

Gender Budgeting In India: A Strategy To Achieve Gender Equality

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Abstract: Gender budgeting has been conceptualized to study the gaps or deficiencies of prevailing in our society, particularly in employment, education, health care, women literacy and so forth. Gender budgeting in Indian context emphasizes women centric development covering mainly gender equality and development. Development of women is central to any country's progress. As per Government of India, Gender Budgeting initiatives which allocate money to implement policies and programs were supposed to change the existing gender inequalities patterns and move the country in the direction of gender equal society. In view of the growing importance of the gender budgeting, the present paper gives a broad overview of the gender budgeting initiatives in India, and to analyse the Gender Budgeting trends in India during the period from 2005-06 to 2016-17. The main source of data for the study is the budgetary documents presented by the Government of India like Annual Budget documents. The data will also be collected from Journals like Economic and Political Weekly and other such publications will be extensively used to cull out data and information. Time series and cross sectional data culled out from numerous sources will be subjected to statistical treatment. Student t-test, Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) and Coefficient of Determination (R^2) will be employed where ever necessary. The results of the study revealed that, the acceptance of gender budgeting as a strategy for gender mainstreaming has grown in the country, since its introduction in 2005. However, it is now required to fast track the process. We need to strengthen our Gender Budgeting Cells to ensure systematic process of engendering of their policies, programmes and schemes.

Keywords: Gender Budgeting, Women Empowerment.

I. INTRODUCTION

“Gender budgeting ... means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality.” In India, gender perspective on public expenditure had been gaining ground since the publication of the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in 1974. The Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-97) highlighted for the first time the need to ensure a definite flow of funds from the general developmental sectors to women. The Plan document made an express statement that “... the benefits of development from different sectors should not bypass women and special programmes on women should complement the general development programmes. The latter,

in turn, should reflect greater gender sensitivity”. This approach, however, could not make much indentation in ensuring adequate flow of funds and benefits to women. The Ninth Five Year-Plan (1997-2002), while reaffirming the earlier commitment, adopted Women Component Plan as one of the major strategies and directed both the Central and the State Governments to ensure “not less than 30 percent of the funds/benefits are earmarked in all the women's related sectors”. It also directed that a special vigil be kept on the flow of the earmarked funds/benefits through an effective mechanism to ensure that the proposed strategy brings forth a holistic approach towards empowering women.

The budget announcement in 2000-01 by the then Minister of Finance, clearly stated that - *There is an urgent need for improving the access of women to national resources*

and for ensuring their rightful place in the mainstream of economic development. Towards this objective, the Government will set up a Task Force under an eminent person to review all existing legislation and Government schemes pertaining to the role of women in the national economy. This Task Force will help us chalk out specific programmes for observing 2001 as "Women's Empowerment Year". As a follow up measure, the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was adopted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2001. It specifically mentioned that time-bound action plans to be drawn up by the Ministries should specifically include among other things, a gender perspective in the budgeting process. Subsequently, Ministry of Finance constituted an Expert Group in 2003 to review the Classification System for Government Transactions. The Sub-Group on Gender Budgeting essentially focused on identifying the Institutional framework that could facilitate the introduction of Gender Budgeting in the Government and developed matrices aimed at capturing financial data of budgetary allocations from the gender perspective.

The recommendations of the Expert Group was taken note of and the same was reflected in the Finance Minister's budget speech in 2004-05 – 'Women's groups have met me and urged me to consider gender budgeting. This means that the budget data should be presented in a manner that the gender sensitivities of the budgetary allocations are clearly highlighted. In Budget Speech 2005-06, the Finance Minister reaffirmed his commitment to Gender Budgeting and introduced a Gender Budget Statement: '... I have included in the Budget documents a separate statement highlighting the gender sensitivities of the budgetary allocations under 10 demands for grants. The total amount in BE 2005-06, according to the statement, is Rs.14,379 crore. Although this is another first in budget-making in India, it is only a beginning and, in course of time, all Departments will be required to present gender budgets as well as make benefit incidence analyses'. The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) stated "... 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 ...the Tenth Plan will initiate immediate action in tying up these two effective concepts of Women's Component Plan and Gender Budgeting to play a complementary role to each other, and thus ensure both preventive and post facto action in enabling women to receive their rightful share from all the women-related and general development sectors."

The Eleventh Plan (2007-12) stated that "Gender Budgeting and Gender Outcome Assessment will be encouraged in all ministries/departments at Central and State levels. Gender Budgeting helps assess the gender differential impact of the budget and takes forward the translation of gender commitments to budgetary allocations. During the Eleventh Plan efforts will continue to create Gender Budgeting Cells in all Ministries and Departments. Data from these cells will be collated on a regular basis and made available in the public domain." The Twelfth Plan noted that one of the seven key elements to be addressed for gender equity was "Mainstreaming gender through Gender Budgeting". The Plan also noted that "The process of gender

budget will be further strengthened in the Twelfth Plan and its reach extended to all Ministries, Departments and State Governments".

II. GENDER BUDGET STATEMENTS

Gender Budget Statement is a reporting mechanism that can be used by Ministries/ Departments to review their programmes from a gender lens and is an important tool for presenting information on the allocations for women. This Statement was first introduced in the Union Budget 2005-06. On the basis of the information furnished by the Ministries/Departments, the Gender Budget Statement is prepared. One of the purposes of gender budgeting is to monitor expenditure and public service delivery from a gender perspective. This means of mainstreaming women's concerns in all activities and improving their access to public resources. The number of Ministries reflecting such allocation has increased over the years. Prior to the introduction of the Gender Budget Statements, there was no way of even estimating how much of the government's total expenditure was flowing to women. Now, with the production of the Gender Budget Statement as part of the union budget documents, an institutionalized effort is being made to answer this basic question.

However, the Gender Budget Statement does not capture all the women-focused interventions, because it is not possible for the so called gender neutral sector to count its individual beneficiaries. The Gender Budget Statement indicates, in two parts, the budget provisions for schemes that are substantially meant for the benefit of women. Part A details schemes in which 100% provision is for women, Part B reflects schemes where the allocations for women constitute at least 30% of the provision. Therefore funds provided for women-focused interventions, in these sectors may be small, i.e. less than 30 per cent of the total budgets for the Ministries/Departments and are not captured by the Gender Budget Statement. The gender relevance of these interventions, however, can certainly go a long way in addressing the gender based challenges of women in those sectors.

Table-1 incorporates the trends in the allocation of resources towards gender budget during the period from 2005-06 to 2016-17. It could be noted from the table that the gender budget has risen steadily from Rs. 14,378.68 crore in 2005-06 to Rs.90,624.76 crore in 2016-17. The share of gender budget to the total Union budget accounted for 2.79 per cent in the year 2005-06 and it marginally increased to 4.58 per cent in the year 2015-16. The allocations under gender budget have touched the peak level of Rs. 98,029.84 crore in 2014-15 followed by Rs.97,133.70 crore and Rs.90,624.76 crore during 2013-14 and 2016-17 respectively. But the share of gender budget has registered the highest level of 6.22 per cent in 2011-12 followed by 6.11 per cent in 2010-11 and 5.91 per cent in 2012-13. It should be noted that though women constituted nearly 50 per cent of the total population, the actual allocation of resources to them ranged between 2.8 per cent and 6.2 per cent. It clearly indicates that gender justice has not been done fully and it is only a modest attempt towards this stupendous task.

Year	No. of Ministries/ Departments	Gender Budget (BE) (in Rs. Crore)	Percentage of Gender Budgeting to Total Union Budget
2005-06	9 (10)	14378.68	2.79
2006-07	18 (24)	28736.53	5.09
2007-08	27 (33)	31177.96	4.50
2008-09	27 (33)	27661.67	3.68
2009-10	28 (33)	56857.61	5.57
2010-11	28 (33)	67749.80	6.11
2011-12	29 (34)	78251.02	6.22
2012-13	29 (34)	88142.80	5.91
2013-14	30 (35)	97133.70	5.83
2014-15	36 (39)	98029.84	5.46
2015-16	34 (35)	79257.87	4.46
2016-17	31 (36)	90624.76	4.58

Note: Figures in parentheses represent no. of demands included in Gender Budgeting.

BE-Indicates Budget Estimates

Source: <http://indiabudget.nic.in>

Table 1: Magnitude of Gender Budget Statements during the period from 2005-06 to 2016-17

Figure-1 depicts the allocation of gender budgeting statements over the period from 2005-06 to 2016-17 in terms of crore.

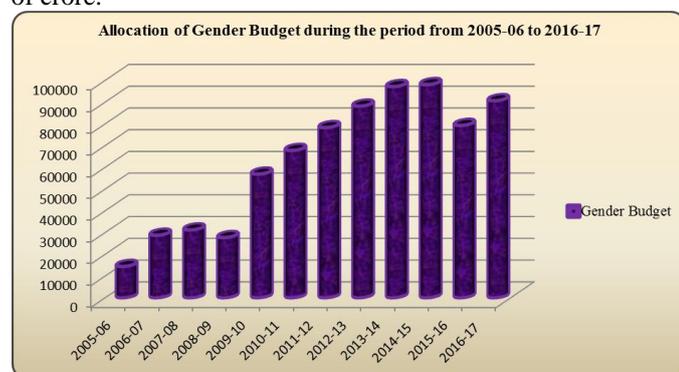


Figure 1

Gender Budget	Total Gender Budgeting
CAGR	17.10
R ²	0.80
t-cal	6.35

Note: * Significant at 95 % Confidence level

Source: Computed from Table 1

Table 2: Statistical results of the Gender Budgeting Statements during the period from 2005-06 to 2016-17

Table 2 presents the Statistical results of Gender Budgeting Statements during the period from 2005-06 to 2016-17. The table provides information on Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR), coefficient of determination (R²) and the value of student t-test calculated for Gender Budgeting Statements between the years 2005-06 and 2016-17. It is evident from the table that, the gender budget statements have registered 17.10 per cent growth per annum during the period from 2005-06 to 2016-17. The value of coefficients of determination is 0.80 indicating that 80 per cent of variation in the dependent variable is explained by the

independent variable viz., time. The computed t-value is of 6.35 greater than the table value indicating that the growth is statistically significant at five per cent probability level.

III. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- ✓ Total magnitude of gender budget is very low.
- ✓ The focus on gender budget has been mainly on identifying programmes/ Schemes meant entirely for women or having visible components that benefit women.
- ✓ Very little information is available in the public domain as regards the assumptions made by various ministries in the reviews of their expenditure profiles from a gender perspective.
- ✓ Human primary needs sectors like water supply, sanitation and food & public distribution still remain outside the purview of the Gender Budget Statement.

IV. CONCLUSION

An attempt has made for the adoption of Gender Budgeting as a tool for promoting gender equality by the Government of India in 2005-06. The allocation made towards gender budgeting rose more than by 6.3 times, the share of gender budgeting as a proportion of total Union budget remained abysmally low at 2.7 per cent to 6.2 per cent during the period from 2005-06 to 2015-16. The high R² value also indicates the goodness of fit of the model to the data. The progress has been recorded across Ministries and Departments with varying degrees of success. Although there are many challenges that are faced by the Gender Budgeting Cells of Central Ministries and Departments, there are many successful interventions across Ministries and Departments that may be replicated by others to speed up the pace of gender mainstreaming. As a result of the above efforts, acceptance of gender budgeting as a strategy for gender mainstreaming has grown in the country, since its introduction in 2005. However, it is now required to fast track the process. We need to strengthen our Gender Budgeting Cells to ensure systematic process of engendering of their policies, programmes and schemes.

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