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Gender budgeting in India: An administrative study

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Abstract

Gender inequality is a serious issue that governments throughout the world are attempting to solve. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, closing the gender gap in India alone would improve business-as-usual GDP by 18% by 2025. (2018). Given this, spending public funds efficiently might be one of the most efficient methods to target the proper audience. Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) was first used in India in 2005. This study will go over the many stages of GRB in India, from gathering gender-disaggregated data to producing handbooks on implementation frameworks. It will also cover how obstacles were overcome at various stages and lessons acquired. Some potential lessons include how GRB might be used as a powerful policy tool to eliminate inequality and promote inclusion. This will also go through current gaps and provide recommendations to close them. Gender Resource Budgeting (GRB) is an extremely effective technique for promoting gender equality and empowerment. This report examines gender budgeting patterns in India, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Gender Budgeting Cells (GBCs) appear to be mostly dysfunctional. Taking notice of the Gender Gap Report, the paper offers a strong suggestion to enhance the health of girls and women, increase their economic engagement, and increase female political representation at the state assembly and national parliament levels through reservation.

Keywords: Gender equality, budgeting, India, gender budgeting framework, COVID-19

Introduction

Gender budgeting

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) became popular in the early twentieth century, when budgets were recognized as a crucial fiscal innovation tool for achieving gender equality. Since then, almost 80 nations have implemented some form of gender budgeting. This list covers India, whose finance ministers have all committed to enhance women's welfare through increased and more gender-focused government spending during the last 16 years.

It is not an accounting practice, but rather a continuous process of incorporating a gender perspective into policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation.

It entails dividing government budgets to determine their gender-differential impacts, as well as ensuring that gender commitments are translated into budgetary commitments.

It is an effective method for achieving gender equity and ensuring that development benefits are distributed equally to men and women.

Gender-based budgeting is crucial for eradicating gender inequities while also significantly improving a country's social, educational, health, and economic indices.

Gender disparity impedes a country's overall growth and development. The GBB tackles issues of financial gender disparity, such as how gender hierarchies affect budgets and gender-based unpaid or low-paid labour.

While certain public expenditures, such as defence and road construction, are 'non-excludable' and 'non-rival,' others, such as education, health, and sanitation, may have inherent gender implications and need independent consideration of gender-specific requirements.

The introduction of the GBB has both economic and social justifications.

Gender imbalance stifles a country's overall growth and development.

The economic case for adopting a gender-sensitive budget stems from concerns about efficiency and equality.

It also contributes to the achievement of social goals, thereby supporting social justification.

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The justification for gender budgeting stems from the understanding that national budgets have varied effects on men and women due to the pattern of resource allocation.

The research's goal

- Examine the Gender Budgeting Concept.
- To examine the current state of gender budgeting in INDIA.
- To examine the fiscal allocation for women in India's Union Budget.
- TO investigate the distribution of resources for women

Methodology

Secondary data is used in the study. Secondary data is gathered from expenditure reports, five-year plans, union budget documents, economic surveys, annual reports of the Women and Children's Department, national sample surveys, central statistical organisations, and national family health surveys. Secondary data gathered from the aforementioned sources is analysed using basic statistical procedures. Wherever possible, appropriate charts, graphs, and diagrams are utilised to help elucidate the issues involved.

Gender budgeting framework

There is a Five-Step Framework for Gender Budgeting that covers the following steps

- Gender analysis is a sort of socioeconomic study that investigates how gender relations influence a development issue.
- Gender gap analysis: An examination of the legislation or a policy that identifies a specific choice that has a negative impact on the status of equality between men and women.
- Budgetary allocation: An evaluation of the sufficiency of budget allocations to execute the selected gender-sensitive policies and activities.
- Fiscal tracking is keeping track of whether money was spent as anticipated, what was provided, and to whom.
- **Outcome assessment:** An evaluation of the policy's impact and the extent to which the initial concerns stated have been addressed.

Gender budgeting across the globe

- In 1984, Australia was the first country to introduce a women-centered budget.
- Since then, around 80 nations have implemented gender-based budgeting.
- South Africa, for example, began women-centric budget efforts in 1995, including NGOs, MPs, and a diverse variety of academics and consultants.
- Other African countries, such as Tanzania (1997) and Uganda (1999), have begun gender budget efforts.
- Even the United Kingdom acknowledged the effectiveness of sending money to women in 2003, when it declared that Child Tax Credit would be given to the primary caregiver—usually a woman.

Gender budgeting in India

- Women account for 48% of the overall population of India. However, they continue to be marginalized in all aspects of life, with insufficient and inequitable human

capital investments, as well as gaps in health, education, and economic opportunities.

- According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2021, India has dropped to 140th place from 112th in 2020.
- As a result, India must take steps to close the gender gap, one of which is to establish effective Gender-Based Budgeting.
- GBB was created in the 2001 Union Budget to address the idea of gender disparity.
- It was implemented in 2004-05 based on the suggestions of the Ministry of Finance's expert group on "Classification of Budgetary Transactions."
- A gender-responsive budget, as defined by the GOI, recognises gender trends in society and distributes funds to make policies and programs gender-equitable.
- It refers to the systematic gender-discrimination of budgetary legislation, programs, and policies.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) of India is the focal agency for GBB implementation.
- The Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), also conducts GBB research in order to create gender budgeting matrices.
- The MWCD has also prepared, in partnership with UN Women, a Manual and Handbook for Gender Budgeting for Gender Budget Cells in Central Ministries and Departments.
- In recent years, the Indian government has established many initiatives aimed at improving women's socioeconomic situations, such as MGNREGA, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhi Yojna, and Ujjawala Yojna.

Gender budgeting challenges in India

- Non-utilization of gender-specific funding: There are only a few "large budgets" women-exclusive MWCD programmes that confront non-utilization of money, such as Nirbhaya Fund and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao.
- There is a scarcity of devoted and competent human resources to carry out the gender budgets assigned in specific areas of concern.
- Due to a lack of national monitoring systems, India's gender budget has stagnated in recent years.
- Some initiatives, like as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna PMAY, are not entirely aimed at women.
- The federal government's gender budget has never exceeded 1% of India's GDP, and monies for GBB are limited to public expenditure.
- In 2018, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) calculated a female labour force participation rate (LFPR) of 18.6 percent.

Policy recommendations

- There is a need to enhance funding for women-focused initiatives. Priority sectors should be recognized, and money should be allocated accordingly.
- Lahiri committee proposals, which give a clear framework for generating analytical matrices for gender budgeting, as well as institutional structures such as Gender Budgeting Cells, must be implemented.

- The FRMB must be revised and gender goals must be incorporated, as well as SDG target number 5 on gender equality.

Gender budget analysis for FY 2021-22

- The United Kingdom's portion of the budget has remained steady throughout time, at around 5%.
- In the previous fiscal year, the Gender Budget was Rs. 1,43,462 Crore, representing for 4.72 percent of the total budget.
- The government's gender-sensitive reaction to Covid-19 led in a Rs. 2,07,261 Crore increase in actual spending.
- The post-pandemic climate remains difficult:
- Women have suffered disproportionate employment losses as a result of the COVID-induced economic slump.
- Gender differences in access to digital technology have exacerbated the growth in female school dropout rates.
- There is an upsurge in domestic violence allegations during the lockdown.
- The closure of Anganwadi facilities jeopardized reproductive and maternal health services.

The COVID-19 epidemic and the necessity for the GRB

The COVID-19 epidemic, which has worsened pre-existing economic inequities within India's patriarchal culture, need more stringent and concerted GRB efforts than ever before. In reality, the GRB approach might assist governments in identifying gender needs, allocating funding to programs via a gender lens, and prioritizing gender-specific results. Given this backdrop, it is critical to understand how effective previous Indian gender budgets have been and to assess if India's first pandemic gender budget (2021-2022) will be able to promote a gender sensitive economic recovery in the face of the current crisis.

- Budgeting for Women in India: In 2004-05, India implemented gender budgeting based on the suggestions of a Ministry of Finance expert group committee on "Classification of Budgetary Transactions."
- Gender budgeting, a fiscal innovation, was envisioned and included into India's financial framework to address gender inequities.
- Gender Responsive Budgeting is concerned with the gender-sensitive drafting of laws, programs, and schemes; resource allocation; program and scheme implementation and execution; program and scheme audit and impact assessment; and follow-up remedial action to address gender inequities.
- GRB is a significant instrument for achieving gender mainstreaming, which ensures that the benefits of development are shared equally by men and women.
- GRB requires dissecting government finances to determine gender disparities and ensuring that gender promises are converted into financial commitments.
- It does not demand a separate budget, but rather seeks positive action to meet unique needs of women and examines expenditure and public service performance from a gender viewpoint.
- The impact of government finances on the most vulnerable categories of women is receiving special attention.

Rationale behind gender budgeting

- Women make up 48% of India's population (according to the 2011 census), although women trail behind males in numerous social indices such as health, education, economic prospects, and so on.
- As a result of their vulnerability and lack of resources, they require special treatment.
- Women have unequal access to and control over services and resources.
- The majority of government spending and policy issues are in "gender neutral areas."
- Gender responsive budget policies can help to achieve the goals of gender equality, human development, and economic efficiency.

Who implements a Gender Responsive Budget in India?

Though the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) is the nodal agency for GRB implementation in India, it is the Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) that conducts the pioneering GRB study to design the gender budgeting matrices.

Why gender responsive budgeting is important?

- Gender disparities must be eliminated: GRB is relevant both intrinsically and instrumentally.
- GRB is crucial for decreasing gender inequality and significantly improving a country's social, educational, health, and economic metrics.
- Economic justification: Gender imbalance stifles a country's overall growth and development. The economic case for advocating a gender-sensitive budget stems from efficiency and equitable concerns.
- It covers concerns of budgetary gender disparity, such as how gender hierarchies effect budgets and gender-based unpaid or low-paying jobs.
- Achieving social goals: Gender disparity is linked to a loss in human development as a result of inequality.
- Gender disparity affects other aspects of human growth, jeopardizing progress toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Expenditures by the government that have a gender component:
 - a. While certain government spending is by definition 'non-excludable' and 'non-rival,' such as defence, road/bridge construction, and so on.
 - b. Some government spending, such as education, health, and sanitation, may have inherent gender implications and necessitate independent assessment/monitoring /evaluation of gender-specific requirements.
 - c. The rationale for gender budgeting stems from the realization that national budgets affect men and women differently due to the pattern of resource allocation.

What are the flaws in India's GRB?

Lack of funding for women's welfare: Despite a considerable increase in the budget (in monetary terms), funding for women's welfare has remained stagnant over the previous 13 years.

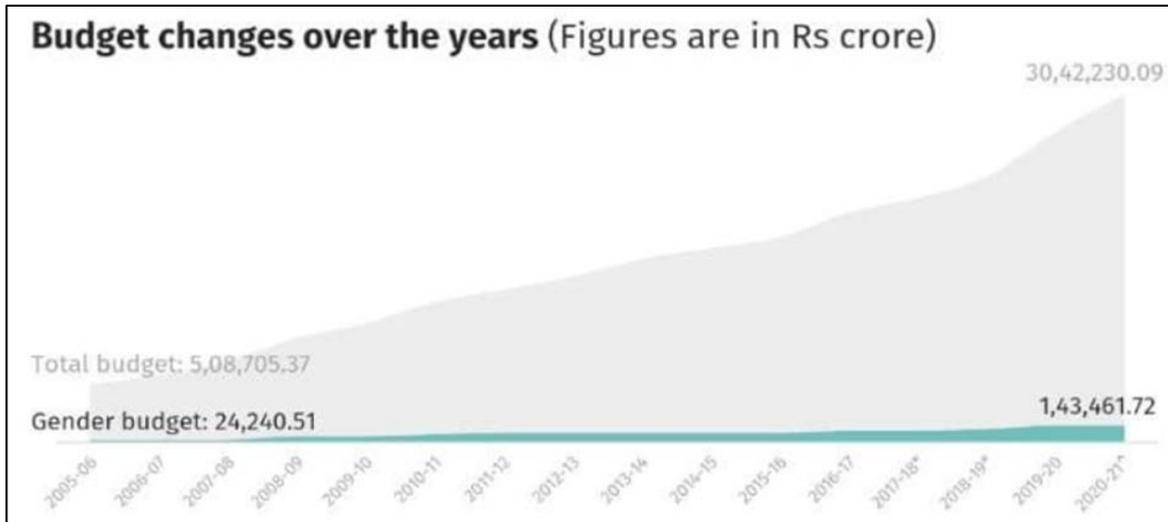


Fig 1: India's gender budget has been almost constant for 13 years

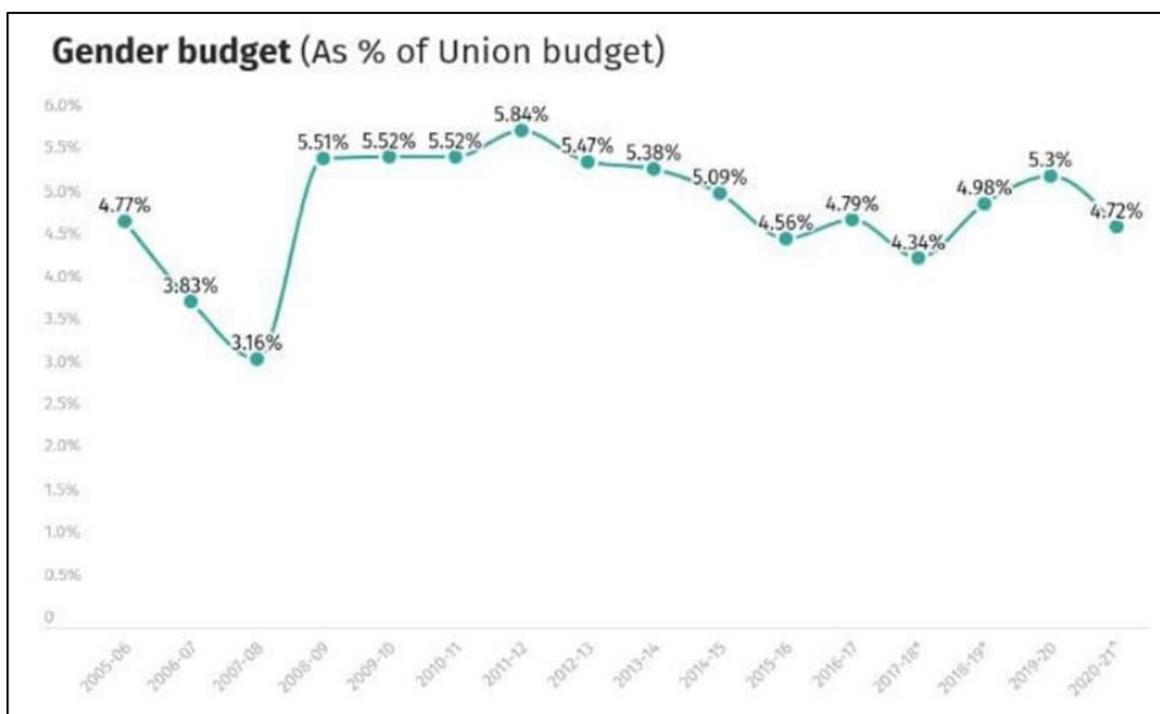


Fig 2: Gender budget (As % of union budget)

Part A reflects Women Specific Schemes, i.e. those with a 100 percent female allocation.

Part B reflects Pro Women Schemes, which are those in which at least 30% of the allocation is for women.

Part B of the Gender Budget Predominance

- a. Since its establishment, programs that benefit women have continued to dominate the gender budget, with allocations under Part B accounting for at least two-thirds of the entire gender budget.
- b. Women in India have been deprived of initiatives that are totally aimed at their development, and as a result, the gender budget statement has only partially helped them.

Schemes omitted that are beneficial

The gender budget is a compilation of monies granted by several ministries to the purpose of women's empowerment;

yet, in doing so, it has resulted in the omission of some initiatives that are truly helpful to women.

For example, the Department of Water and Sanitation has not declared any part of the funding under the gender budget for the Jal Jeevan Mission, a plan targeted at providing rural homes with tap connections, which would significantly improve the quality of life for women.

Uneven distribution of money between ministries under GRB

In the previous three years, only five government ministries and agencies have received approximately half of all gender budget allocations.

The Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development are among them.

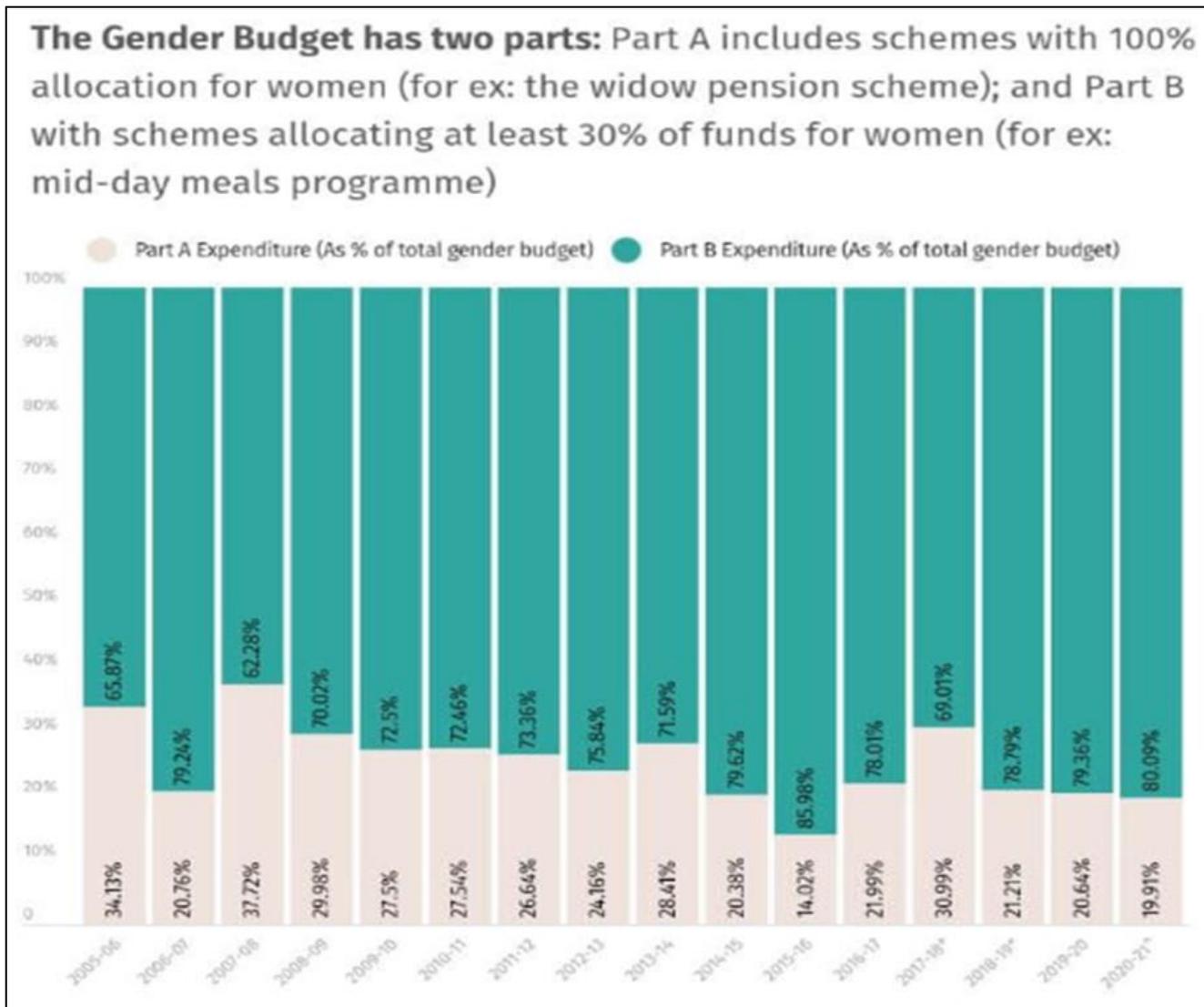


Fig 3: Schemes that partially benefit women dominate the gender budget

Are the GRB results satisfactory?

- The absence of schemes and women-led initiatives, as well as unbalanced funding allocations across ministries, continue to be significant disadvantages for women in India, restricting the facilitation of fair access to resources and services for everyone.
- This is especially troubling given that India still has a long way to go in terms of achieving its gender equality goals.
- In reality, India fell from 108th to 112th place among 153 nations in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index in 2018.
- According to the analysis, closing the gender gap in politics, economics, health, and education will take roughly 100 years.
- Given these constraints, it is reasonable to conclude that India's GRB process has led in a lack of outcome-oriented budgeting.
- In India, government ministries and departments have reduced GRB to an aggregation process, with the primary purpose of attaining gender parity frequently taking a back place.

Is a Pandemic gender budget beneficial?

- Despite accumulating evidence of COVID-19's disproportionate impact on women and young girls,

India's first pandemic gender budget has continued to follow troubling past tendencies.

- In reality, the gender budget allocation in the Union Budget 2021-22 was reduced by 26%, falling from 2.1 trillion rupees in 2020-21 (updated estimate) to 1.5 trillion rupees in 2021-22. (Budget estimate).As a result, it contributes for just 4.4 percent of overall budgetary spending and 0.7 percent of GDP, which is far inadequate.
- These allocations are especially disheartening at a time when economic activity is at an all-time low, with women at the forefront of layoffs, job losses, and salary cuts.
- The GRB 2021-22 has remained focused within a few ministries and established schemes or projects, with just 34 of over 70 central ministries and agencies reporting some type of allocation.
- Even in the current fiscal year, the same five ministries that dominated the previous gender budgets have gotten 87 per cent of the funding.
- All ministries and departments should get some financing to ensure effective and appropriate gender mainstreaming.
- The new priority sectors that developed in the aftermath of the pandemic, such as digital literacy, domestic

violence, skill training, and others, earned just 2% of the budget allocation in 2021-22.

- According to the United Nations, these are some of the important short-term goals that require government action not just to decrease the disproportionate weight of the epidemic on women's shoulders, but also to bring about a country's gender-sensitive social and economic recovery.

Conclusion

Global progress toward gender equality necessitates a variety of techniques, including gender budgeting. Purposive gender budgeting and thorough monitoring are required to guarantee that budgets are used optimally. Women deserve special care because of their social marginalization. Gender-targeted expenditure produces a virtuous loop that doubles efforts to improve women's living conditions as well as overall growth and development.

The GRB process in India has certainly been hampered by a number of constraints, which frequently produce in suboptimal outcomes, with gender inequality pervasive in many aspects of Indian society. Despite this, the present COVID-19 epidemic is reinforcing and, to some extent, deepening these inequities. As a result, a larger emphasis should be placed on gender budgeting in India.

Women require special consideration owing to their fragility and lack of resources. The allocation of resources in government budgets has the ability to change gender inequities. As a result, Gender Budgeting as a method for attaining gender mainstreaming can be tremendously beneficial. Gender-targeted expenditure produces a virtuous cycle with a multiplier effect on women's living standards as well as general growth and development.

Way forward

- An examination of gender sensitive budgeting in India finds a conflicting picture.
- There have been a number of beneficial achievements, including adjustments to specific planning and budgeting procedures and the establishment of gender budget cells.
- However, GB's limited reach and flat or even shrinking gender agenda funds are roadblocks.
- Adoption of the GB should be followed by diverse and interconnected reforms to budgets in general, as well as budget gender sensitivity.
- There must be a move from mere "reporting" of gender allocations to "purposeful planning" with greater female engagement.

▪ Increase funding for women-focused programs

1. In just one year, India's ranking on the Global Gender Gap Index decreased from 87 to 108.
2. Several international studies continue to rate India as one of the worst countries for women to live in.
3. Despite an ambitious road map and the MWCD's national commitment to GRB, the Central government's gender budget has never exceeded 1% of India's GDP.
4. There is an urgent need to prioritize women's safety, education, health, and labor-force participation, which needs a large increase in funding.

▪ Improve your targeting

Priority sectors with the greatest gender gaps must be addressed with funds.

These industries should be identified through comprehensive research to guarantee that targeted funding generates a virtuous cycle and has a multiplier effect on women's living standards.

▪ Create a rating of gender budgets at the state level.

States should be graded on the quality of gender budgets, impact evaluations, and gender audits of these allocations, similar to the ease of doing business rating.

MRCB should offer capacity building and technical assistance to state-level Gender Budget Cells for this endeavour.

▪ Increase accountability

The Outcome Budget should be gender mainstreamed, in accordance with the recommendations of the Planning Commission's Working Group on Women's Agency and Empowerment established in 2012.

To assess the impact of centrally supported schemes and flagship programs, gender audits should be conducted.

This demands enhanced efforts at the national, state, and district levels to gather gender disaggregated data.

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