

Budgeting for Gender Equality in India: Trends and Analysis

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Abstract

Almost all developing nations experience a significant amount of gender-based violence. Religious beliefs, cultural practises, long-standing biases, and other factors have made Indian women exploitable and subordinate in many spheres of life. Women are reliant on males and other institutions of authority such as the family, community, and society because of low rates of educational involvement, a lack of economic independence, prejudices acting against them, etc.

The state's budget is a crucial instrument for taking positive action to enhance gender relations by closing the gender gap in the development process. Economic disparities between men and women, as well as between the wealthy and the poor, may be lessened as a result. The budget has a variety of effects on women's life. By allocating financial monies for women's activities, it actively supports the growth of women while reducing prospects for their emancipation via budget cutbacks.

It has been determined after a preliminary review of the literature that there is sufficient room and opportunity to give a critical analysis of the trends and traits of gender budgeting by the Government of India with some empirical data. Thus, the papers also aims to assess the composition of the total expenditure for women in the State Budget in terms of the priorities across various sectors relating to various needs of women; and to make recommendations for budgetary policies that the State can adopt for addressing various needs of women.

With this context, the researcher used secondary data sources for the study at hand. The report also highlights the consequences for further research and practise.

Keywords: Gender Budget, Women Empowerment, Gender Based Violence, and Government Programmes.

Introduction

Women are and have always been the cornerstone of a family in particular and society in general, according to recorded human history. Men and women are created equally, and they

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both contribute significantly to the growth and development of their families and society at large. (Roy, 2007). The aims of human development are directly related to the advancement and empowerment of women, who, as a separate category, make up around 496 million people (according to the 2001 Census), or 48% of India's total population. In addition to being important national human resources, they also set the pace for the economy's sustainable growth via their socioeconomic development. However, after 60 years of independence, many women still experience barriers to accessing and having control over resources. Important social development indices including health, nutrition, literacy, educational attainment, skill levels, occupational position, etc. reflect these inequities. Women are also denied access to their fair share of the flow of public goods and services due to a variety of gender-specific restrictions. The benefits of economic growth are likely to completely bypass a sizable portion of the country's population unless these gender requirements and their felt needs are taken into account and mainstreamed in the planning and development process of the country, which is not promising for the economy's future growth.

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The social and economic objectives of governments and the extent of political resolve to address issues like poverty, gender inequality, and social exclusion are reflected in national development budgets.

Gender Budget: Concepts

Gender budgeting is a technique for viewing budget preparation, budgetary policies, and budget expenditures through a gender perspective. Gender budget, in relation to the Government at any level, does not refer to a separate budget for women; rather, it is an analytical tool that examines the Government budget to reveal its impact on gender differently and promotes higher priorities for programmes and schemes to address the disadvantages faced by women due to gender.

The phrase "gender budget" refers to a number of procedures and instruments designed to make it easier to evaluate how the government budget affects women and men differently. As these exercises have developed, the emphasis has been on evaluating government spending for its effect on women's and girls' issues. It's crucial to understand that gender-sensitive budgets or budgets for women are not distinct budgets for men and women. In

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order to ensure gender equality in the distribution of the effects of the government budget, both in terms of its benefits and costs, gender budget initiatives examine how the government raises and spends public funds.

The purpose of a gender budget is not to analyse how the government's goals are represented in the budget or how they affect different groups of men and women within those categories. They do not consider whether the same amount is spent on men and women, or if the budget appropriately meets both groups' requirements. Initiatives that have utilised gender as a lens through which to assess budgets at the national, regional, and local levels are referred to as women's budgets, gender budgets, and gendersensitive budgets. Gender budgeting is the process of dissecting the government's spending plan to identify its effects on women and men differently and to transform gender pledges into financial commitments. In order to evaluate how the government budget serves the needs of women across all sectors, gender budgeting: - 34 Looks at the budget from a gender viewpoint. Gender responsive budgeting initiatives provide a mechanism for measuring the effect of government income and spending on women. It does not intend to establish a separate budget but to give positive action to meet the unique needs of women.

Gender Equality and Budgets

By incorporating gender concerns into macroeconomic policy and budgets, gender responsive budget (GRB) programmes aim to reduce persisting disparities between men and women and encourage development. The significance of gender budgets lies in their contribution to greater economic equality for women as well as increased budgetary efficacy, efficiency, accountability, and transparency. The gender budget also aims to highlight inconsistencies between what a government claims to be doing and the real effects of its policies. Generally speaking, GRB measures have not been properly implemented into traditional budgets, which account for more than 90% of government spending. Instead, they've tended to focus on funding for programmes that support women and girls, which makes up a relatively modest fraction of national budgets. GRB activities aim to influence the budgeting process in order to advance gender equality. The goals of GRB activities are to achieve GRB, hold governments responsible for their pledges to gender equality, and increase understanding of the impact that budgets have on both men and women. In order to advance equality between women and men, it includes a gender equality viewpoint into the budgeting process and the policies that support it.

GRB does not only increase the precise budgetary allotments allotted to women and girls, or

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even distinct budgets for these groups. Instead, it entails gathering budgetary funds and allocating spending to solve enduring disparities between women, girls, and boys. By emphasising the gender aspects of government budgets, both on the income and spending sides, gender budgeting programmes support "gender mainstreaming." Strengthening administrative procedures and initiatives to meet the goals for improving the status of women is possible with gender budgeting.

It includes not just a look at how resources are allocated for women, but also monitoring how those resources are used, effect analysis, and beneficiary incidence analysis of public spending and policy from a gender viewpoint. Therefore, gender budgeting differs from accounting as it is often viewed and understood. It involves include a gender perspective and sensitivity at all levels and phases of the planning, programmes, plans, procedures, and execution of developmental projects. Gender mainstreaming in the development process and understanding how the needs of women can be addressed in not only "traditional" areas like agriculture, health, and education but also in so-called "gender neutral" sectors like power, defence, chemicals, biotechnology, commerce, information technology, etc., where, in the first instance, the gender implications do not seem a significant factor, are important results of the application of gender budgeting. Public spending will always be unfavourably biased in favour of women since it is mainstreamed in these areas.

As a result, gender mainstreaming is a crucial need and a logical result of gender budgeting.

Worldwide Gender Budget Initiatives

In the ongoing battle to make budgets and policies more gender sensitive, globally gender responsive budgeting (GRB) has emerged as a key instrument.

Over the last 20 years, GRB has received a resoundingly overwhelming support as a powerful instrument for influencing marijuana gets and policies all over the globe, growing from only one nation in the mid-1980s to over 90 countries now. The use of gender budgeting as a tool for macroeconomic planning is growing in popularity. Gender equality must be included in all macroeconomic policies, including its fiscal aspects, according to the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference of Women, which was held in Beijing in September 1995. The UN General Assembly Special Session on Women, which took place in June 2000, called on all nations to include a gender perspective into important macroeconomic and social development programmes as well as national development initiatives. The Sixth Conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Women's Affairs, held in New Delhi in April 2000, also focused emphasis on gender budgeting. The Federal

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Government of Australia published the first in-depth evaluation of a government budget for its effect on women and girls in 1984. As a result, Australia was the first nation to adopt a gender-sensitive budget. The governments of each Australian State and Territory also conducted women's budget exercises at different points in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1995, South Africa led and pioneered the creation of a gender-sensitive budget via a participatory process that included lawmakers and NGOs. Apart from South Africa, four additional nations—Fiji, St. Kitts and Nevis, Barbados, and Sri Lanka—began the Commonwealth movement to include gender into national budgeting procedures in 1997. Several other countries, including Canada, the UK, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Uganda, have also taken action to generate their own national budgets. 35 nations are now attempting gender budget projects that follow various paths in terms of the Process and partners engaged in carrying out the activity.

Methodology

The following goals have been kept in mind when this research was conducted:

- (i) To evaluate the expenditure priorities for women in the union budget;
- (ii) To assess how the priorities across several sectors in relation to the various needs of women affected the composition of the State Budget's overall expenditure on women; and
- (iii) To provide suggestions for financial measures the State might use to address the various needs of women

In order to examine the gender budget patterns in India, the fundamental information and statistics were gathered on a secondary basis from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the National Commission for Women, and five year plans.

Budgetary Effects of the Planning Process on Gender

According to its members' assessments of women's situation in the economy, the Indian Planning Commission has always placed a special emphasis on problems affecting women. The Central Social social Board was established in 1953 as part of the First Five Year Plan (1951–1956) to advance social work via volunteer associations, charity trusts, and philanthropic organisations. Mahila Mandals were developed with backing from the Second Five Year Plan (1956–1960) to promote grassroots activities among women. The Third, Fourth, and Interim Plans (1961–1974) included provisions for prenatal and child health services, women's education, and additional food for young children, nursing infants, and expecting mothers. The attitude to women during the Fifth Plan (1974–1978) saw a significant change from welfare to development.

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The Report of the Committee on the Status of Women (titled "Towards Equality") published by the Government of India in 1974 is often seen as the starting point of the discussion in India about assessing public spending from the viewpoint of gender. This report made clear how the country's growth trajectory had harmed a significant portion of women and produced new inequalities and disadvantages. The Fifth Five Year Plan's development of women's policy changed as a result of the awareness this Report raised. The Sixth Plan (1980–1985) recognised women's empowerment as a distinct economic goal. the multidisciplinary strategy with a focus on employment, education, and health.

The Seventh Plan pioneered the idea of DWCD monitoring 27 beneficiary-oriented programmes for women. The process is still ongoing, and the scope of the programmes covered is growing. Since the Eighth Plan, there has been an emphasis on allocating resources based on gender. For the first time, a gender perspective and the necessity to provide a clear flow of funding from the general developmental sectors to women were stressed in the Eighth Plan (1992–1997). The Plan document explicitly stated that "women should not be left out of the advantages of growth from diverse sectors, and specific initiatives for women should be complementary to the general development plans. In turn, the latter need to exhibit more gender awareness. The "Women Component Plan" was one of the main strategies chosen by the Ninth Plan (1997–2002), which also instructed the Central and State Governments to make sure that "not less than 30% of the funds/benefits are earmarked in all the women's related sectors." To guarantee that the suggested plan puts out a comprehensive approach to empowering Women, special attention was advised on the flow of the allocated funds/benefits via an efficient process. The conversion of fiscal obligations to gender commitments has related effects. "The Tenth plan will continue the process of dissecting the Government budget to establish its gender-differential impact and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments," it declares explicitly.

The preceding plans' strategies were examined once again in the tenth five-year plan (2002–07). Additionally, it established two working groups on the economic and social empowerment of women, who have since made a number of recommendations, including the following:

The strategy acknowledged both the market's function and women's aspirations. Therefore, it advises using a strategy that respects people's rights.

Spending in the social sector was once again shown to be on the decline. Therefore, it advised significantly increasing investment in the social sector, such as in health and

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education.

In order to reach the greatest amount of people, it was also advised that grassroots leadership be appropriately used.

According to the Eleventh Plan, all Ministries and Departments must include suitable provisions for gender parity in their plans and policies. Additionally, it requires that gender budgeting be strictly followed everywhere. The Twelfth Five-Year Plan's anticipated Gross Budgetary Support for WCD is Rs 1,17,707 crore, of which Rs 1,08,503 crore goes to the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). Thus, the total funding available for the execution of all other programs/interventions (apart from ICDS) linked to child and women development, including programmes like the National Nutrition Mission, are Rs 9,204 crore. This number has drastically decreased as compared to the Eleventh Plan. In comparison to the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, the expected Gender Based Schemes (GBS) for the Women and Child Development sector have decreased by 25%. It's also crucial to keep in mind that a bigger number of projects, both new and old, will be funded with this smaller amount of money. It's interesting to note that none of the previous year's promotions have been dropped this year.

Another factor that deserves consideration is the size of the projected Gross Budgetary Support for programmes related to women's development (within MWCD) in comparison to other fields like health, education, transportation, and energy, as well as urban and rural development, Panchayati Raj, and scientific fields. In comparison to 18.8% for rural development and Panchayati Raj and 12.5% for the transport and energy sectors, women's development (excluding child development, in MWCD) accounts for a pitiful 0.2% of the overall Gender Budgetary Support.

Gender Responsive Budget: Governmental Initiatives

In several venues, the significance of gender budgeting has been emphasised. The Finance Minister in 2004–05 had ordered the establishment of Gender Budgeting Cells in all Ministries and Departments and highlighted the perceived need for budget data to be presented in a manner that brought out the gender sensitivities of the budgetary allocations in order to further this objective.

This was followed by a stronger commitment in the Budget Speech of 2005–2006, where the Gender Budgetary Allocations were reflected in a two-way classified Gender Budgeting Statement in the Union Budget. The first Statement indicated those Ministries/Departments which identified allocation of 100% for Schemes/Programs flowing to Women and second

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Statement reflected allocation of 30% and above but below 100% for Schemes/Programs for Women. Gender budget allocation for nine ministries/departments and ten requests for grants in the fiscal year 2005–06 was expected to account for about 4.77% of all expenditures in the public sector. According to the budget for 2006–2007, 33 requests for grants from 18 Ministries/Departments and an anticipated 3.8% allocation for women were made. A more accurate representation of the real sums going to women via programmes and schemes is what caused the apparent decline in the gender budget allocation between 2005–06 and 2006–07. A rough estimate of 4.6% of the Public Sector Outlay for the 2007–2008 fiscal year came from 33 Grant Requests, 27 Ministries/Departments, and 27 Ministries. The Gender Budget Charter was released in March 2007 by the Ministry of Finance in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

As the nodal organisation for gender budgeting, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has been working on a number of projects to empower women. The Ministry has developed gender budgeting in this context as a tool for attaining the objectives set for women in our Constitution and Plans and Policies. "Budgeting for Gender Equity" was approved as the Ministry's mission statement in 2004–2005. Additionally, a strategic framework of activities was developed and distributed to all government departments in India in order to carry out this purpose.

The purpose of the mission statement is to emphasise that (1) Gender Budgeting is a process that involves keeping a gender perspective at different stages of planning, policy, programmes, and schemes, assessment of target group needs, resource allocation, implementation, impact assessment, outcome assessment, and reprioritization of policy/program objectives and allocations bringing about gender mainstreaming into the development process:

Gender sensitive budgets are the result of the gender budgeting process because it transforms declared gender commitments into financial obligations.

Gender-specific Budgeting Tools

The following list includes the gender budgeting tools that the MWCD has provided in workshops and orientations:

(a) the Gender Sensitive Review of Public Expenditure and Policy Guidelines .

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has developed specific recommendations in the shape of Checklists I and II. Programmes that intentionally target women and are

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beneficiary-oriented should refer to Checklist I. Checklist II includes traditional industries. These recommendations assist in analysing public spending and policy from a gender perspective in order to identify obstacles that prevent programmes and policies from reaching enough women and to allow appropriate remedial action.

(b) Public Expenditure Gender Profile:

Making the Gender Based Facilitates isolating the gender component via financial and physical objectives and reviewing all programmes and public expenditure from a gender viewpoint. The profile would provide a clear situational analysis of limitations including the lack of gender-disaggregated data availability and the necessity to identify the causes of non-adherence to targeted investment on women, among other things. The gender responsiveness of budgeting is shown by the trend of the gender component, allocation, and spending.

(c) Beneficiary Needs Assessment

establishing standards from a female perspective and evaluating the success of public spending appropriately.

(d) Impact Analysis using field-level surveys, monitoring, and assessment

Through monitoring, assessment, and field-level surveys, this would involve determining the real effect of public spending and policies from a gender viewpoint.

The findings of programmes' impact analyses from a gender perspective aid in identifying obstacles that prevent women from using public services or spending money on them, allow for a gender-sensitive assessment of policy and programme design, modification in the amount of funding allotted, and clarification of implementation rules, among other things.

(e) Participative Budgeting

All gender budgeting projects are seen to succeed when women are included in decision-making. Instead of being seen as recipients, women must be considered as equal participants in decision-making and execution. Thus, Gender Budgeting encourages the development of the skills of elected female representatives, women's self-help organisations, and other organisations as well as their active participation in decision-making and budgeting at the local level.

(f) Spatial mapping – Planning at the macro level for requirements at the micro level:

Women's empowerment is a comprehensive idea that calls for a sufficient allocation of resources in all sectors, including health, education, access to finance and asset ownership, water sanitation and nutrition, long-term employment, and skills, research and design

technology. It also calls for political engagement. Additionally, regional inequities need to be addressed. For this, it's important to concentrate on the unique requirements of women living in cities and villages. The spatial mapping of social infrastructure and women's access to employment opportunities would clearly show the resources available, overall gaps, resource allocation needed based on population size and yardsticks for facility availability, etc. so that universalization of basic socio-economic infrastructure is achieved gradually and allocations and interventions are more focused. Using as much local input as possible, these spatial maps would subsequently serve as the foundation for concurrent regional plans and funding forecasts for gender needs. Additionally, this would make it possible to adjust for regional imbalances within States and districts.

The Indian Budgets have placed a strong emphasis on the value of gender budgeting (GB). In his budget speech for 2004–2005, the Finance Minister of the Government of India recognised the need for budget data to be presented in a way that highlighted the gender sensitivity of the budgetary allocations and ordered the establishment of Gender Budgeting Cells (GBC) in all Ministries/Departments for this purpose. It was acknowledged that there is a growing understanding of the gender sensitivity of financial allocations in the Budget Speech for 2007–2008. The Ministry of Finance has also distributed a Gender Budget Charter outlining the duties of GBCs. The establishment of a Gender Budgeting (GB) cell has been aggressively pursued by the Ministry with other Ministries. 52 Ministries/Departments have already established these cells. The list of Ministries and Departments that have established Gender Budgeting cells is shown in Box 15. These cells act as hubs for organising intra- and inter-ministerial Gender Budgeting activities. These cells are expected to play the following roles:

- ❖ Serve as a focal point for all projects including gender-responsive budgeting.
- ❖ Pilot project examining governmental policy, spending, and revenue in a gender-sensitive manner in accordance with Checklist I and II
- ❖ For the target group of beneficiaries covered by spending, revenue-raising, policy, or law, guide and carry out the collection of gender-disaggregated data.
- ❖ Lead gender budgeting activities inside Departments and in the field organisations in charge of carrying out government schemes.
- ❖ Perform beneficiary needs analysis, beneficiary incidence analysis, and gender-based impact analysis to
- ❖ Determine the efficacy of public spending

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- ❖ Determine the potential for re-prioritizing public spending
- ❖ Enhance implementation, etc.
- ❖ Compile and disseminate the best practises for participatory budgeting and programme execution.

Initiatives by Ministries Outside of the Government

The National Commission for Women (NCW), whose aim is to defend and advance women's rights, has launched a number of efforts to advance gender budgeting in India. A nationwide consultation on "The Budget: A Gender and Poverty Sensitive Perspective" was undertaken by the commission in 2003. Meetings with members of the commission for women from several states and advocacy work with the Ministry of Finance came next.

The NCW sent a memo to the finance minister outlining a number of demands for the 2004–2005 union budget, with the demands focusing on issues like women's health, basic village infrastructure, rural environment, women's economic empowerment, families in need, and underserved segments of our society. A paper titled "The Budget: A Gender and Poverty Sensitive Perspective" was also funded by the NCW.

Discussion: Research Results and Analysis

Budgets assemble resources via taxation laws and distribute funds to various economic sectors. The aforementioned tables can be used to analyse how much money is allocated annually by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to various programmes intended to promote the holistic development of women in our nation. The trend shows that funding is sometimes steadily increasing, other times declining, and other times remaining constant. However, a substantial part of women and young girls in our nation are malnourished, ignored, and subjected to different sorts of exploitation across the many civilizations in the nation. Therefore, the issue of why the funds provided are not being used effectively emerges. It is stating that there is a lack of governance at the federal, state, and even municipal levels, as well as a failure of the bureaucracy, mutualization of finances, and corruption, all of which must be addressed for the GRB's programmes to succeed. Between men and women, as well as between the wealthy and the poor, it may aid in reducing economic disparities (NCAS, 2003). Therefore, the gender dynamics at play in the economy and in civil society must be taken into account by budgetary policy.

The budget must emphasise bottom-up budgeting, child budgeting, SC budgeting, ST budgeting, green budgeting, participatory approaches to pro-poor and pro-women budgeting, as well as the connections between gender-sensitive budgeting and women's

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empowerment. It also needs to address the local and global implications of these budgeting strategies. Workshops must be held for those in charge of making decisions in gramme sabhas, parliaments, and the media in order to offer training and develop capacity (Patel, 2003).

Budgetary commitments must be made in accordance with gender commitments. Transparency and accountability for income production and public spending may be assured by using Right to Information (2005). 'Bottom up budgets' must be created in order to reprioritize public expenditure, and along with elected officials, lobbyists must work to see that they are implemented.

In a word, it can be said that Gender Sensitive Budgeting has become a widely accepted phenomenon in India's whole policy framework. However, rather of addressing serious gender-sensitive issues, the approach continues to be piecemeal and exceedingly uncertain.

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