



Women Empowerment Through Gender Budgeting in India

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ABSTRACT

India is second largest country after China with 1.21 billion population consisting 52 percent male & 48 percent females. Females are almost half of the population with decadal growth rate 18.3 percent as compare to male with 17.1 percent. But still women lag behind men in many fields like education, health, status, economic freedom etc. In current union budget, investment plans in social and rural sectors will be focused on infrastructure, health insurance, farmer's income schemes as well as education and skills development. The total funds allocated in the Gender Budget Statement (GBS) in 2016-17 are Rs. 90,625 crore, while the allocations for the Ministry of Women and Child Development are Rs. 17,408 crore. Gender equality can be insured with proper planning, budgeting and auditing process.

In the above regard, the present paper is a humble attempt to understand the govt. intuition towards the women empowerment. Present paper will also highlight some issues regarding the women empowerment through gender budgeting in India.

KEYWORDS : Gender Budgeting, women empowerment, health & education.

INTRODUCTION

The economic development of any nation depends on the physical, human and financial resources. These resources except human are limited and achievement of broader objectives of any country including India like faster, sustainable & inclusive growth are required equal women participation in current scenario. India can achieve her Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) with the proper strategic investment in human capital because the return on this is much higher in comparison to others investment. India is second largest country after China with 1.21 billion population consisting 52 percent male & 48 percent females. Women constitutes nearly 50 percent of India's population, but still their status is low which is reflected by low literacy rate (67 percent), sex ratio (940 women against 1000 men) & declining participation in employment (only 22 percent). Earlier it was a misconception that women are made for household work only and she should involve herself in up keeping of house and upbringing of her children only. But gradually the multifaceted role of women has been realized due to the challenges accepted by the women which are imposed by our society. In current Union budget with its 'nine pillar' theme, the finance minister gave equal importance to all sectors of the economy. Investment in social and rural sectors will be focused on infrastructure, health insurance, farmer's income schemes as well as education and skills development. It also stress that efforts must be directed towards proper planning, budgeting and auditing process that can contribute to gender equality. For this purpose 'Gender-Responsive Budgeting' in 2005 adopted as a method of planning, programming and budgeting that helps advance gender equality and women rights. Women issues and concern are more important due to growing violence against them. The Global Gender Gap Index 2015, on the basis of economic participation and opportunity, education, political empowerment and health & survival, ranked India with a score of 0.664 at 108 out of 145 countries. Even after 68th years of independence, violence against women and girls are still persisting both in public and private sector. Gender budgeting can be a powerful tool for reducing this inequalities prevailing in our society through proper resource allocation. In the next session of paper we will discuss about literature on the topic, objectives of the study, research methodology, present status of women, budget provisions & their implications.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are numbers of study which highlight the role of women empowerment in the reduction of gender inequality. The main studies are:

The 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development or Rio+20 affirmed that women have central, transformative roles in sustainable development, and that gender equality must be a priority for action in areas including economic, social and political participation and

leadership (UN Women Annual Report, 2012-13).

Duflo E. (2011) Women's Empowerment and Economic Development, National Bureau of Economic Research Cambridge The study argues that the inter relationships of the Empowerment and Development are probably too weak to be self-sustaining and that continuous policy commitment to equality for its own sake may be needed to bring about equality between men and women.

Rihani et al. (2006) in their study explore that educated women are better informed about their legal rights and how to exercise them and thus are more politically active and can participate equally in societal and political decision-making processes. Women's levels of education determine their chances of becoming parliamentarians.

Venkata Ravi and Venkatraman (2005) focused on the effects of SHG on women participation and exercising control over decision making both in family matters and in group activities.

Several studies show that excluding women's input into development by inhibiting their involvement in education, leadership, finance, and social improvement has a negative impact on development (Lucas, 2001; Okojie, 1996).

In light of above literature, sustainable economic development can be possible with women education, which maintain balance between family & office life and provide base to economic independence and good status in the society.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Following are the main objective of the study:-

To examine the women status in our society.

To analyze the rationale of gender budgeting in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is conceptual in nature and based on the secondary data which has been collected from articles, Journals, Books, Magazines and Websites.

PRESENT STATUS OF WOMEN

Violence against women is the outcome of low status in our society. Literacy rate, sex ratio and women's participation in labour are some developments indicators which measures the status of women. So now we are discussing these indicators, literacy rate one of the development indicators has power to change the mind-set of our male dominated society.

TABLE 1: LITERACY RATE IN INDIA (IN PER CENTAGE)

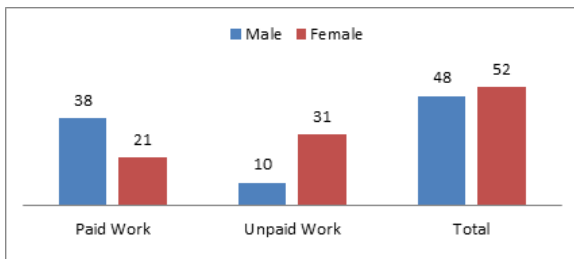
YEAR	MALES	FEMALES	% AGE GROWTH RATE IN MALE LITERACY RATE	% AGE GROWTH RATE IN FEMALE LITERACY RATE
1951	27.2	8.9	-----	-----
1961	40.4	15.4	48.53	73.034
1971	46	22	13.86	42.857
1981	56.4	29.8	22.61	35.455
1991	64.1	39.3	13.65	31.879
2001	75.3	53.7	17.47	36.641
2011	80.9	64.6	7.437	20.298

Source: Census of India-2011

Table 1 indicates the literacy rate in India since 1951. In 1951 male literacy rate was 27.2 percent it increases to 80.9 percent in 2011. There is 53.7 percent point increase in male literacy rate. Female literacy rate was just 8.9 percent in 1951 it increases to 64.6 percent in 2011. There is 55.7 percent point increase in female literacy rate. Decadal growth rate in male and female literacy rate is also shown in table 1. It is clear that growth rate in female literacy rate is higher than male literacy rate.

Second development indicator for women status is sex ratio. Everyone in our society wants boy child nobody prefer girl child. In the census of 2001, sex ratio was 933 females per 1000 males. In which further rural sex ratio is 946 and urban areas has 900 females per 1000 females. In comparison to this, in 2011, sex ratio was 940 females per 1000 males. If we talk about rural sex ratio in 2011 were 947 females per 1000 boys & 926 per 1000 males in urban areas. This improvement shows nowadays our society is focusing on girl child and traditions are changing day by day.

Figure 1: Global share of men and women in Paid/Unpaid Work (in %)



Source: Human Development Report, 2015

Last development indicator for this is participation of women in labour. Women's participation is less 21 per cent while male contribution is 38 per cent in paid work. In unpaid work women participation 31 per cent and male contribution is 10 per cent. Less participation in paid work is main cause in the declining status of the women.

PROVISIONS OF CURRENT UNION BUDGET FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The finance minister of India announces the current budget with the strong hope of 'Transform India' through their 'nine pillar theme'. This hope can be reality with a proper strategic investment in all the strata of society. For this, allocations to women ministries and 'Gender Budget Statement' (GBS) can help assess the gender responsiveness of the budget 2016-17. The total funds reported in the Gender Budget Statement in 2016-17 are Rs.90, 625 crore, while the allocations for the Ministry of Women and Child Development are Rs. 17,408 crore. The provisions for women empowerment are:

Allocations to National Mission for empowerment of women have doubled to Rs. 50 crore.

To stop violence against women, allocations for various schemes to combat trafficking and empowering adolescent girls have increased.

Importance (Rs. 400 crore) is given to core activities for the improvement of women participation in labour market, such as Integrated Child Development Services and Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY).

Women participation in MGNREGA as Employer is 55 percent, so its budget has increased to Rs. 38500 crore as against Rs. 34600 crore in 2015-16.

In the 'Ujjwala' scheme, Rs. 2000 crore set aside for LPG connections in the name of poor households (approx. 1.5 crore). It can be prove as a health concern of women especially in rural areas where women use wood or agricultural residues for daily cooking. This household pollution is the main cause of five lakh deaths in India every year as per WHO.

To empower SC & ST through entrepreneurship, Rs. 500 crore allocated under 'Stand up India Scheme' which can provide benefit at least 2.5 lakh entrepreneur especially women.

These provisions are only indicative; there are so many other provisions for women empowerment in current union budget. These provisions have no meaning until and unless we will not discuss the implications of these schemes.

IMPLICATION OF GENDER BUDGETING IN INDIA

The implications of budget for women can be analyzed through social sector spending, where specific head are not for especially women, women specific programs & allocations and allocations under the gender budget statement of different ministries and departments. Due to recommendations of 14th finance commission, share of state in tax revenue of union govt. has increased from 32 percent to 42 percent. This initiative can increase the spending of state and centre-state on women specific issues. So, first we will analyze social sector spending, which is core investment of govt. in education, health, sanitation, housing etc. India is known as 'Youngistan' because its economically active population (15-59 years) has increased from 57.7 per cent to 63.3 per cent during 1991 to 2013, as per Sample Registration System (SRS) data for 2013. If we want maximum output from this 'demographic dividend' in the years ahead, it is imperative that investments in social infrastructure are made in appropriate measure to achieve the desired educational and health outcomes. Trends of expenditure in these sectors are around 3-4 percent and less than 2 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) respectively. (Figure 2 & 3)

Figure 2: Expenditure on education by Government

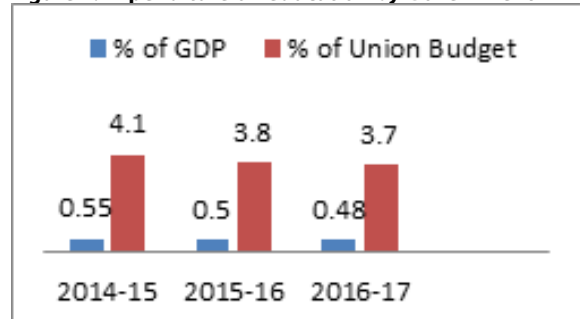
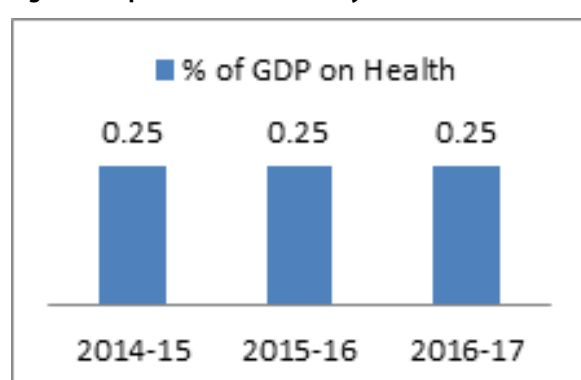


Figure 3: Expenditure on health by Government



Source: CBGA, Analysis of Union Budget 2016-17

In the above figures we can see that expenditure on both the sector not have enough, some challenges like in all kind of education, availability of qualified teacher is rare, which further raising question of quality education. As like health sectors have also some bed implications like lack of accessibility to rural areas even after such measures, expensive treatment, and unethical practices by doctors etc. The other dimension is spending on women specific programs and allocation by various ministries exclusively. (Table 2) In this table we can see that spending on Agriculture education and Research cut down by Rs.9.18crore, which is not a good initiative because females are, lag behind in education in comparison to male. Further Nirbhaya Fund attracted additional Rs.500 crore, which is a welcome step to stop the crime against women. Reduction in Health & family welfare is not a good step because some issues related to women are much serious like anemia, pregnancy etc. Allocation to Indira AwasYojana (Rural Housing) has increased from Rs.10025 crore to Rs. 15000 crore, it can help govt. for achieving their dream of housing for all by 2022 & provide benefits to widows and poor women in the form of proper sanitation.

Table 2: Allocations for Women exclusive programs by Ministries (In Rs. Crore)

Ministry/department	2015-16 (BE)	2016-17(BE)	Difference in allocation
Agriculture Education and Research	44.23	35.05	-9.18
Ministry of Finance-Nirbhaya fund	1000	500	+500*
Health & Family Welfare	3852.11	-	-3852.11
Rural Development-Indira AwasYojana (Rural Housing)	10025	15000	+4725
Other ministries	1735.77	1876.96	+141.19
Total of all women exclusive allocation	16657.11	17412.01	+754.9

Source: Union Budget 2016-17, expenditure budget, vol. 1, part A of Gender Budget Statement.

***it is improvement over last budget.**

Women and child development department is nodal authority which deal with women specific issues and take initiative to improve the conditions of women in our society. There are some exclusive programs which are introduced by this department (Table 3). Allocation for Hostel for working women has reduced from Rs. 30 crore to Rs. 28 crore; it can be badly affect working efficiency of women, lack of proper and safe sanitation facilities are main reasons for increase in the dropout rate of girl students from schools. If we make comparison with last budget, allocations for many schemes are constant, poor & worst or declined like STEP, IGMSY etc. Some schemes got maximum allocation from this budget like SABLA, One Stop Crisis Centre, Swadar and BetiBachao- BetiPadhao. Allocation for SABLA can be boon for adolescent girl for meeting the nutritional and other health concern.

Table 3: Allocations for Women exclusive programs of Ministry of Women and Child Development (In Rs. Crore)

Programmes/schemes	2015-16(BE)	2016-17(BE)	Difference in allocation
Hostels for working women	30	28	-2
STEP	30	30	0
CSWB	73.57	71.28	-2.29
RashtriyaMahilaKosh	0	1	+1
BetiBachao-BetiPadhao	73(RE)	100	+27
One stop crisis centre	2	75	+73
Swadar	50	100	+50
Gender budgeting	2	2	0

Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of adolescent girls (SABLA)	10	460	+450
Women's helpline	1	25	+24
Indira Gandhi MatritvaSahyogYojana (IGMSY)	438	400	-38
NMEW	25	50	+25

Source: Union Budget 2016-17, expenditure budget, vol. 1, part A of Gender Budget Statement

Apart from the women exclusive programs there are some other allocation in which 30 percent or more women are beneficiaries (Table 4). There is a significant change in Agriculture & cooperation, now govt. has recognized the role of women farmers in India. In male dominated society, to empower SC & ST through entrepreneurship, Rs. 500 crore allocated under 'Stand up India Scheme' which can provide benefit at least 2.5 lakh entrepreneur especially women.

Table 4: Allocations for programs with 30 percent or more Women beneficiaries by Ministries/ Departments (In Rs. Crore)

Ministries/department	2015-16 (BE)	2016-17(BE)	Difference in allocation
Agriculture & cooperation	3539.06	4084.20	+545.11
Health & family welfare	10396.92	17116.35	+6719.43
School education and literacy	12472.07	12565.80	+93.73
Higher education	7446.34	8016.21	+569.87
Labour and employment	250	140	-110
MSME	412.37	526.54	+114.17
Minority affairs	2262.68	2319	+56.32
Panchayati Raj	0	196.50	+196.50
Rural Development	12817.68	14333.33	+1515.65
Social Justice and Empowerment	1997.08	1927.68	-69.4
Tribal affairs	1487.2	1397.02	-90.18
Women and child development	8072.36	9082.05	+1009.69
Youth affairs and sports	99.37	136.98	+37.61
Others ministries/department	1347.63	1371.09	+23.46
Total	62600.76	73212.75	+10611.99

Source: Union Budget 2016-17, expenditure budget, vol. 1, part B of Gender Budget Statement.

Some scheme which can contribute maximum in gender equality has given main focus in this budget. These are Health & Family welfare, Rural Development, Higher education and women & child development. If we have true spirit to reduce gender inequalities than there is strong need to strengthen the women education, health & social justice.

CONCLUSION WITH POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Women are the second wheel of the society which bears much responsibility not only of family but also of working formal & informal organizations, still they are lag behind in literacy, health facilities, economic freedom and participation in labor etc. An educated woman is more confident of her ability to make a decision in family and at workforce. Economic independence transfers the control on economic resources which further provide independent decision making like a change agent within the community and beyond. Though govt. had taken the initiative in the form of Gender Budgeting since 2005, yet there is a strong need to take some sincere effort for removing the gender inequality. Gender budgeting can be a powerful tool for women empowerment. Some women exclusive schemes have positive implications like Nirbhaya Fund, Rural Housing & SABLA, but we need to fix the responsibility of implementing authority with proper planning and controlling procedure. Last but not least, if we are truly want to reduce gender inequality then we must start this from our own home, then we can think about sustainable economic development of the country.

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