Volume : 5 | Issue : 8 | August 2016 • ISSN No 2277 - 8179 | IF : 3.508 | IC Value : 69.48

Gender Budgeting : A Tool for Gender Mainstreaming

Economics

KEYWORDS : Gender equality, Gender budgeting.

Rubab Fatema Nomani Dept. of Economics, DHSK College, Dibrugarh, Assam: India. 786001

ABSTRACT

Women world over continue to remain disadvantaged as compared to men, in major economic, social and political indicators. Gender mainstreaming is a crucial political agenda of most governments of the world. It is increasingly being realized that gender-equality not only renders social benefits but it is critical to economic growth as well. Budgets are basic tools of fiscal policies and can perpetuate, aggravate or redress social inequalities. Gender Budgeting is a powerful tool for achieving gender mainstreaming. In this paper an attempt has been made to critically examine the existing literature on GB, survey some experiences worldwide with Gender Budgeting and suggest some measures for the success of Gender Budgeting.

1. Introduction: Gender refers to the socially constructed distinctions between women and men. It is a distinct and powerful form of social stratification that often acts in conjunction with other social stratifiers like class, race, caste, religion, leading to differential spaces, experiences and realities for women and men. Gender Budgeting is a powerful tool for achieving gender mainstreaming, in order to ensure that the benefits of development reach women as much as men. It seeks to achieve a gender-equal distribution of resources in terms of not only money but also time, as well as paid and/or unpaid work. It addresses not only public institutions but also industrial enterprises, associations and NGOs.

The paper is divided into three sections. Section 1 is a brief introduction, Section 2 discusses the concept and rationale of gender budgeting. Section 3 hints on the frame work of gender budgeting. Section 4 discusses the gender budget experiences around the world including India, followed by section 5, the conclusion.

2. The Concept and Rationale

Macro-economic policies can contribute to narrowing or widening gender gaps in areas such as education, health, employment etc. Budgets are important and basic tools of fiscal policies and have the potential to perpetuate, aggravate or redress social inequalities. Budgets are not 'gender neutral', rather they are 'gender blind' for they do not address the gender specific consequences arising from the structural differences in the ways women and men relate to the economy. Budgets that do not take these differences into account can accentuate gender inequality (Elson, 2002).

The European Parliament Resolution defines Gender Budgeting as '. . . Gender Budgeting [is] the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process; this entails 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'(European Commission, 2003).

'Gender-sensitive' budgets, are not separate budgets for women and for men; they are attempts to disaggregate/dissect the government mainstream budget according to its impact on women and men, taking into account the underpinning gender-relations(Sharp and Broomhill, 2002). A gendered analysis of budgets would essentially be an impact analysis of public budgets, at various levels and for different sectors, in terms of cost and benefits to women and men separately.

However, integration of gender into budgets is not just a social issue but also an economic issue, for, as has been demonstrated, such an approach can improve the efficiency of the public expenditure through more effective targeting, increase revenue through increased women's productivity, improve equity, complement poverty-alleviation measures, institute public sector reforms and improve macro-economic management. Studies show that programmes and policies designed to improve women's economic opportunities lead to higher rates of economic growth and greater economic stability, by producing positive 'externalities', that is, cost and benefits resulting from economic activities that are not taken into account by the market (Stotsky 2006). The Millennium Development Goals recognize the two-dimensional aspect of women's equality, i.e., as an aid to achieve economic goals as well as social equity.

3. The Framework

Gender Budgeting does not follow any particular format, has no standardized tools and varies from country to country. Several analytical frameworks and approaches have been suggested from time to time. The main focus of gender budgeting Gin most countries where it is practiced has been public expenditure. The earliest and commonly used framework for classifying public expenditure(PE), was developed by Sharp and Broomhill(1990) and was applied for the first time in Australia. It classified PE into three categories: (i) Gender-specific Expenditures: These are expenditures that are specifically targeted to groups of men, women, boys or girls. For example, programmes to promote women's health or men's education etc. (ii) Expenditures that promote gender equality within the public service: These are expenditures targeted to equalizing employment opportunities in the public sector. For example, programmes to promote equitable pay, equitable working conditions etc. and (iii) General/mainstream Expenditures: It comprises all other expenditures.

Some other frameworks were suggested subsequently (Budlander and Hewitt, 2003; Davoodi, 2003; Younger, 1999). A framework for evaluating the benefits of public spending with specific application to gender disaggregated data was suggested by Glick, Saha and Younger in 2004. On the revenue side, the application of Gender Budgeting has been less well-defined. Sahn and Younger (2003) discussed gender disaggregated incidence of public revenue. Another study examined the gender dimensions of the incidence of tariff liberalization, using South African expenditure data(Daniels etc. 2005). Explicit and implicit gender biases of tax systems have also been examined by several studies(Feenberg and Rosen,1995; Goldman, 2000). Following Budlender & Sharp(1998) and Budlender & Hewitt(2003), one may mention seven standard tools of GB. (i) Gender-aware policy appraisal, (ii) Gender -disaggregated beneficiary assessment, (iii) Gender- disaggregated/public expenditure incidence analysis, (iv) Gender-disaggregated tax incidence analysis, (v) Gender-disaggregated analysis of the impact of the budget on time use, (vi) Gender-aware medium term economic policy frame work, (vii) Gender-aware budget statements. These tools, through their impact on productivity, the use of time, emphasis on reducing inequalities, emphasis on continuous appraisal etc. may be expected to make budgetary initiative in general more effective and transparent.

4. Experiences with Gender Budgeting

This section provides a brief review of experiences with gender budgeting with special reference to India. Gender Budgeting has gained prominence in recent years particularly in the context of economic globalization. It received impetus from the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 which called for the integration of a gender perspective in budgetary policies and programmes(Sarraf, 2003). Countries of the Common Wealth(CW) were the first to take steps towards the implementation of Gender Budgeting. The CW secretariat sponsored some of the earliest pilot projects in Gender Budgeting in a number of CW countries viz., Barbados, Fiji, South Africa and Sri Lanka. Most of the countries of the world have tried some form of GB.

Budlander and Hewitt (2002) observed that Gender Budgeting takes different forms in different countries. However, most initiatives in this regard have focused on the expenditure side of the budget, with UK being an exception. Australia was the first country to develop the concept of women's budget in 1984. However it failed to make much of an impact in influencing policies and met with limited success. A second initiative was taken in 1995 in South Africa. It was in fact the first pilot project of the CW Secretariat. It led to the generation of training and research material but Gender Budgeting was not institutionalized like in Australia. In the EU, Gender equality is an important policy. Efforts in this direction are reflected in the Amsterdam Treaty(1997), Structural Funds, 1994, the Frame Work Strategy on Gender Equality, 2001-05(Stosky, 2006). The Nordic countries of Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark have achieved greatest gender equality in the world as per the UNDP HD reports. They have adopted Gender Budgeting in practice since 2003. Mexico began with Gender Budgeting initiative in 1993. Spain introduced studies on gender impact of government measures in 2003(Stosky, 2006).

In India, perhaps the first step towards a gendered analysis of budgets was the paper presented by Manju Senapaty, at the Inter-Agency Workshop on Improving the Effectiveness of Integrating Gender into Government Budgets, organized by Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 26-27 April 2000, in which she categorized Government of India's Budget 2000-2001 in terms of (a) budget allocations exclusively for women (b) provisions made in the annual budgets of ministries and departments containing sub-components on women and (c) expenditures by ministries on general services available to both women and men. It provided a framework for a gender-sensitive budget analysis in India and paved the way for a gendered analysis of the Union Budgets 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy. Lahiri and others(2002) presented a report on Gender Budgeting initiatives in India in 2002, while also providing an analytical framework for Gender Budgeting.

Since the year 2003 ministries/departments of Government of India have incorporated a chapter on gender issues in their annual reports. So far, 56 of them have set up Gender Budgeting Cells. In 2013 the MCWD issued guidelines to states to provide a roadmap towards institutionalizing GB. Many states of India have already adopted GB. Various women's groups, feminist scholars, NGOs have undertaken gendered analysis of Union Budgets, State Budgets and of policies in sectors critical to women like health, education etc. However most of the work done in India thus far have focused only on the expenditure side and not the revenue side of budgets(Ministry of WCD, Govt. of India).

5. Conclusion

The experience with Gender Budgeting has been mixed so far. It has not yet been institutionalized as a standard tool or as a part of mainstream budgeting exercise. For it to become more useful, it must be incorporated into the standard budgetary processes and fully institutionalized. Working methods and tools that help to evaluate the cost impact and consequences of the distribution of resources by gender must be developed. And they have to be tailored to suit the national and regional conditions, and to the specific fields of action, subjects and specialized departments in administrative authorities.

More research on the differential impact of public policies by gender, and on the benefits of reducing gender inequalities is needed. The case for promoting Gender Studies is reiterated here. Experiences worldwide have shown that gender-disaggregated data collection is the basis for the target-group-oriented use of public fund. As demonstrated in the case of UK, Gender-budgeting is not a purely administrative process. The political will of the government and involvement of civil society are important pre-requisites.

References :

[1] Ministry of Women & Child Development, Govt. of India.www.wcd.nic.in/gender-budgeting as accessed on 24.6.16.

[2] European Commission, Opinion on Gender Budgeting, Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2003. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/framework/opinion_on_gender_budgeting_en.pdf. as accessed on 28.616.

[3] Budlender, Debbie, and Rhonda Sharp, with Kerri Allen, 1998, *How to do a Gender-Sensitive Budget Analysis: Contemporary Research and Analysis* (Commonwealth Secretariat and the Australian Agency for International Development).

[4] Budlender, Debbie, and Guy Hewitt, eds., 2002, *Gender Budgets Make More Cents: Country Studies and Good Practice* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat).

[5] Budlender, Debbie, and Guy Hewitt, 2003, *Engendering Budgets: A Practitioners' Guide* to Understanding and Implementing Gender-Responsive Budgets (London: Commonwealth Secretariat).

[6] Daniels, Reza C. and the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, 2005, "Gender Dimensions of the Incidence of Tariff Liberalization" (Washington: United States Agency for International Development).

[7] Davoodi, Hamid R., Erwin R. Tiongson, and Sawitree S. Asawanuchit, 2003, "How Useful Are Benefit Incidence Analyses of Public Education and Health Spending?" International Monetary Fund Working Paper 03/227 (Washington: International Monetary Fund).

[8] Elson, Diane, 2002, "Integrating Gender into Government Budgets within a Context of Economic Reform," in *Gender Budgets Make Cents: Understanding Gender- Responsive Budgets*, ed. by Debbie Budlender, Diane Elson, Guy Hewitt, and Tanni Mukhopadhyay (London: Commonwealth Secretariat), pp. 23–47.

[9] Feenberg, Daniel R., and Harvey S. Rosen, 1995, "Recent Developments in the Marriage Tax," *National Tax Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 1, pp. 91–101.

[10] Glick, Peter, Rumki Saha, and Stephen D. Younger, 2004, Integrating Gender into Benefit Incidence and Demand Analysis," Cornell University Food and Nutrition Policy Program (unpublished).

[11] Goldman, Tanya, 2000, "Customs and Excise Paper," *IDASA Women's Budget Series*, Community Agency for Social Enquiry and the Parliamentary Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Women.

[12] Lahiri, Ashok K., Lekha S. Chakraborty, and P.N. Bhattacharyya in association with Hiranya Mukhopadhyay and Anuradha Bhasin, 2002, "Gender

Volume : 5 | Issue : 8 | August 2016 • ISSN No 2277 - 8179 | IF : 3.508 | IC Value : 69.48

Budgeting in India," National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi.

[13] Sahn David E., and Stephen D. Younger, 2003, "Estimating the Incidence of Indirect Taxes in Developing Countries," in *The Impact of Economic Policies on Poverty and Income Distribution: Evaluation Techniques and Tools*, ed. by Francois Bourguignon and Luiz A. Pereira da Silva (New York: World Bank and Oxford University Press), pp. 27–40.

[14] Sarraf, Feridoun, 2003, "Gender-Responsive Government Budgeting," International Monetary Fund Working Paper 03/83 (Washington: International Monetary Fund).

[15] Sharp, Rhonda, and Ray Broomhill, 2002, "Budgeting for Equality: The Australian Experience," *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 25–47.

[16] Stotsky, Janet, G., 2006, 'Gender Budgeting' International Monetary Fund Working paper06/232(Washington: International Monetary Fund)

[17] Younger, Stephen D., 1999, "The Relative Progressivity of Social Services in Ecuador," *Public Finance Review*, Vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 310–52.