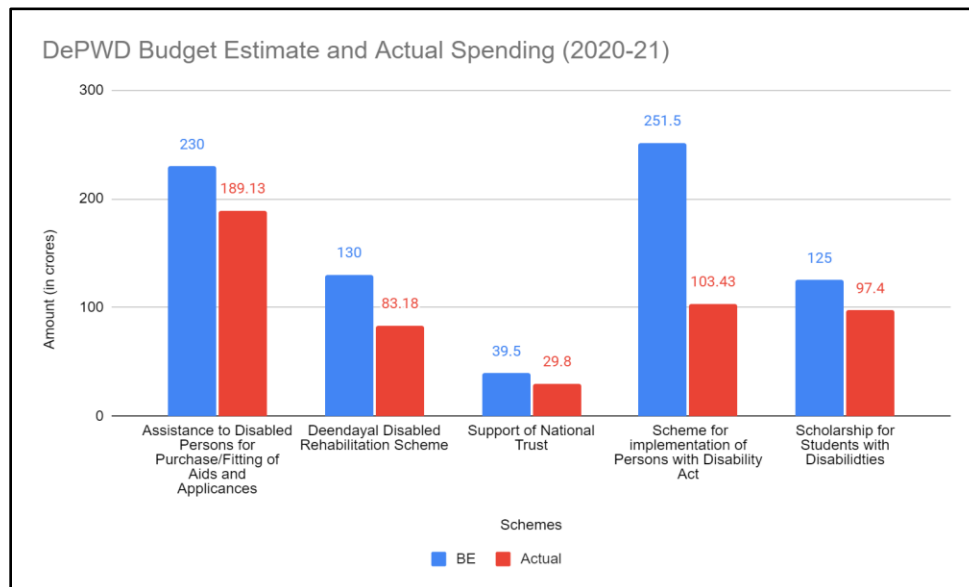


Figure 10: Budget estimate and actual spending for schemes under DePWD
(Source: Expenditure Budget 2020-21, GoI)

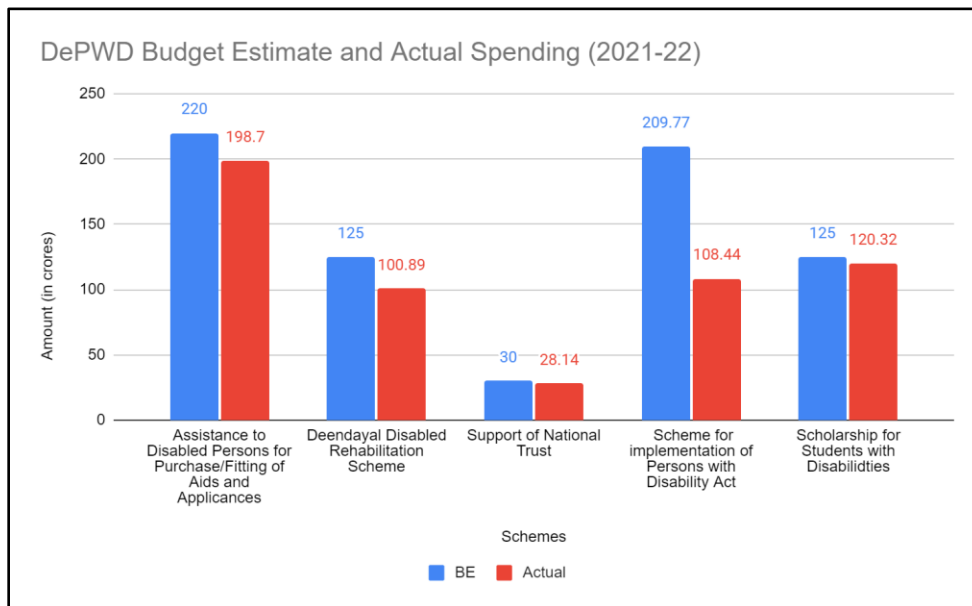


Figure 11: Budget estimate and actual spending for schemes under DePWD
(Source: Expenditure Budget 2021-22, GoI)

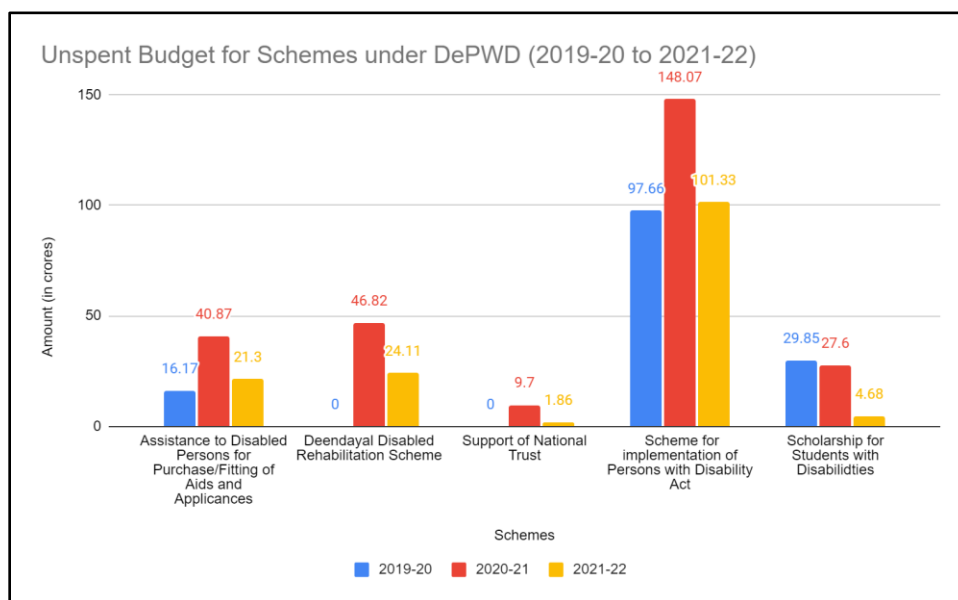


Diagram 12: Unspent budget for schemes under DePWD (2019-20 to 2021-22)
(Source: Expenditure Budget 2019-20 to 2021-22, GoI)

- There is almost complete utilization of allocated budgets in some cases, while there is consistent underutilization in others.
- Between 2019-20 and 2021-22, underutilization has been most in the case of the Scheme for implementation of Persons with Disability Act.
- The magnitude of underspending has been much less for all other schemes.

II. MoRD: Disability Budget Utilization

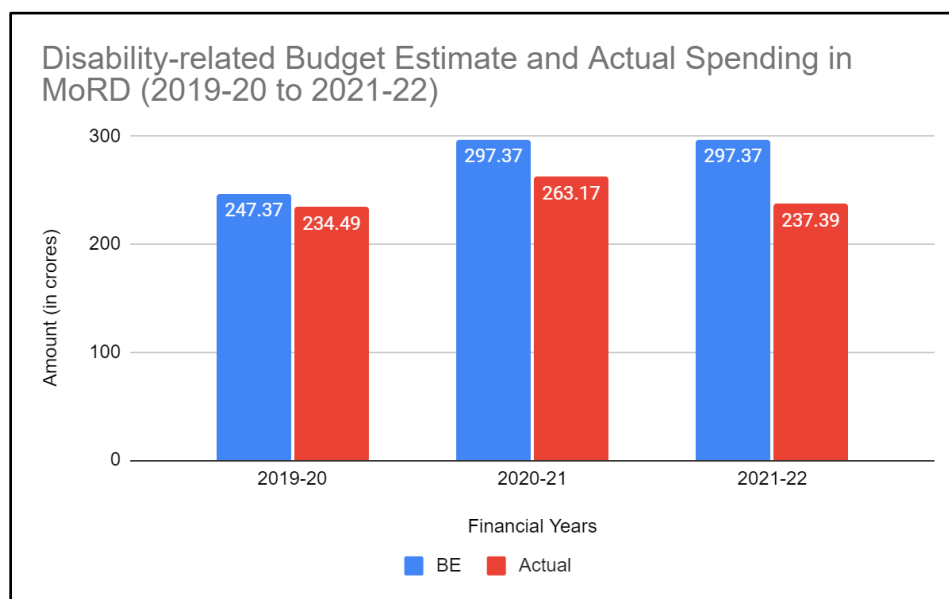


Diagram 13: Budget Estimate and Spending for Disability-related allocation in MoRD for 2019-20 to 2021-22)

(Source: Expenditure Budget 2019-20 to 2021-22, GoI)

- Between 2019-20 and 2021-22, there has been an under-utilization of the budget for the Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme in each of the years.
- The value of under-spending has increased from 13 crores to 60 crores over the three years. The underspending could be attributed to the rules for the release of funds. According to the rules, the central government releases funds for the scheme in two installments and the release of the second installment depends on the spending of the first installment.

III. MoHFW: Disability Budget Utilization

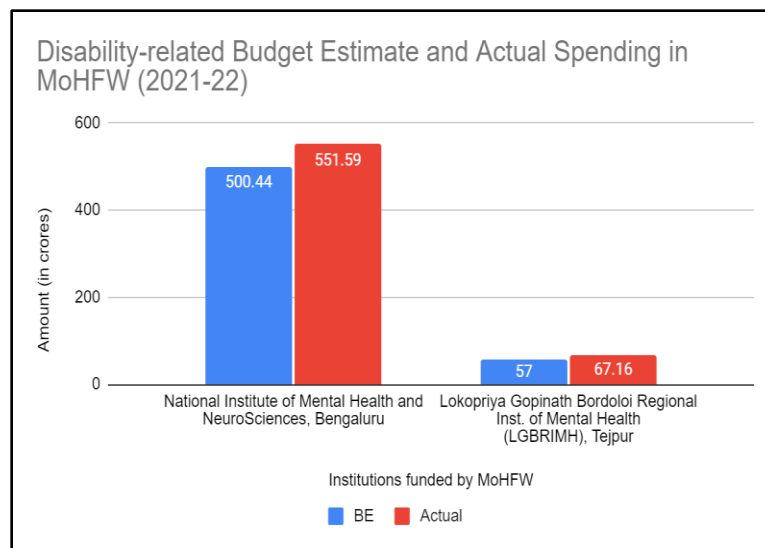
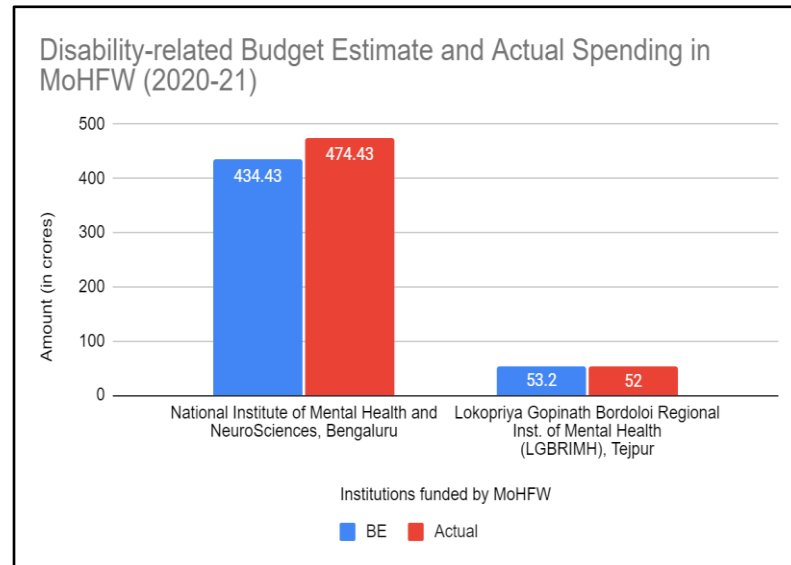
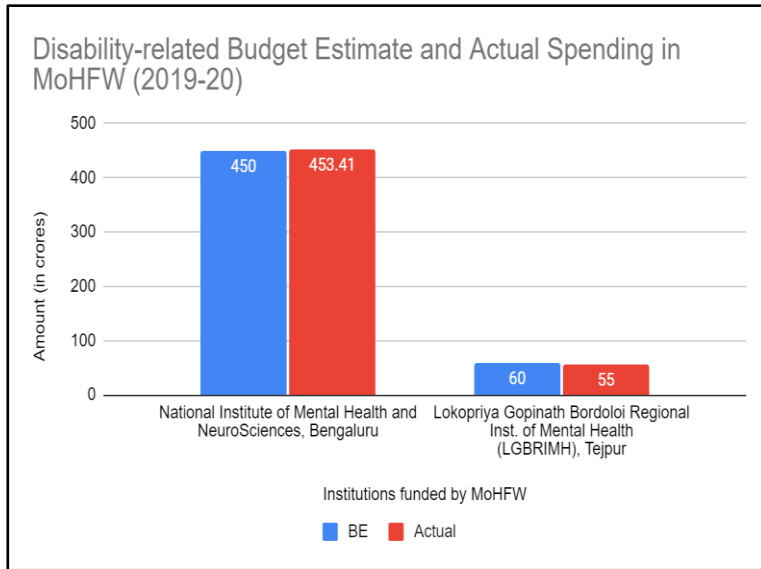


Diagram 14: Budget Estimate and Spending for Disability-related allocation in MoHFW for 2019-20 to 2021-22)

(Source: Expenditure Budget 2019-20 to 2021-22, GoI)

- Between 2019-20 and 2021-22, there has been almost no underutilization of the budget allocated to the National Institute of Mental Health and NeuroSciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, and the Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health (LGBRIMH), Tejpur in each of the three years.
- The expenditure has at times surpassed the budget allocated for the two institutions.

Persons with Disabilities and the Struggle for Better Budget Allocations and Spending to Continue

In the Union Budget for 2023-24, there has been an increase of 7.5% over the revised estimate of 2022-23.² At the same time, the budget for persons with disabilities has stagnated. This year, the budget for the DePWD is merely 12.73 crores better than the previous year. Besides, crucial schemes such as the Scheme for Implementation of Persons with Disability Act, which envisages cross-cutting inclusion of persons with disability in education, employment, public spaces, and justice systems have received cut in budget with allocation falling by 90 crores.

While the current budget allocations to disability paint a bleak picture, inadequate attention to persons with disabilities in union budgets has been a recurring trend in India. This could be attributable to the limited government capacity to utilize budget allocations for programs beyond rehabilitation, distribution of assistive aids or disability pensions. Despite notifying an ambitious draft policy for people with disability in 2022,³ no financial resources have been allocated towards operationalization of the policy. India's commitment to meet the 2030 SDG agenda for achieving inclusion of people with disability and pledge to "leave no-one behind"⁴ becomes meaningless when fiscal commitments don't back policy commitments. Sadly, the Union Budget 2023-24 continues to under-deliver when it comes to persons with disabilities.

² PRS Legislative Research. (2023, February 1). *Union budget 2023-24 analysis*. PRS India. https://prsindia.org/files/budget/budget_parliament/2023/Union_Budget_Analysis-2023-24.pdf

³ Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. (2021). *Draft national policy of person with disabilities (Divyangjan)*. Government of India. <https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Draft%20Copy%20New%20National%20Policy%20May%202022%20.pdf>

⁴ Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Sustainable Development. (n.d.) *Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>