

Gender Budgeting: Powerful Tool for Women Empowerment

Archana Soni*

M.A, B.ED, NET Qualified

Abstract – The innovative concept of gender budgeting has received significant attention worldwide. There are about 85 countries around the world which have followed gender budgeting. Real development process can only happen when modern world considers the balance that exists between male and female. However in developing countries, they are very much deprived. The most illustrious way to bridge the gap is through Gender Budgeting Initiatives. First step towards this goal was taken by Australia, South Africa and Philippines followed by other developed and less developed countries. The issue of gender budgeting has become very much important in the present day Indian scenario for the social, economic and educational development of women as a whole. Women & girls not only comprise a large part of the valuable human resources of the country, they are also individuals having their own identity & their socioeconomic development sets the foundation for sustainable growth of the economy & society. As a whole Gender Budgeting tends to focus on women because nearly about two third of the non-literate people in the world are women. This paper is a modest attempt to measure the effectiveness of Gender Budgeting as a tool for women empowerment.

Keywords: Development, Gender Budgeting, Educational Development, Women Empowerment, Australian Government

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INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment has become the agenda of almost all countries around the world. For this, a lot of initiatives have been made both at national and international level. In the midst of these initiatives, gender budgeting is a new methodological tool to mainstream women. Over the past two decades, women's empowerment has been increasingly recognized as a crucial factor for any country's holistic and sustainable development. Several programs and projects across the world have been launched and are currently in progress to bring social, economic and political equity and broader access to basic livelihood needs.

Development process can be taken only with the help of some helpful resources. The provision and allocation of resources are done through budget. Hence budgets are crucial in framing policy. Resources are limited, therefore scarce. Budget allocates resources according to their priority. But at the same time, it suffers from political influence. Hence, budget has some political agenda. In spite of that, gender inequality mitigation is an apolitical issue which reveals that urban areas are both economically and socially in better position than their rural counterpart. Rural women do not have any social and political platform of their own. Under such circumstances, it is

the national commitment to extend help in favour of this poor class. Now through budget, the gap between male and female can be narrowed down. The analysis of budget shows how and where the amounts are being spent. Among sectors like education, health and agriculture, where the gaps between male and female are really wide immediate steps are necessary to take. Budget is very important and effective tool world wide to meet this gap. The first gender responsive budget initiative was taken by Australian government at the federal level in 1984 and fully executed in 1985.

Gender budgeting is looking at the economy through women's eyes. Gender budgeting is a classification of the government budget to establish its gender differential impacts and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments. Gender budgets are referred by several names like "Gender Budgets", "Women's Budgets", "Gender Sensitive Budgets", "Gender Responsive

Budgets", "Applied Gender Budget Analysis", etc. All these terms refer to gender budget initiatives. The concept of gender budgeting came into existence in 2005. The basic aim of this was to make allocation of funds for various schemes which are designed for the assistance of women. With the production of the gender budgeting statement as part of the Union

Budget documents, an institutionalized effort is being made to answer the basic question that how much of the government's total expenditure is flowing to women. At present, twenty two states have taken initiatives to implement gender budgeting for the welfare of women in India.

OBJECTIVE

- To find out how effective the gender budgeting as a tool for narrowing inequality gaps between men and women.
- To analyse the (National) budget from a gender perspective (Gender Budget Analysis)
- To identify problems unique to women in the sectors like health, education and employment.
- To determine how revenue and expenditure affect women, men, girls and boys – who benefits from budgetary decisions and who does not?
- To manuscript existing policies, programmes, and the involvement of support agencies in promoting women's empowerment.
- To develop starting points for a gender-equal restructuring of the (National) Budget and to effect changes in the fiscal policy priorities.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on secondary data. The required data has been taken from Expenditure Budget, Volume 1 (Statement 20) and Various Issues. This study has been conducted within a short time frame. Thus the scope of the study is limited. Since secondary sources of data were relied upon it was difficult to maintain uniformity in sample size for comparative analyses of various aspects related to women empowerment.

GENDER BUDGETING

- Gender Budgeting is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all the levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality.
- Gender –related analysis and gender-oriented evaluation of the distribution of (Financial) resources. By (Angelika Blickhauser, Henning Von Bargaen)

- Gender Budgeting is a dissection of the Government Budget to establish its gender-differential impacts and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitment.
- Refers to the process of conceiving, planning, approaching, executing, monitoring, analyzing and auditing budgets in a gender-sensitive way.
- Involves analysis of actual expenditure and revenue (usually of governments) on women and girls as compared to expenditure on men and boys.
- A (National) budget is a reflection of the political decisions made as to how (from whom) the revenue is levied and for what purposes (for whom) the expenditure is specifically used.
- Budgetary decisions have an impact on how society is structured and consequently directly affect the living circumstances of women, men, girls and boys as well as the gender relationship.

GENDER BUDGET IS NOT:

- A separate budget.
- About spending the same on women and men;
- Just about assessing programmes targeted specially at women and girls.
- Confined to budgets alone. It covers analyzing various economic policies from the gender perspective.

STEPS IN GENDER BUDGETING

Gender Budgeting is not easy undertakings but they can be very useful. They highlight a citizen's right to participate in decisions that affect their lives and their equal right to access public resources. Steps in gender budgeting is as under:

- An analysis of the situation for women and men and girls and boys (and the different sub-groups) in a given sector.
- Assessing existing government policies and programs in relation to these priorities including the extent to which they are responsive to marginalized groups.
- An assessment of the adequacy of budget allocations to implement the gender sensitive policies and programs.

- ▶ Monitoring the extent to which resources are used for their intended purpose and reach intended beneficiaries.
- ▶ Evaluating the impact of the resources spent on the problems acknowledged.
- ▶ Developing gender-sensitive policies to incorporate into the next budget.

WHY DO GENDER BUDGETING?

Budgets are universally accepted as a powerful tool in achieving development objectives and act as indicator of commitment to the stated policy of the Government. Because no other policy will work without money. National budgets reflect how governments assemble and allocate public resources, and how they plan to meet the social and economic needs of their people. The budgetary policy of the Government has a major role to play in achieving objectives of gender equality and growth through content and direction of Fiscal and Monetary policies. Thus gender responsive budgets policies can contribute to achieving the objectives of gender equality, human development and economic efficiency.

The purpose of gender budgeting put into effect is to calculate quantum and adequacy of allocation of resources for women and establish the extent to which gender commitments are translated in to budgetary commitments.

GENDER BUDGETING AROUND THE WORLD

- The concept of gender budgeting is a nineties trend that has been introduced mostly in commonwealth countries.
- Australia was the first country to implement a women's budget in 1984. Due to this there is a significant increase in spending in areas of importance to women. There was also a five-fold increase in child care places for working women.
- In Philippines, there was made a significant requirement that every government agency allocate at least five percent of its budget to gender and development initiatives.
- South Africa's women's Budget Initiatives was initiated in 1995 and involves NGOs, Parliamentarians and a wide range of researchers and advisors.
- Gender Budget initiatives in Tanzania (1997) and Uganda (1999) scrutinize the impacts of structural adjustment programs in these

countries and specifically focused on education and health.

- In South Korea, a gender budget initiative demonstrated that most of the beneficiaries of training and education programs were leaders of women from women's organizations.
- UK "From the wallet to purse". In United Kingdom, the government announced that from 2003 onwards the new Child Tax Credit would be paid to the main carer – usually a woman-rather than to the main earner – usually a man. The group supporting this used the slogan "From the wallet to purse" (men carry wallets while women carry purses) to argue that giving money to women was more efficient and in-line with government policy on reducing child poverty.

GENDER BUDGETING STATEMENT (GBS)

Which comprises the gender specific demands for grants has emerged as an important support tool which reflects on the flow of funds for women and encourages debate and discussion on Gender budgeting.

GENDER BUDGETING STATEMENT IN INDIA

Table 1: Gender budgeting statement

| Year | No. of Ministries | No. of Demands | Total Magnitude of Gender Budget(BE) (in Rs. Crore) | Percentage of Gender Budget to Total Budget |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---|---|
| 2005-06 | 9 | 10 | 24032.00 | 2.79% |
| 2006-07 | 18 | 24 | 28736.53 | 5.09% |
| 2007-08 | 27 | 33 | 31177.96 | 4.5% |
| 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 | 35 | 35 | 79257.87 | 4.46% |
| 2016-17 | 36 | | 90624.76 | 4.58% |
| Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) | | | 12.82 | |

Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development, Annual Report, Various Issues [13].

Table-1 shows the total magnitude of gender budget since 2005-06 to 2016-17 in India. Unquestionably there has been boost in gender budgeting statement in absolute terms, i.e., from Rs. 24032.00 Crore 2005-06) to Rs. 90624.76 Crore (2016-17). The total magnitude of gender budget as a percentage of the total budget has declined from 5.09 per cent (2006-07, Budget Estimate) to 4.58 per cent (2016-17, Budget Estimate). The coverage of 'Gender Budget

Statement' in terms of Union Government ministries/departments has increased from 10 in 2005-06 to 36 in 2016-17. Ten states in India have also introduced gender budgeting but the lack of a standardised nomenclature for the various schemes have made it difficult to imitate or assess them.

GENDER BUDGETING IN INDIA

A Budget that is working towards gender equality while it goes about allocating resources for the upcoming financial year, this involves reorientation and reprioritisation of the resources, in favour of women. In the recent year it has been brought to light that Gender inequality is the cause of inefficiency and which in turn would cost us the economic development of the country. Gender equality is also seen as integral part of the Indian constitution. Keeping this in mind the Indian Government has gone for Gender responsive budgeting since 2005. But the scenario has been rather discouraging. The allocation made towards "women and child development" has been declining over the past years. This has been visible in the Union Budget 2016-17. The total outlay of the General Budget Statement in 2016-17 is Rs.90, 625 crores as compared to Rs.79, 258 crores in 2015-16.

The department of women and child development came in to existence in 2006 as a separate ministry. This was done with the vision to "Empowered women living with dignity and contributing as equal partners in development in an environment free from violence and discrimination". The Union Budget 2016-17 saw no change on the funds that were allocated towards women since last year, it was been allocated Rs.17, 408 crores, a nominal increase from Rs.17, 352 crores in 2015-16. India ranks **127th** out of **152** nations in the **Gender Inequality Index** the expectations were of a budget that would works towards reducing the gap and making the budget women oriented, bridging the gap in all spheres, politics, education, health and employment. On 29th February, the Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley announced the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2016-17. This has been a mixed bag for the women, especially the working women. Facing a lot of negative response due to decline in the funds allocated towards women oriented schemes in the previous budget the government has increased the funding for women-specific scheme by 55% in the current budget.

Some of the popular existing schemes in which Government have raised funds and launched some new scheme for women welfare is mentioned below:

- **Indira Gandhi Matritva Yojana:** It is a maternity benefits program under the ministry of Women and Child Development, for pregnant and lactating women who are 19 years and above. It provides monetary compensation to make up for the loss of wage during childbirth and child care. Rs.400 crore has been allocated for the (IGMSY).
- **RAJIV GANDHI SCHEME FOR EMPOWERMENT OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS (RGSEAG):** The objective of this program was to empower the adolescent girls. It involves like skill education and vocational trainings for girls aged 16 years and above, along with improved nutrition and health education. The program has been allocated Rs.460 crores in the current year, a decline from the 2015-16 budget.
- **NIRBHAYA FUND:** Set up with the view of providing safety and security to the women of the country. It was announced in 2013 budget. In the 2016-17 budgets, Rs.500 crore has been allocated for the Nirbhaya Fund. Also, Rs.75 crore has been allocated for the establishment of the One Stop centres in the country. Women Helpline (WHL) will provide 24 hours emergency response to women in distress. Rs.25 crore has been allocated towards WHL. Both the schemes will be funded from the Nirbhaya Fund.
- **PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN:** Money allocated towards this has increased from Rs.127 crores in the previous budget to Rs.313 crores in 2016-17. This scheme includes:
 1. **National Mission for Empowerment of women: NMEW** was founded on 8th march 2010, on International Women's Day. With the sole purpose of promoting holistic development of women in the country. In the budget 2016, the allocation for NMEW has been doubled to Rs.50 crore.
 2. **Support to Training and Employment Programme: (STEP)** with the view of enhancing the earning capacity of the women above the age of 16 by providing them with training and enhance their skills which in turn would improve their employability.
- **Stand up India Scheme:** In the Union Budget 2016, Rs.500 crores has been allocated for SC/ST and women entrepreneurs. Stand up India Scheme aims specifically at encouraging entrepreneurship among women and the schedule cast and schedule tribes. The loans under this scheme will range from 1 lakh to 1crore.
- **THE MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MGNREGA):** It has been playing a crucial role in generating employment in rural India, and has shown a real improvement in the number of women getting employment. Rs.38, 500 has been allocated for

MGNREGA in 2016-17 an increase of Rs.3800 crore from the previous budget.

- **LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS CONNECTION IN THE NAME OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS:** In this years budget Rs.2000 crore have been kept aside to meet the cost of providing LPG connection in the name of the women in the rural areas.

GENDER BUDGETING – AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR WOMEN

Human Development report 1995, stresses that empowerment is about participation. Gender empowerment includes:

- Opening up access to decision-making
- Processes that make women to perceive
- Themselves as able and entitled to occupy
- Decision –making space.
- UN conferences have advocated that women's empowerment is central to sustainable development.

Any thriving strategy for women's empowerment will have to explanation for the fact that:

- Empowerment cannot be successfully achieved till all aspects social, economic and Political are addressed.
- Empowerment should cover women in all regions of the country
- Gender concerns have to be mainstreamed in all aspects of public expenditure and
- Policies as women are equal citizens in the country
- Participation of women in decision making is required given their specific needs and to recognize them as equal members of society

Being able to make decision on all affairs concerning themselves, their families, at the political level from the Panchayati Raj to the parliament level, to play an active role in the development of the nation.

CONCLUSION:

Gender budgeting is a strategic approach to revealing any gender specific disorders in budgetary policy. It develops approaches aimed at providing a gender equal reforming of the (National) Budget. For women,

gender budget exercise are empowering because they support their representative capacities Women can make use of gender budget analysis as an indicator of completion of their specific needs, and rights to health care, education and employment etc. In India, gender budgeting has drawn momentous attention from policy makers. With the production of the gender budgeting statement as part of the Union Budget documents, an institutionalized effort is being made to answer the basic question that how much of the government's total expenditure is flowing to women. Although the Indian government's experience of gender budgeting is widely used as an indication point for other gender budgeting initiatives. Today significant progress can be seen in the areas of women's development, their reproductive rights, health and gender equality but much more needs to be done.

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Corresponding Author

Archana Soni*

M.A, B.ED, NET Qualified