

## Child Grants Programme in Nepal: Issue of Affordability and Sustainability

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### ABSTRACT

Nepal is committed to protecting human rights and ensuring social protection for all citizens, including children. This paper provides an overview of the existing child grant programme, which is aimed at social protection and improving health outcomes by addressing malnutrition, based on desk review and secondary data. The findings show that existing child grant contributes to the nutritional intake and promotes enrollment in the vital registration system, however, the distribution modality and governance of child grant distribution need to be revisited to link the actual beneficiaries with unique national identification.

As per the latest population census of 2021, out of the total child population (10 million), the child grant programme covers approximately 14.9 percent. At present, the programme is operational in 25 districts, leaving nearly 50 per cent of children under the age of five in the remaining 52 districts outside its coverage. Despite this limitation, the government prioritised the enrollment of Dalit communities nationwide within this social protection initiative. To enhance its impact, the programme must be extended to cover the remaining districts and in all communities, aligning with national priorities and capacity to ensure effective implementation. This paper critically assesses the programme before its proposed expansion to additional districts as one of the government's priority initiatives. Further, it advocates for the integration of fragmented social protection programmes for strengthening the next generation, foster human capital, and enhance public trust. Such integration would support the development of a citizen centric, responsive, accountable, and transparent government system by leveraging reliable and secure data exchange mechanism. This could be done by integrating the National ID with the child grant beneficiaries so that system will automatically verify and the entire verification process is changed from document based verification to data based verification.

## 1. Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance”. Further, it highlights that “all children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection” (United Nations, 1948). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that every child has the right to social security and

the government should take the necessary measures to achieve the full realisation of the right in accordance with the national law (United Nations, 1990). In accordance with this provision, the Constitution of Nepal has endorsed this principle as a fundamental-right. Furthermore, by agreeing to ILO recommendation 202 on the social protection, Nepal is committed to providing a comprehensive social protection for all its citizens, including children (ILO, 2012). Article 22 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the international covenant of United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO), and other instruments of Human Rights recognised social protection as one of the basic rights for any citizen. Furthermore, Article 43 of the Constitution of Nepal guarantees the social security as a fundamental right to all citizens. Social Security Act, 2018 establishes some provisions on social assistance for children, old age citizens, single women, person with disabilities and marginalised segment of the community. Likewise, the Health Insurance Act, 2017 also provides a comprehensive framework for social insurance aligning with the ILO's Social Security Convention, 1952.

Chronic malnutrition among children is a pressing policy issue in Nepal. Although the prevalence has gradually declined over the past two decades, it still remains a significant challenge for Nepal. In 2001, the rates of stunting, wasting and underweight among children under five were 57 per cent, 43 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. By 2022, these figures had improved to 25 per cent, 19 per cent, and 8 per cent (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2024). Despite this progress, the government must implement substantial efforts to fully address the problem of malnutrition in the country. The child grant is one of the policy instruments to handle the issue which is basically an unconditional cash transfer programme initiated in Nepal

in 2009, and aims to enhance nutrition for children under five years of age. Initially, this programme was targeted to the households of the remote Karnali region and poor Dalit families across the country (Ministry of Finance [MoF], 2009). Overtime, the programme is expanded significantly and now reached in 25 districts, nevertheless, 52 districts are still out of coverage.

Two critical questions emerge from this situation. First, considering the international commitments to children's rights and implementing national policies, how can this programme of cash distribution be extended in other districts for its universal coverage of children under 5 years of age? Currently, children from only 25 districts are receiving grants, while children outside them, except those from the Dalit communities, remain excluded from this social protection net. Second, given the country's narrow revenue base, how can this programme be sustained in the future amidst financial constraints? Hence, the programme associated with coverage to fulfill the international and national commitments and sustainability issues because of weak governance of this distributive programme will be explored in this paper. Moreover, the identification of actual beneficiaries is another important issue and it will also be analysed based on the census and child grant beneficiaries data for the fiscal year 2021/22.

The essence of the child grants is that it is considered as an investment for the future human resource of the country. Investing in children brings both short-term and long-term benefits to the economy and strengthens social contracts. Regular and predictable cash transfers to households can increase trust in the government, which may lead to higher tax compliance and allow greater investment in public services such as health and education (Dhakal *et al.* 2023). ILO (2023) highlighted

that approximately 65.7 per cent of children (0-14 years) are under the social protection net by utilising at least one social protection benefit (cash or in-kind). Social security programmes empower families for investing in the human capital (World Bank, 2021). Further, well designed social protection programmes help support for reducing disparities and promote inclusiveness (UNDESA, 2013).

The modality of distribution of cash transfer is one of the major policy issues because every distributive programme is largely skewed by the local political leaders. Kidd and Wyld (2011) observed that the manipulations by the officials and beneficiaries induce higher inclusion and exclusion error in the cash transfer programme. Hence, the sustainability of the programme also depends upon the degree of fairness in the modality of the cash transfer programme. Mathers (2017) also highlighted that the approach which Nepal has adopted promotes a critical question: whether cash transfers should be targeted specifically to the cohort of people living under the poverty line or made universal. Research suggests that a poverty- targeted approach would be both challenging and costly while implementing, leading to a significant risk of excluding the needy individuals, particularly the poorest (Mathers, 2017). Further, it is very difficult to identify, recognise and update the poor household information before distributing cash-grant due to the absence of actual household income and expenditure data reporting system annually. Conversely, a universal approach offers greater inclusivity, is more socially acceptable, however, it induces a question of economic feasibility.

Previous literature (UNDESA, 2013; Adhikari, *et al.*, 2014; Bastagli, *et al.*, 2016.) mainly focus on the importance of social securities, its impact on developing

human capital but do not explore the issues of affordability and sustainability. Hence, this paper aims to explore the administrative bottlenecks and sheds light on issues of affordability and sustainability of existing child grant programme in Nepal. Finally, it also suggests some actionable recommendations for its universal coverage and effective implementation mechanism based on the past experience. The findings of this paper are imperative for the government when expanding this programme to the remaining 52 districts.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1 Theoretical approaches and data sources

This paper is primarily grounded on the right based approaches on human rights, and UN Convention on the Rights of Child. Numerous studies highlight the multifaceted benefits of child grant programme. For instance, UNICEF (2016) highlights that grants have positively influenced nutrition, educational outcomes, social inclusion and civil registration. Groot de (2015) and extended framework developed by Smith and Haddad (2002) and analysed the three main pathways through which cash transfer act as one of the important resources of poor household, and show that it may impact child nutrition by supporting them for: 1) food security, 2) health, and 3) care giving. The framework based on these pathways is also adapted in this paper. The Government of Nepal aims at enhancing digital governance for all social security programmes including the child grant programme, by linking it with the unique national ID so that the transparency in cash distribution and regulatory quality of the government will be enriched in the near future.

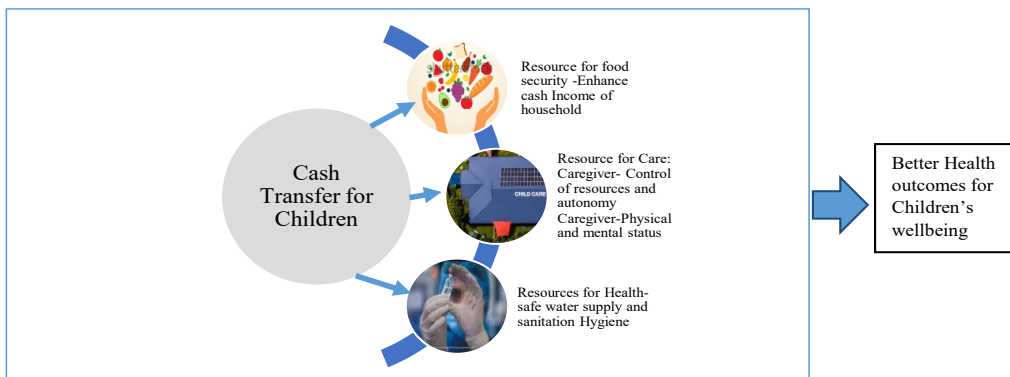


Figure1: Framework of linking cash transfer with children's wellbeing

Source: Authors' compilation based on Groot de et al. (2015); (Images are taken from <https://www.gettyimages.com>)

This paper is based on secondary information particularly peer-reviewed journal articles, published and unpublished reports, policy briefs, as well as relevant secondary data related to child grants in Nepal. Time series data of expenditure in child grants from the fiscal year 2010/11 to 2023/24 has been taken from the publication of Financial Comptroller General Office<sup>1</sup> and beneficiaries' data are taken from the annual report of the Department of National ID and Civil Registration for 2021/22. Likewise, child population under the age of five is taken from

1 The Financial Comptroller General Office (FCGO) is responsible for the disbursement of child grant in the respective local levels of each districts.

the National Population Census, 2021. The graphical presentation and specific tables are developed from the secondary data to explore the issues of universal coverage, affordability and sustainability of the existing child grant programme in Nepal.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Coverage of the child grants and its expansion

The determination of cash transfer programmes for deprived communities, marginalised groups, senior citizens and children are based on the political decisions in Nepal. Figure 2 illustrates different social

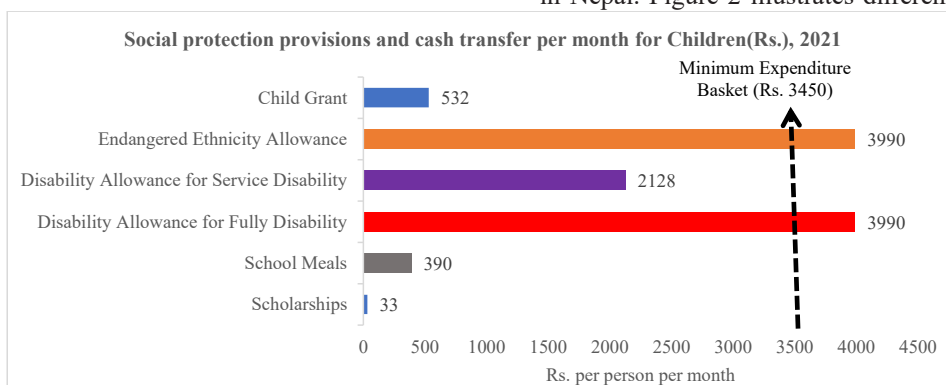


Figure 2: Major social protections and monthly cash transfer (Rs.) per children, 2021/2022

Source: Extending Social Protection for all in Nepal (ILO, 2023).

protection provisions and cash transfer per month per person against the minimum expenditure base that a household requires to meet their indispensable necessities. Each horizontal bar represents the amount received by the child for different social protection programme and vertical arrow shows minimum expenditure basket per household member (ILO, 2023).

In 2009, the Government of Nepal launched the child grant programme aimed at providing financial support to children from Dalit<sup>2</sup> families across the country and five districts in the Karnali region: Humla, Mugu, Jumla, Dolpa, and Kalikot. The grant was targeted for children under the age of five, allowing for two children per mother to be eligible from each household. Over the years, the programme has expanded significantly, adding three districts - Achham, Bajhang, and Rautahat – in 2016/17, followed by six more - Mahottari, Jajarkot, Sarlahi, Doti, Bajura, and Siraha in 2018/19. Most recently, in the fiscal year 2020/21, the programme extended to additional 11 districts- Saptari, Bara, Dhanusha, Rasuwa, Rukum East, Rukum West, Rolpa, Kapilbastu, Baitadi, Salyan and Dailekh. This programme is now extended to 25 districts from Mountain, Hill and Tarai region of Nepal and covered all children under five years of age irrespective of cast groups (Table 1). Further, this programme has covered all Dalit<sup>3</sup> children under five years of age all over the country.

2 Dalit refers to the vulnerable and poor group of people in Nepal. Adopted from Dalits and Labour in Nepal: Discrimination and Forced Labour (ILO, 2005): retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/media/318731/download>

3 According to the caste system outlined in the Muluki Ain (National Code) of 1990 B.S. (1934 A.D.), the communities classified as “castes from whom water cannot be accepted and who are considered untouchable, have historically faced caste-based discrimination, and have been marginalized socially, economically, politically, educationally, and religiously, as well as excluded from the mainstream of the state.” are referred to as the Dalit group as defined by the Government of Nepal. Adopted from <https://ndc.gov.np/pages/documents?lan=np>.

## 3.2 Status of children receiving the grants and existing gaps

The 2021 population census of Nepal reported 9.86 million child population, with 2.44 million children under the age of five. This programme covered around 49.9 per cent of the total child population under five years of age and around 15 per cent of total child population under the age of 15 (NSO, 2023). This shows that the child grant programme is yet to reach to the entire population. Currently, it only covers children under five in 25 out of 77 districts, and all children under 5 years of age belong to the Dalit communities across the country. In other words, this programme still leaves 50.1 per cent of children under 5 years of age, particularly those living outside of these 25 districts.

Table 1 provides the total number of children of all designated category under the age of 5 years, Dalit category under 5, and the total number of children under 5 who are receiving grants. Dalit population under 5 years of age for Humla, Mugu and Dolpa from Mountain region, Jumla and Kalikot from Hill region and Rautahat, Mahottari, Bara and Kapilbastu from Terai region show under-reporting of the beneficiaries for Dalit children under 5 years of age during 2021/22. Total population of children under 5 years is taken from the population and housing census 2021 (NSO, 2023) and number of child beneficiaries are taken from the annual report of Department of National ID and civil registration for FY 2021/22. However, data from two different sources are not exactly comparable.

National population and housing census (2021) data of Nepal is compiled under the principal of usual place of residence (population is counted from the usual place where people lived at least 6 months before the census period). Beneficiary data are

compiled by the local levels at the end of fiscal year (Mid-July 2022) irrespective of the duration of stay. Due to the data limitation for the projected population under 5 years by districts, the recent year's child grant beneficiary data are not utilised for analysis.

Table 1 further shows that total children from the Dalit categories are fully covered and received child grant (102.5% coverage). However, 1312 thousand children (designated category) from remaining 52 districts are not

**Table 1: Number of children receiving child grant in 2021/22**

S. N	District	Region	Designated category Population under 5 (census, 2021)	Dalit Population Under 5 (Census, 2021)	Child grant receiver, FY 2021/22		Total Child grant receiver
					designated region category	Dalit children	
1	Humla	Mountain	4690	1379	11346	130	11476
2	Mugu	Mountain	5009	1931	10233	13	10246
3	Jumla	Hill	8431	2271	16391	25	16416
4	Dolpa	Mountain	2992	646	5165	267	5432
5	Kalikot	Hill	11173	5441	27749	670	28419
6	Achham	Hill	17033	8048	27140	13037	40177
7	Bajhang	Hill	15546	3126	24500	5071	29571
8	Rautahat	Terai	83720	13653	93625	12453	106078
9	Mahottari	Terai	61549	13781	69695	9931	79626
10	Jajarkot	Hill	14588	7022	20715	9932	30647
11	Sarlahi	Terai	72873	14187	79167	11394	90561
12	Doti	Hill	15885	6224	21876	8253	30129
13	Bajura	Hill	10284	4339	15205	7216	22421
14	Siraha	Terai	59355	19863	62201	18896	81097
15	Saptari	Terai	47913	18991	44126	18476	62602
16	Bara	Terai	67291	10337	51109	9363	60472
17	Dhanusa	Terai	76795	18942	53660	18970	72630
18	Rasuwa	Mountain	3872	98	5055	132	5187
19	Rukum East	Hill	4357	1259	4929	1756	6685
20	Rukum West	Hill	12732	3807	15964	5568	21532
21	Rolpa	Hill	19633	4446	20455	5573	26028
22	Kapilbastu	Terai	57441	11186	54463	9400	63863
23	Baitadi	Hill	17197	5954	23299	8623	31922
24	Salyan	Hill	19116	3982	23899	5553	29452
25	Dailekh	Hill	17638	9167	24290	14257	38547
26	Other Districts	NA	1311873	210217	0	215161	215161

*Source: National Reports of Department of National ID and Civil Registration, (DoNIDCR, 2024)*

covered from the existing child benefit scheme. The child grant for these children is estimated to be around Nepalese Rs. 8.4 billion. Details of the coverage of the child grants from the designated 25 districts are listed in Table 1.

Regional classification of these 25 districts indicates that children from Hill (13 districts), and Mountain (4 districts) show over reporting (coverage around 141.5% for Hill and 156.8 % for Mountain). However, 95.2 per cent of children from Terai region

(8 districts) have received the child grant. This indicates that children from the Terai region of these 25 districts, which accounts to 5 per cent of the children are still out of the coverage.

### 3.3 State of child grants and total expenditure

The amount of grant per child per month and number of beneficiaries with annual expenditure are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Evolution of the child grants in Nepal**

S.N.	Fiscal Year	Total Number of Children receiving Child Grants of 25 districts	Annual total amount of expenditure (Rs.)	Grant per Child Rs.
1	2010/11	409105	981852000	200
2	2011/12	458135	1099524000	200
3	2012/13	551916	1324598400	200
4	2013/14	537118	1289083200	200
5	2014/15	506718	1216123200	200
6	2015/16	469922	1127812800	200
7	2016/17	442428	1061827200	400
8	2017/18	524507	1258816800	400
9	2018/19	684158	3283958400	400
10	2019/20	794221	3812260800	400
11	2020/21	1121198	5381750400	400
12	2021/22	1173442	7491253728	532
13	2022/23	1201897	7672910448	532
14	2023/24	1061639	6777503376	532

Source: DoNIDCR, 2024.

Number of children benefitting from this programme has also seen a remarkable increase. In the fiscal year 2010/11, approximately 409 thousand children received support, with this number gradually increasing to 442 thousand by fiscal year 2016/17. By 2023/24, the total number of beneficiaries reached 1061 thousand, slightly lower than the previous fiscal year 2022/23. There are couple of reasons for this decline. Firstly, the beneficiaries are started to link with the National ID. Secondly, new population census results have been released with the fresh data of total probable beneficiaries for this specific age group and local levels are engaged in reviewing database of beneficiaries while developing their new profile. These two initiatives of the Government of Nepal are remarkable for improving administrative procedure and governance system for sustainable social security thereby enhancing transparency and accountability.

### 3.4 Issue of affordability and sustainability

The amount of grant per child has been gradually increasing over time. In 2010/11, it was Rs. 200 per child and increased to Rs. 400 in 2016/17. By 2021/22, the grant was further increased to Rs. 532, underscoring the government's commitment to supporting vulnerable communities. However, government has been facing budgetary constraints after Covid-19 to expand this programme for all children under 5 years of age for its universal coverage. Hence, the challenge created by the economic capability can be mitigated by leveraging the existing resources and improving governance of cash transfer program.

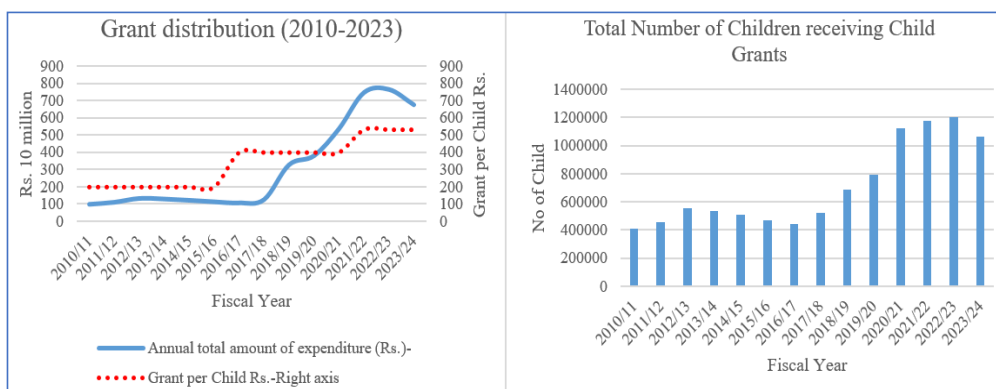
Dhakal *et al.* (2023) highlighted that the financial constraints could be mitigated by adopting contributory social security system,

voluntarily opting-out while receiving grant by the well-off families, families of civil servants, and self-employed families, imposing additional tax for private schools and utilise this tax for financing child grant programme. Further, school sector reform programme can be customised and additional grants or soft loan can be utilised for pre-school enrollment and binding it with the child grant programme. Nevertheless, investing this contributed fund in the high yield sectors and use its profit to finance the child grant programme can be effective. Based on the available resources, this programme could be gradually expanded for universal coverage. The additional resource requirement is estimated to be around Rs. 8.4 billion per year under the current schemes by 2024.

The government expenditure on the programme has also significantly increased over time as per the increases in the per capita amount of the grants. In 2010/11, the total spending was only Rs. 981 million, while by 2023/24, the figure had increased dramatically to Rs. 6.8 billion, reflecting an issue of sustainability and universality for the welfare of children under 5 years of age. Further, by using modern tools for data exchange, implementing business process reengineering, and integrating services through unique national ID could resolve this problem and the child grants programme can be sustained in the future. Figure 3 illustrates the grant distribution for children during 2010-2023 in the selected districts since the FY 2011/11.

### 3.5 Expansion of government expenditure on child grants

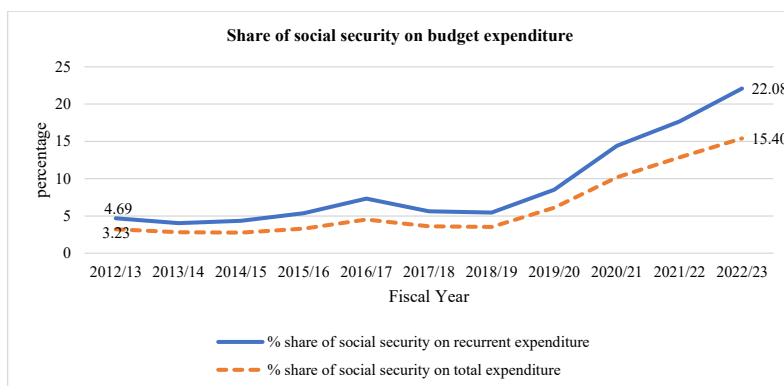
The share of social security expenditure out of the total government expenditure was around 3.2 per cent in 2012/13. This share has significantly soared to 15.4 per cent in 2022/23. This indicates that financial



**Figure 3: Trend of child grants distribution and their coverage**

Source: FCGO, 2024; National ID and Civil Registration, 2024.

burden of social security in the government expenditure has increased by almost 5 times during the period 2012-2022. The trend of the social security on government expenditure is illustrated in the following figure.



**Figure 4: Trend of social security expenditure, 2012-2023**

Source: MOF (2024).

The increasing trend of the social security expenditure induces an issue of affordability from the economic point of view. Further, the effectiveness of the social security system is highly demanded for implementing international commitments and enhancing public welfare. However, the sustainability of the existing social security including

cash transfer programme for children needs additional reform from the point of view of equity. Identification of marginal communities, poor households and integration of all social security programmes could be easier by

implementing digital services after linking with the National ID. This could reduce the misuse of the government fund and efficient outcomes of social security programme could be achieved in the long run.

The higher proportion of government budget allocated for social security should be utilised by the children under 5 years of age. Moreover, the administrative reform for each cash transfer programme is desirable before its expansion to other 52 districts. The following table illustrates different types of social securities and their share with respect to beneficiaries and budget expenditure for fiscal year 2021/22.

**Table 3: Types of social securities, corresponding proportions of beneficiaries and expenditure, 2021/22**

Types of social securities	No of Beneficiary	% of Beneficiaries	% of Expenditure
Senior Citizen ( 70+ years)	1321493	36.7	58.27
Senior Citizen Dalit	191846	5.3	6.18
Senior Citizen (Designated Area-Karnali)	21068	0.6	0.66
Single Women	276493	7.7	8.94
Widows	360502	10.0	11.61
Disability (Category-A)	63343	1.8	2.88
Disability (Category-B)	128223	3.6	3.05
Children from Designated region	806258	22.4	4.73
Dalit Children	410120	11.4	2.55
Endangered Ethnic Community	22538	0.6	1.12
TOTAL	3601884	100	100

Source: Annual Report, Department of National ID and Civil Registration, 2021/22.

Around 65 percent of the total expenditure on social security is concentrated to senior citizens. Widows and single women comprise around 20.5 per cent of total expenditure on social security. However, children from designated region and Dalit communities (around 34% of total beneficiaries) uphold only around 7 per cent of the expenditure as shown in the above table. As Nepal is heading towards an aging society and facing large outmigration of youth, this phenomenon may create additional burden to the financing resources in the future. On the other hand, less investment on child could result less return in the future (Dhakal *et al.*, 2023). Hence, there is an urgent need to review the child grant programme for enhancing its effectiveness so that it will ensure higher future return.

The decisions on providing these grants may create additional burden to the resource management and financing. Similarly, from the implementation perspective, the duplication of the beneficiaries, concentration of expenditure to senior citizens, single women and widows demonstrate an urgent need for redesigning and integrating different social benefits with the help of unique

identifier (National ID can be utilised as unique identifier) and e-governance initiatives.

More importantly, cash grant for children ultimately strengthen human capital by improving nutritional intake and thereby improving their cognitive ability (Bastagli *et al.*, 2016). Table 4 shows the number of children under five years of age receiving child grants from the designated 25 districts in 2021/22 in Nepal. The estimated child grant for 1.3 million excluded children under 5 years of age from the remaining 52 districts is around Rs.8.4 billion annually.

This table highlights that around 15 per cent of children under 5 years of age have received child grant with reference to the total child population under the age of 15. However, the level of awareness regarding child grant, the concentration of the child population between age 5-15 years (not entitle child grant) and level of governance and regulatory quality of the local levels involved in this programme for these districts result variation in the percentage of coverage.

**Table 4: Distribution of children receiving child grants, 2021/22**

S.N	District	Total children under 5 years receiving Child grants			Population Under 5 years	Total Child Population (0-14 years)	Child grant receiver as % of total child population (0-14 years)
		designated district category	Dalit category	Total			
1	Humla	11346	130	11476	6069	20000	49.56
2	Mugu	10233	13	10246	6940	23890	38.46
3	Jumla	16391	25	16416	10702	37919	40.94
4	Dolpa	5165	267	5432	3638	13553	35.43
5	Kalikot	27749	670	28419	16614	53935	47.59
6	Acham	27140	13037	40177	25081	86610	40.80
7	Bajhang	24500	5071	29571	18672	68366	36.23
8	Rautahat	93625	12453	106078	97373	298922	33.07
9	Mahottari	69695	9931	79626	75330	240516	33.69
10	Jajarkot	20715	9932	30647	21610	70377	41.88
11	Sarlahi	79167	11394	90561	87060	283940	31.27
12	Doti	21876	8253	30129	22109	75023	36.70
13	Bajura	15205	7216	22421	14623	49930	41.62
14	Siraha	62201	18896	81097	79218	245003	32.42
15	Saptari	44126	18476	62602	66904	210377	33.14
16	Bara	51109	9363	60472	77628	249830	26.27
17	Dhanusha	53660	18970	72630	95737	289972	28.46
18	Rasuwa	5055	132	5187	3970	12038	45.03
19	Rukum East	4929	1756	6685	5616	17680	38.40
20	Rukum West	15964	5568	21532	16539	54169	41.07
21	Rolpa	20455	5573	26028	24079	76137	36.27
22	Kapilbastu	54463	9400	63863	68627	222578	30.78
23	Baitadi	23299	8623	31922	23151	78848	40.19
24	Salyan	23899	5553	29452	23098	73230	41.51
25	Dailekh	24290	14257	38547	26805	86641	44.66
26	Other Districts	0	215161	215161	1522090	5176091	4.16
<b>Total</b>		<b>806257</b>	<b>410120</b>	<b>1216377</b>	<b>2439283</b>	<b>8115575</b>	<b>14.99</b>

Source: Child grant data from the Department of National ID and Civil Registration, 2024. Total Child Population from the National Population Census, 2021 (NSO, 2023).

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The child grant programme is one of the major social security instruments. However, the share of the budget allocated for this programme is just 7.3 per cent of total expenditure realised for social security. In addition, the child grant programme only covers around 49.9 per cent of the children under the age of 5 and leaving almost half

of the children under 5 out from the social security net. This is against the fundamental right of a child and government's commitment for establishing equitable social security system for leaving no one behind.

Expanding the programme to include all children would require a substantial amount of resources, far beyond what is available within the current budgetary constraints. However,

as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the ILO Social Security Floor, it is ethically problematic to provide support to only a selected group of children while excluding a majority. Such an approach contradicts the principles of universal rights and equity that these international commitments advocate for.

The coverage has almost doubled and reached around 49.9 per cent and the expenditure for this child grants programme has accounted around Rs 7.6 billion in 2022/23. There are several issues related to the distribution of the child grants and selection of the coverage districts. The main objective of child grant is to promote enrollment of vital registration of the child birth. The child grant programme has significantly impacted birth registration and further enables families to purchase basic requirements (UNICEF, 2020). However, it also aims to enhance nutritional status of the children from the selected 25 districts and all Dalit communities across the country. Based on the reflections from the last fifteen years of its implementation, following are some of the actionable recommendations while customising this programme in the coming years.

- Selection of the districts for the distribution of child grants should be based on the concentration of the under five years of population and geographical remoteness.
- The coverage should be increased to all communities living below the poverty line.
- The child grant should be adjusted with the local inflation and equivalent to the purchasing power parity of the respective district.
- Separate contributory fund should be

created to finance child grant programme for its sustainability.

- Conduct a study on the effectiveness of the programme before its extension in other districts.
- The child grant programme should be integrated with the vaccination, health insurance, pre-school enrollment, regularity of attendance, and other social security programmes for better outcomes.

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