

# **Impact of Gender Budgeting on Women Empowerment**

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## **Abstract**

Real development process can only happen when a in the modern world considers the balance that exists between male and female. However in developing countries, they are very much deprived. The most famous way to bridge the gap is through Gender Budget Initiatives. First step towards this goal was taken by Australia, South Africa and Philippines followed by other developed and less developed countries. India has also taken initiative from its Eighth Plan onwards. This paper is a modest attempt to measure the effectiveness of Gender Budgeting as a tool for women empowerment.

## **Section I: Introduction**

Idea and concept of development do not only stand upon the quantitative measure which is basically growth, but also depends upon the qualitative factors like fulfillment of some of the basic human necessities to lead the livelihood, to give each and every people the support of basic infrastructure, food, health, education and safe drinking water. But practically it is too hard to provide all these at the same time by the government of a developing country due to its resource constraint. Gradually with time, the concept of development has changed. Poverty alleviation is a major point that is being taken care off by the countries all over the world. Even it is the main objective in WTO agenda. Policy makers have suggested that poverty, equity and gender are interrelated process and are very much interlinked with each other as both men and women are both integrated part of national and economic development policies and programs. Areas have already been identified where there exist gender inequalities and policies have been started to take

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place to narrow down the gap. Therefore, ample attention should be given to the requirements of women just to overcome their disadvantages.

Development measures can be taken only with the help of some valuable 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 a better position than their rural counterparts. 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 favor of this unprivileged 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 be taken. Budget is a very important and effective tool world wide to meet this gap. The first gender-responsive budget initiative was taken by the Australian government at the federal level in 1984 and fully executed in 1985.

Within a short period of time, the concept of Gender Budgeting has become a powerful tool for gender mainstreaming. 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. Alongside these developments, gender has emerged as an overarching socio-cultural variable considered at par with other factors such as caste, race, class etc. Gender is not synonymous to women, nor is it a zero-sum-game implying loss for men and to their status relative to each other (Lopez-Carlos and Zahidi, 2005).

“ ‘ Gender sensitive budgets’, ‘gender budgets’, and ‘women budgets’ refers to a variety of processes and tools aimed at facilitating an assessment of gendered impacts on government budgets. In the evolution of these exercises, the focus has been on auditing government budgets for their impact on women and girls. This has meant that, to date, the term ‘women’s budget’ has gained widest use. Recently, however, these budget exercises have begun using gender as a category of analysis so that terminology ‘gender sensitive budgets’ are not separate budgets for women or for men. They are attempts to breakdown or disaggregate, the government’s mainstream budget according to its impact on men and women and different groups of women and men with cognizance being given to the society’s underpinning gender relations”[Sharp, Rhonda: 1999].

Government initiative behind gender budgeting can be recognized as the step towards true economic development in terms of distributional justice of benefits and burdens among both men and women. “Gender budget initiatives analyse how governments raise and spend public money, with the aim of securing gender equality in decision –making about public resource allocation; and gender equality in the distribution of the impact of government budgets, both in their benefits and in their burdens. The impact of government budgets on the most disadvantaged groups of women is a focus of special attention.’ (IDRC, 2001)

## **Section II: Strategic Framework**

Budget allocation in terms of gender budgeting is relatively newer concept. Several countries all over the world adopted gender budgeting as a qualitative improvement in their development issue but pioneering work was done by Australia and South Africa. Australian government adopted a “**Three-way categorization**” to address the issue. This approach distinguishes between -

1. Gender-specific expenditure;
2. Equal opportunity expenditure for civil servants;
3. Gender expenditure (the rest) considered in terms of its gender impact.

In case of South Africa, government has gone for a “**Five Step Approach**”. These five steps basically are -

1. Analyzing the situation of women, men, girls and boys;
2. Assessing the gender-responsiveness of policies;
3. Assessing budget allocations;
4. Monitoring spending and service delivery;
5. Assessing outcomes.

The gender-responsive budgeting initiative in the **Philippines** also begun in 1995 as part of a gender and development movement. The nation’s General Appropriations Act, which approves the national budget, required all national agencies to set aside 5 percent of their budgets for gender and development. In 1998, local governments required to do likewise (Flor and Lizares-Si 2002). This 5 percent allocation “was meant to provide national agencies and local governments...with a budget for programmes that would enhance the ...capability for gender sensitive planning and budgeting”(For and Lizares-Si2002).

We have already mentioned above that the governments of Australia, South Africa and Philippines have done pioneered work in the field. The experiences have been followed by gender-responsive budgeting initiatives throughout the world (table-1).

The awareness has been generated in different parts of the world. Various countries have taken the initiatives to bridge the gap, through Gender Budgeting, at their national or more grass root level.

**Table 1: Countries those have undertaken Gender-Budgeting Initiatives at the National or Sub national Level**

<b>Africa</b>	<b>America</b>	<b>Asia</b>	<b>Europe</b>	<b>Middle East</b>	<b>Pacific</b>
Bostswana	Barbados	Afganistan	Austria	Isreal	Australia
Egypt	Belize	Bangladesh	Croatia	Lebanon	Fiji
Kenya	Bolivia	India	France		Marshall
Malawi	Brazil	Indonesia	Germany		Islands
Mauritius	Canada	Malaysia	Ireland		Samoa
Morocco	Chile	Nepal	Italy		
Mozambia	Ecuador	Pakistan	Former Yugoslav Republics		
Namibia	El Salvador	Philippines	Norway		
Nigeria	Mexico	Sri Lanka	Republic of Macedonia		
Rwanda	Peru	Thailand	Russian Federation		
Senegal	St. Kitts-Nevis	Vietnam	Scotland		
South Africa	United States		Serbia and Montenegro		
Swaziland			Spain		
Tanzania			Switzerland		
Uganda			United Kingdom		
Zambia					
Zimbabwe					

*Source: Budlender and Hewitt (2003)*

At present the budgets of 22 states of India are implementing Gender Responsive Budget initiatives. In India the strategic framework for gender sensitivity in resource allocation

has been earmarking a specified minimum quantum of funds/benefits for women in all women related sectors, supplemented by targeted interventions for women in various sectors like health, education, employment, training, microcredit etc.(Table-2)

**Table-2: Targeted Intervention for Women in Various Sectors (Rs. in crores)**

Ministry/Department	2004-2005 Budget			2005-2006 Budget		
	Plan	Non-Plan	Total	Plan	Non-Plan	Total
<b>Department of Family welfare: Family Welfare Services</b>						
1.Rural Family Welfare Services	1532.71	-	1532.71	1869.20		1869.20
2.Urban Family Welfare Services	121.00	-	121.00	133.08		133.08
3.Reproductive and Child Health Project	710.51	-	710.51	1380.68		1380.68
4.Strengthening of Immunisation Programme and Eradication policy	1186.40	-	1186.40	1304.60		1304.60
Transfer to Union Territory Govt. Assistance for Nutrition Prog. for Adolescent Girls-Delhi and Pondichery	2.03	-	2.03	2.03	-	2.03
Department of Elementary Education and Literacy						
Mahila Samakhya	30.00	-	30.00	30.00	-	30.00
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya	100.00	-	100.00	225.00	-	225.00
Department of Secondary Education and Higher education						
Access and Equity	30.00	-	30.00	9.00	-	9.00
Department of Women and Child Development A] Child Welfare						

Integrated Child development	1947.44	-	1947.44	3315.25	-	3315.25
Day care centers	27.00	14.00	41.00	28.50	13.00	41.5
National Institute of Public cooperation and child development	5.25	6.50	11.75	4.35	7.00	11.35
Other schemes of child welfare	14.10	.51	14.61	13.55	0.57	14.12
<b>B  Women Welfare</b> Condensed courses for women education	5.25	-	5.25	5.40	-	5.40
Balika Samridhi Yojana	0.03	-	0.03	0.03	-	0.03
Hostels for working women	9.00	-	9.00	6.00	-	6.00
Support to training and employment programme	22.50	-	22.50	13.50	-	13.50
Swawlamban	22.50	-	22.50	14.00	-	14.00
Short stay homes	13.50	1.50	15.00	13.50	1.50	15.00
Awareness Generation prog.	4.50	-	4.50	4.50	-	4.50
National Commission for women	5.40	1.60	7.00	3.60	2.17	5.77
Swashakti project	25.00	-	25.00	5.00	-	5.00
Rastriya Mahila Kosh	1.00	-	1.00	0.01	-	0.01
Swayarnasiddha	18.00	-	18.00	18.50	-	18.50
Schemes for rescue of victims of trafficking	3.00	-	3.00	0.25	-	0.25
Other prog. of women's welfare	-	0.20	0.20	-	0.15	0.15
Nutrition	1.83	5.93	7.76	5.07	6.46	11.53
<b><u>Ministry of labour and employment</u></b>						
Improvement in working conditions of child/women labour	99.31	-	99.31	125.05	-	125.05
<b><u>Department of Rural Development</u></b>						
Swarnajayanti gram swarozgar yojana	360.00	-	360.00	344.90	-	344.90
Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar yojana	1377.00	-	1377.00	1080.00	-	1080.00
<b><u>Department of Drinking water supply</u></b>						

Accelerated rural water supply prog.	2610.00	0.07	2610.07	3645.00	0.07	3645.07
Rural Sanitation	360.00	-	360.00	630.00	-	630.00
<b><u>Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment</u></b>						
Girl hostels	22.00	-	22.00	0.01	-	0.01
Child welfare schemes	22.20	5.40	27.60	29.20	5.35	34.55
Education work for prohibition and drug abuse prevention	26.09	-	26.09	30.64	-	30.64
Prevention and control of juvenile social maladjustment	18.90	-	18.90	0.01	-	0.01

*Source: Budget Report 2005-06*

### **Section III: Gender-based Resource Allocation – Eighth Plan Onwards**

Indian plans from its inception concentrated on economic growth through the process of industrialization. The other objective of the plan was the poverty eradication and self-sufficiency in food production. The Eighth Plan (1992-97) highlighted for the first time a gender perspective and 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 to development from different sectors should not by pass women and special programmes on women should complement to the general development programmes. The latter, in turn, should reflect greater gender sensitivity.

The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) adopted 'Women Component Plan' as one of the major strategies and directed both the Central and State Governments to ensure 'not less than 30 percent of the funds/benefits are earmarked in all the women's related sectors. Special vigil was advocated 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 Tenth Plan reinforced commitment to gender budgeting to establish its gender-differential impact and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments.

“...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 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 general development sectors.”

**Objective:**

The objective of this article is to find out how effective the gender budgeting as a tool for narrowing inequality gaps between men and women. Here we define Gender-Responsive budgeting, discuss its importance, and analyse its potentiality in the field of women empowerment.

#### **Section IV: Gender Responsive Budget Initiative**

A gender –budget initiative always involves a gender analysis of some dimension of the raising and use of public money. But there is no single way of doing this and a number of analytical tools can be used (Elson 1998; Budlender and Sharp 1998).

Gender Responsive Budget initiatives seek to create a direct linkage between social and economic policies through the application of a gender analysis to the formulation and implementation of government budgets. Factors, such as race and ethnicity, caste and class, age or geography could additionally disaggregate Gender responsive budget initiatives.

The Commonwealth Secretariat exercise, for reasons of resource constraints and the limitations in the existing body of work, focused on the analysis of public expenditure. This involved the separation and examination of government expenditures in the following three categories (Sharp and Broomhill, 1990):

**A.** Gender specific expenditures: these are allocations to programmes that are specifically targeted to groups of women, men, boys or girls, such as programmes on men’s health or violence against women.

**B.** Expenditures that promote gender equality within the public service: these are allocations to equal employment opportunities, such as programmes that promote equal representation of women in management and decision making across all occupational sectors, as well as equitable pay and conditions of service. This is distinct from programmes that promote the employment of equal numbers of women and men.

**C.** General or mainstream expenditures: these are allocations that are not covered in the two categories above (A & B). This analysis focuses on the differential impact of the sectoral allocations on women and men, boys and girls. Although the analysis is challenging due to the lack of gender-disaggregated data in many instances, these expenditures are also the most critical because more than 99 percent of government expenditure usually falls into this category.

**The six broad categories of tools that the Commonwealth Gender responsive budget initiative has used to integrate a gender analysis into the budget are:**

- ✓ Gender-Aware Policy Appraisal
- ✓ Beneficiary Assessments
- ✓ Public Expenditure Incidence Analysis
- ✓ Gender-disaggregated Analysis of the Budget on Time Use
- ✓ Gender-Aware Medium-Term Economic Policy Framework
- ✓ Gender Responsive Budget Statement

## **Section V: The logical basis for Gender Responsive Budgets**

A gender responsive budget is an important tool for ensuring greater consistency between economic goals and social commitments. Some of the more compelling justifications are presented below, taking into account economic, political, legal and rights-based factors

including mandates from the various international agreements and declarations to which Commonwealth members and other states are signatories. These are:

**1.Efficiency**

**2.Good Governance**

**3.Right to information**

**4.International development Commitments and commonwealth Mandates**

**5.Gender Mainstreaming**

**Efficiency**

The most widely used argument for undertaking Gender Responsive Budget (GRB) initiatives is that they lead to a more efficient use of resources. Gender analyses of government budgets are crucial for improved targeting, thereby avoiding false economies, that is where attempts to reduce or contain financial costs in one sector may transfer or perpetuate actual costs in terms of time use for individuals and groups and lower their overall productivity (Elson, 2000).

The framework for GRB analysis involves the examination of inputs, activities, outputs and impacts of government interventions and provides comprehensive feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of public expenditure. This results in a more optimal use of limited public resources and improved budgetary performance.

**Good Governance**

While good governance is defined in different ways it is primarily considered to be a process of improving opportunities for the delivery of goods and services to the people in a fair, just, effective and responsible way.

Clearly good governance is a prerequisite for and an essential component of sustainable human development. By promoting accountability and transparency, it has also had a direct as well as an indirect impact upon the reduction of opportunities and incentives for corruption. Fostering these important aspects and values of good governance in the public domain requires a more participatory approach in the design, implementation and

evaluation of projects and programmes. This strengthens the mechanisms for inputs of and reactions by communities and associations of local beneficiaries and users, particularly women in the case of Gender Responsive Budget work. (Dollar et al, 1999a). Gender responsive governance depends upon dynamic and active partnerships in the social and political forums that elaborate and redefine public policy. This requires following:

- Strengthened role of women's groups in negotiation processes at different levels.
- Identification of new allies and partners, especially supportive men.
- Enhanced donor and development agencies support.
- Improved access to public information through the mass media and new information and communication technologies.
- Increased national capacities in particular national mechanisms for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women to participate in policy analysis and dialogue.
- Enhanced accountability and participation at the local level, by giving greater importance to decentralization processes and decentralized development cooperation.
- Strengthened capacity for gender analysis and governance

### **The Right to Information**

The demands for transparency and accountability have also been articulated in debates regarding the right to information as a global public good.

A mass-based organisation called Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sanghathan or MKSS, in one of India's poorest areas, seems to have given new meaning to the demand for the right-to-information in the context of development. Since 1990 MKSS has sought to ensure transparency and accountability in development projects of the government at the panchayat (the lowest local government unit). They now convene public hearings, which elected official records of expenditure and villagers' own experiences as labourers on

public-works projects as applicants for anti poverty schemes and as consumers in ration shops. (Jenkins and Goetz, 1999)

### **International Commitment and Commonwealth Mandates**

The Commonwealth commitment to gender equality was declared by Heads of Government at Harare in 1991 as a fundamental principle. The Promotion of gender equality by Commonwealth member states reflects that governments, as the representatives of the democratic will of the people, the principal architects of development strategies and the signatories to these global declarations, have primary responsibility for implementing initiatives to promote gender equality.

### **Gender Mainstreaming**

GRB initiatives were designed as an application of gender mainstreaming, current international approach to promoting equality between women and men. As budgets involve all government ministries and departments, GRB initiatives provide a practical opportunity for government officials across ministries to develop skills to apply gender tools to their work programmes. In addition, the focus on engaging Ministries of Finance, given their pre-eminent role in budget management, introduces gender issues into the core of both government operations and financial management.

## **Section VI: Gender Budgeting: Opportunities and threats**

So gender budgeting initiatives are tools and process designed to facilitate a gender analysis in the formulation of government budgets and the allocations of resources. The way in which national budgets are usually formulated ignores the different socially determined roles and responsibilities and capabilities of men and women

Progress towards gender equality is slow and this is in part due to the failure to attach money to policy commitments. Overall research shows that not enough attention is given to the impact of allocated resources and this serves to perpetuate gender biases, although budgets offer the potential to transfer gender inequalities. Good policy requires understanding both the impact of policy and how it might be better designed to achieve outcomes which meet the needs of men, women and girls and boys as well as different groups of women, men and children.

Women's unique role in family development and their contribution tends to be taken for granted and never valued in economic sense unless she is the direct recipient of income or possesses income yielding assets. Her problems are not only social but also economic. There is no doubt that educational situation of girls and women has improved in the decade of 1991-2001. However, gender gap in literacy has persisted over the years in rural and urban areas (Table-3). It is found that in rural areas male and female literacy rate is 71.40 percent and 46.70 percent whereas in urban areas it is 86.70 percent and 73.20 percent.

**Table-3: Literacy Rates by Sex and Religion (1951-2001)**

Year	Literacy Rate (Percentage)		
	Persons	Male	Female
<b>1951 (5+years)</b>			
Rural	12.10	19.02	4.87
Urban	34.59	45.60	22.33
Total	18.33	27.16	8.86
<b>1961 (5+years)</b>			
Rural	22.50	34.30	10.10
Urban	54.40	66.00	40.50
Total	28.30	40.40	15.35
<b>1971 (5+years)</b>			
Rural	27.90	48.60	15.50
Urban	60.20	69.80	48.80

Total	34.45	45.96	21.97
<b>1981 (7+years)</b>			
Rural	36.00	49.60	21.70
Urban	67.20	76.70	56.30
Total	43.57	56.38	29.76
<b>1991 (7+years)</b>			
Rural	44.70	57.90	30.60
Urban	73.10	81.10	64.00
Total	52.21	64.13	39.29
<b>2001 (7+years)</b>			
Rural	59.40	71.40	46.70
Urban	80.30	86.70	73.20
Total	65.38	75.85	54.16

*Source: Government of India 2001a.*

In case of employment as on March 31,2002, 4.95 million women were employed in the organised sector (both public and private). In 1991, Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR) was very low at 22.3 percent, while it was 51.6 percent for males. According to the provisional results of the Census 2001 there is a moderate rise in FWPR to 25.6 percent. Female Participation in the workforce varies across rural-urban areas. According to the 58<sup>th</sup> Round (July-December 2004) Survey of NSSO the female workforce participation rate declined in rural areas to 281 per thousand from 299 in the 55<sup>th</sup> Round (July 1999-2000). In urban areas, there was a marginal increase from 139 to 140. It has been found by Time Use surveys that women carry a disproportionately greater burden of work than men and since women are responsible for a greater share of non-SNA (System of National Accounts) work in the care economy (i.e. house based work which is difficult to measure) they enter the market already overburdened with work (Report on Gender Diagnosis and Budgeting in India of National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, December, 2001).

The census 2001 data shows that in the process of gender equality and empowerment of women, a lot more needs to be done. The reality may be worse because the employment

statistics are doubtful, faulty and unreliable. A lot of women's work is not counted as work in its economic sense, particularly for rural women who spent most of their time and energy in household activities and some unproductive activities. Many of them work in unorganized sector.

## **Section VII: Gender Budgeting for Women's Empowerment-an alternative strategy**

A clarification of the term "empowerment" needs to be made here, as it has become the current watchword of high-powered executives, business tycoons, personality developers as well as those involved in gender education. It is a process, not something that can be given to people. It does not mean the bestowal of power on disempowered people.

Longwe (1990) has given the following five levels of empowerment of women,

1. *Welfare*- concerns meeting the basic needs without attempting to solve the underlying structural causes.
2. *Access*- access to the resources such as education, opportunities, land and credit
3. *Conscientization*- recognition of structural and institutional discrimination as the cause for low socio-economic status and of women's own role in reinforcing the restrictive system.
4. *Participation*- through mobilizing collective action, women gain increased empowerment to make decisions alongside man.
5. *Control*- being able to make decision on all affairs concerning themselves, their families, at the political level from the Panchayat Raj to the Parliament level, to play an active role in the development process of the nation and be recognised and appreciated for their contribution.

Awareness about gender budgeting and policy level commitment to women's empowerment is at a peak today. Various enabling measures like setting up of gender budgeting cells in Ministries of Government of India, reflection of a gender budget statement in the Union Budget 2005-06 and adoption of the women's component plan by some states have been undertaken. The mid term appraisal of the Tenth Plan has

identified adverse child sex ratio, high MMR, wide gender gap in literacy and wage rates, violence against women and female feticide and infanticide as burning issues for women besides vulnerability of women in low paid hazardous and insecure jobs in the unorganised sector and in export processing/special economic zones. There is no denying that participative budgeting with women being directly involved in the decisions related to planning, financing and programme implementation is the ideal situation.

### **An Alternative Strategy**

The strategy is based on Macro level planning for micro needs. The gender budgeting became bottom up approach. That means it is not the allocation of resources in the budget at national and or state levels that has to be seen but the resources that flow to and are available to women at the field level i.e. the women in the villages, cities and towns of the country that need to be monitored. Planning for empowerment should then be based on reality check on what is the level of empowerment of women at the field level based on regional geographic spatial maps.

Gender Responsive budget is important because evidence suggests that the economic gains of gender equality lead to increased output and better development of people's capacities. Women's economic empowerment could provide the possibility for all countries to have some combination of increased productivity less stress and better overall health. On the other hand, women will be benefited in a way with lesser strain, greater involvement in important decision-making and that in turn will pave the path of true development.

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