

Research Article

## **Gender Budgeting As A Concept Of Inclusive Development**

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### **Abstract**

Gender equality has been defined by the UN as “the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.” Gender Budget was initiated to empower women through gender equality. Gender budgets are done to address crucial gender gaps and allocations to be based on planning at the grass-root level. The programs and policies should be designed to address gender-based problems such as violence, sexual harassment, and the wage gap. In India, gender-responsive budgeting was first introduced in 2001 and mandated in 2006, with the aim of gender inclusivity at all stages of policymaking. In a country with a 48% female population, a gender budget statement that is less than even 5% of the total Budget reflects the low priority that women empowerment holds in our policies. This article focuses on various schemes to empower women in sectors of education, health, and livelihoods. The allocation of funds towards Gender Budgeting and its contribution towards GDP.

Keywords: Gender Budgeting, women empowerment, inclusion,

### **Introduction**

The development of women is imperative to the development of a nation. Women's empowerment is one of the key indicators of a developed economy. The government of India and the states have rolled out several policies that help women to become independent economically, socially, and politically. To implement these programs and make the end-user benefit from this Gender Budgeting was introduced as part of the Union Budget. Gender Budgeting is a tool to formulate policies that are more inclusive and sustainable. Out of 8 sustainability goals of UN 3 are directed towards ameliorating women through taking care of their education, health, and political participation. Independence is a synonym for empowerment. This article focuses on Gender Budgeting trend analysis of the past 10 years in India and the impact of Gender Budgeting on women's empowerment. The purpose of this study is to see GB from a women's lens. Understanding the schemes under women-specific and pro-woman as Part A and Part B of Gender Budgeting, how these schemes are empowering women is focused.

## **Background of the Study**

The earliest initiatives towards gender budgeting could be traced back to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979. It recognized the importance of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and was ratified by 179 states of the world. CEDAW did not explicitly impose budgetary obligations on states; however, it recognized the importance of allocating resources for implementing this agenda for equality (Elson, 2006). Subsequently, the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing endorsed gender budgeting and it was included in the Platform for Action ratified by 189 states. It recognized that, hitherto, financial and human resources had been inadequate to achieve the advancement of women. It advocated the importance of integrating a gender perspective with budgetary decisions on policies and programs for securing equality between women and men (Beijing Declaration, Chapter IV, paragraph 345). India ratified the 1995 Beijing Declaration and is one of the first countries in the world to have incorporated gender budgeting as an integral part of its national budget. The government's commitment to women's empowerment and the gradual introduction of gender budgeting was endorsed through the National Common Minimum Programme (Ministry of Finance, 2005). It was a victory for the feminists in India, who along with the transnational feminist movement had for decades advocated greater resource allocation for women in the national budgets.

## **Literature Review**

Lekha Chakraborty (2019) says that there have been 4 sequential phases in India's gender budgeting (i) knowledge building and networking, (ii) institutionalizing the process, (iii) capacity building, and (iv) enhancing accountability.

Sanjay Kumar Ghadai & Satya Narayana Misra (2019) focuses on the flagship programs of the Government of India in empowering women. It analyses the global gender gaps and concludes the lack of proper accountability and political will. The emphasis is on the health, education, and political participation of women.

Pooja Goel (2016) says gender budgeting calls for looking both at qualitative and quantitative aspects but India has categorically focused on the quantitative aspect. It also looks at various schemes, trends in the allocation of funds, and political commitments of the state in successfully implementing Gender Budgeting.

Annu Dallal (2016) says Gender Budgeting is important in the Indian context as the country has witnessed patriarchy for several decades. Male dominance and gender discrimination have led to the imposition on women's development. To bring changes in socio-economic conditions, schemes play a crucial role.

Poonam Sharma & Prabha Garg (2014) says two-third of non-literate in the world are women and there is a vital need to enhance their education levels and to mark their own identity by improving their socio-economic status.

Dr. Sriparna Guha & Samrat Goswami (2006) says the important initiatives taken by developing countries to bridge the gap between the genders. The Government of India initiative of Gender Budgeting in her 8<sup>th</sup> plan towards empowering women. To foster any kind of development funds are crucial, hence budgetary allocations will fulfill the aim of gender equality in the areas of health, education, and politics.

### **Research Methodology**

This is a conceptual study based on secondary data. The data has been extracted from various sources like research papers, newspaper articles, books, and authenticated websites. Data included in the working papers of IMF were also considered for the study.

### **Objectives**

1. To study the women empowerment schemes under Gender Budgeting.
2. To analyze the 10 years trend of Gender Budgeting in India and its impact on GDP

### **Women Empowerment and Gender Budgeting**

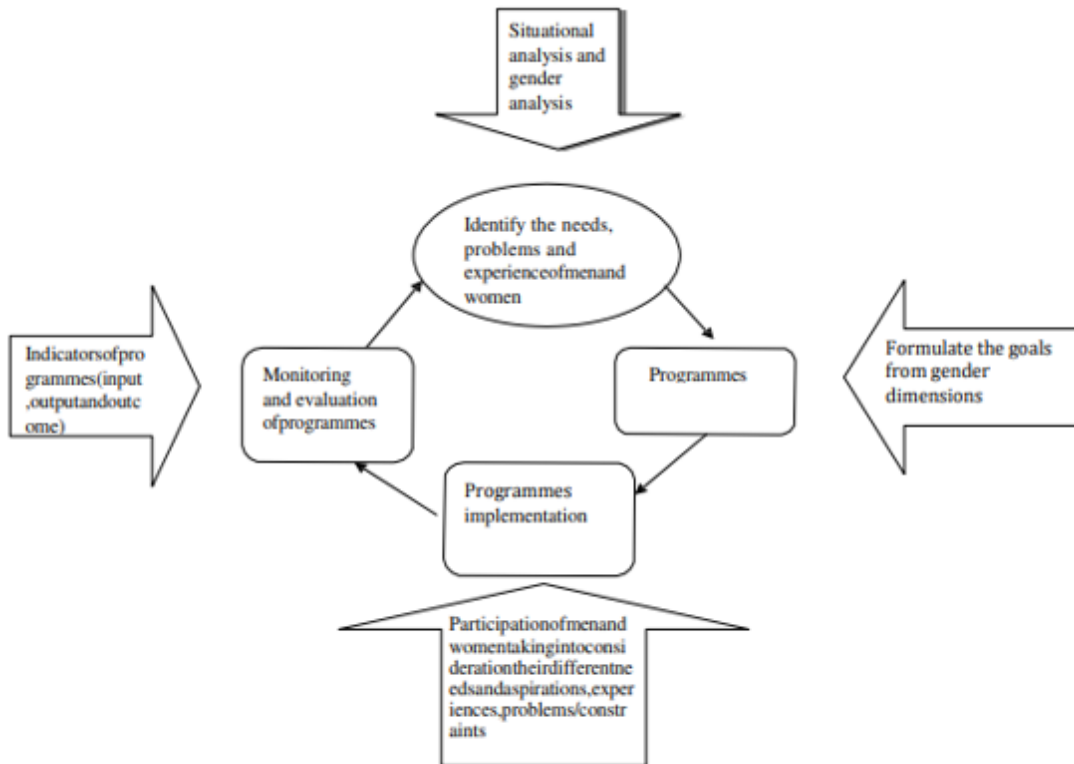
United Nations in its Millennium Development Goals has focused on women empowerment. This can be visualized by the uptrend in self-help group activities, feminization of the labor force, migration to work in the service industry, political participation, reservation system, and social awareness programs in the areas of gender bias, career guidance, and equal remuneration.

### **Salient Features of Women Empowerment:**

The developing countries as a whole have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary and tertiary education. Globally about three-quarters of working-age men participate in the labor force compared to half of the working-age women. The average proportion of women in parliament has nearly doubled over the past 20 years. Women continue to experience significant gaps in terms of poverty, labor market, and wages as well as participation in private and public decision making.

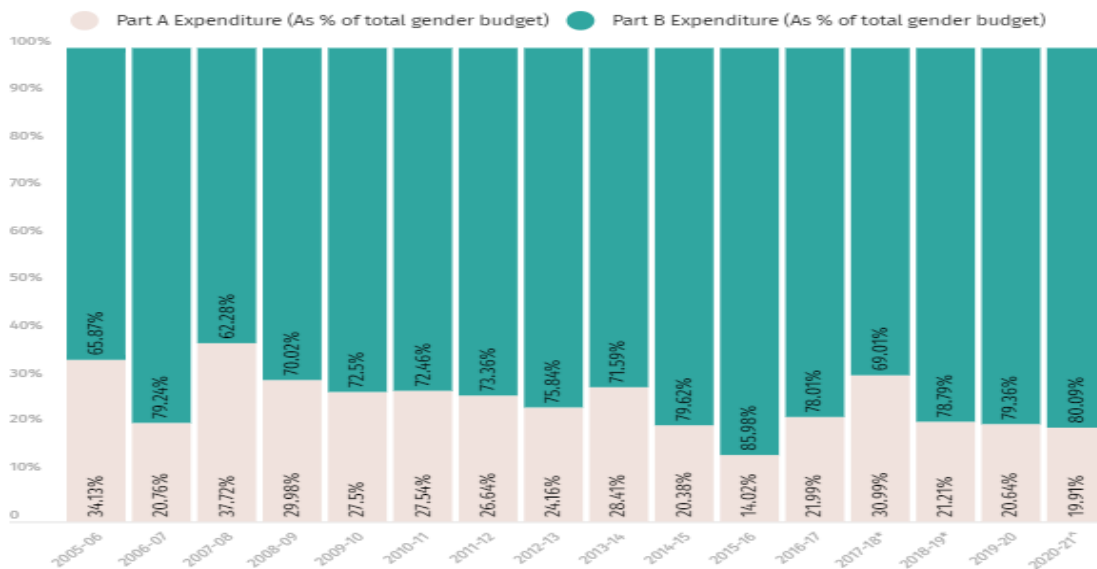
5<sup>th</sup> National Family and Health Survey conducted in December 2020 says, Education attainment for girls has improved. Improvement in two key health care indicators tracked by the NFHS focuses on menstrual hygiene and sex ratio. Input variables for economic empowerment are showing improvement but key output variables are stagnating. Under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan scheme, the prevalence of the Internet in day-to-day life and the low cost of phones and data are the likely explanations of women using technology. On the other hand key output variables such as the share of married women employed and getting paid still stands at a mere 28%. The significant reduction in women's participation in the country's labor force is due to rural mechanization and an increase in education level that may not be matched by the equivalent job creation. Metrics relating to cultural attributes call for attention as land or homeownership among women has reduced. The share of women marrying below the age of 18 is 30%. Trends around spousal violence are also stagnating but surged during the pandemic. The burden of family planning continues to fall largely on women with female sterilization accounting for more than 60% of the total contraceptive use.

### **Gender Budgeting Framework:**



Source: UNIFEM, Gender-Responsive Budgeting ([www.gender-budgets.org](http://www.gender-budgets.org))

**The Gender Budget has two parts:** Part A includes schemes with 100% allocation for women (for ex: the widow pension scheme); and Part B with schemes allocating at least 30% of funds for women (for ex: mid-day meals program)



Note: Figures are revised estimates. \*actuals ^budget estimate

Source: Analysis of Union budget documents • Data visual by Gulal Salil, graphic journalist

The allocation of the Gender Budget emphasizes the key government areas and bridge the gender gap. The five schemes that majorly focuses on Employment-Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

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Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Rural housing under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Childhood care under Anganawadi schemes, Samagra Shiksha for fostering the need of girl education, strengthening rural health under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) have made up half of the total Gender Budget allocations. The PMAY alone constituted nearly 70% of the allocations in Part A and 14% of the total Gender Budget.

### Shortcomings of the schemes under Gender Budgeting

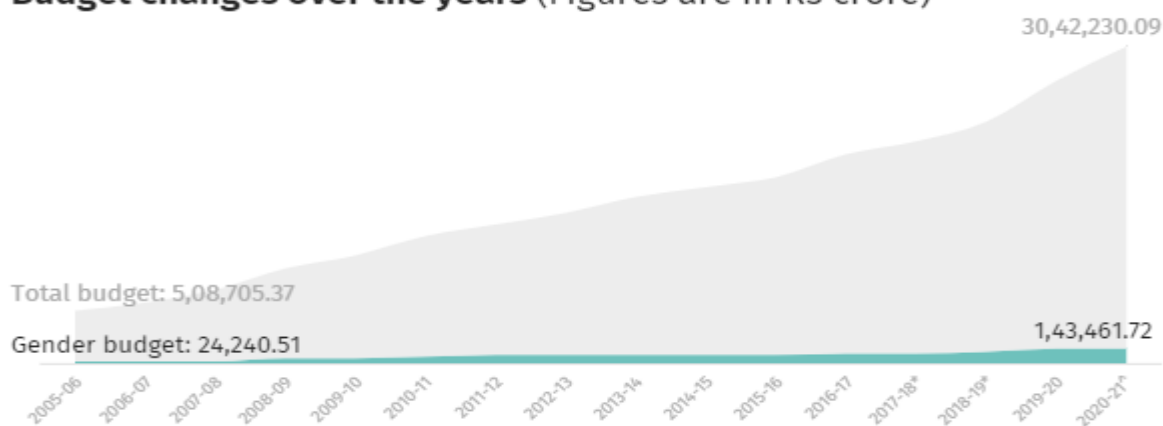
While the Gender Budget allocations are made by different ministries, it neglects some schemes that benefit women. The 10% of the Gender Budget was allocated to rural housing and encouraging those houses to be owned by women, however, there is no monitoring to see the extent of implementation of the intended purpose. The analysis shows the allocation to the Department of Water and Sanitation under the Jal Jeevan scheme a water conservation scheme where the tap water is supplied to every household is limiting. In the 2020-21 gender budget, the AYUSH ministry listed the central councils for research in Ayurveda sciences, Siddha, and Unani medicine in Part A of the budget and reported that 100% of these allocations would benefit women. But these areas are not just confined to women. The Department of Rural Development allocated a third (33%) of the total allocation of MGNREGS under Part B of the Gender Budget for 2020-21. However, women make up for nearly 55% of workers under the scheme. “An essential first step to gender budgeting is determining the outcomes and then defining what inputs will be needed to achieve them, In India, it is still done more like an aggregation exercise of different schemes or ministries,” said Avani Kapur, director of [Accountability Initiative](#), a research organization based in Delhi. The LPG Gas connection scheme which is allocated under Part A, itself defeats the purpose of women empowerment as we are directly restricting women to the kitchen.

### Allocations and trends of Gender Budgeting

Schemes	Year of launch	Description
Widow Pension Scheme	2009	Destitute, deserted women and widow above the age of 18 years will get pension based upon eligibility criteria.
Mid-Day Meals Programme	1995	As part of Nutrition Support of Primary Education to enhance enrolment of children to schools and improve attendance and nutritional status.
MGNREGS	2006	To provide 100 days of guarantee wages to the rural unskilled labourers.
PMAY	2015	Affordable housing for the urban poor.
Saksham Anganawadi and Poshan 2.0	2021	Umbrella scheme under integrated child development scheme for education and nutrition.
Samagra Shiksha	2018	Improving school effectiveness and equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes
NRHM	2005	To provide quality health care to rural population
Jal Jeevan scheme	2019	Flagship program of union government to provide tap water to every rural household.

PMUY (Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana)	2016	LPG connections to women below poverty line
Nirbhaya	2013	To prevent violence and abuse against women.
Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)	2017	Maternity benefit program to provide nutrition for pregnant woman and nursing mothers
Scheme for Adolescent Girls	2010	To improve social status of 11-18 age group girls. Vocational training and life skills.
Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme,	2021	Promoting student volunteer participation to empower rural women.
National Creche Scheme	2017	Day care facilities for children from 6 months to 6 years.
Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)	1993	Provide micro credit to poor women for livelihood support.
Swadhar Greh	2015	Relief and rehabilitation for women in distress
Ujjawala	2016	Prevention of women trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation

### Budget changes over the years (Figures are in Rs crore)



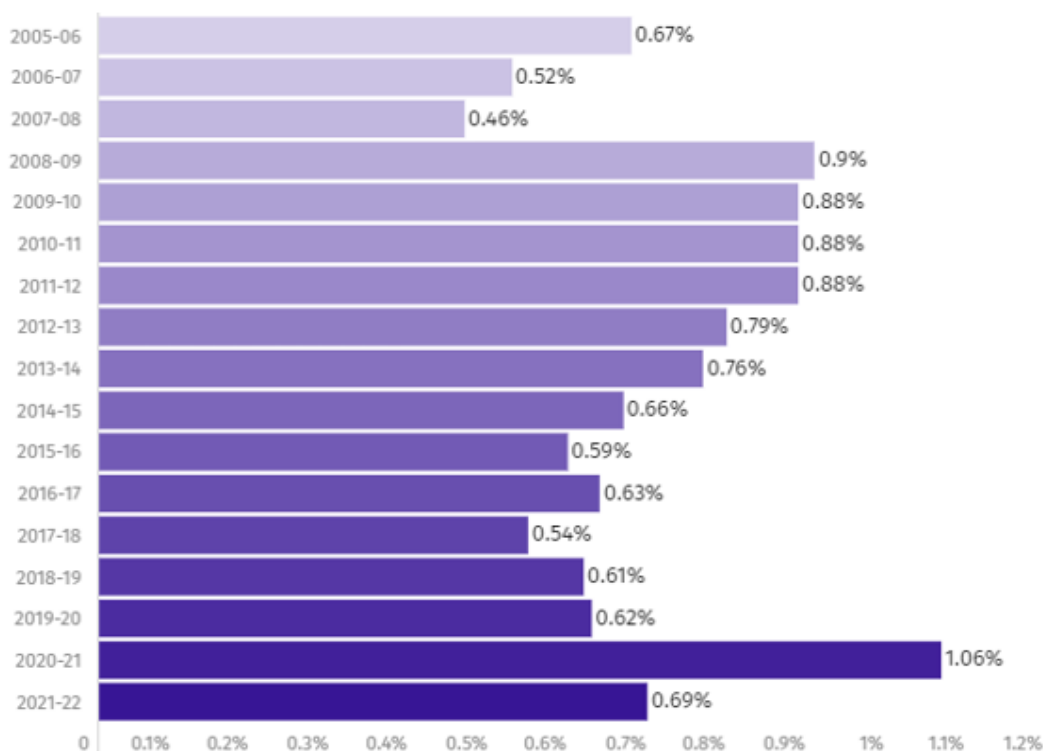
Source: Analysis of Union Budget documents.

India started releasing a Gender Budget along with the Union Budget in 2005-06. Over the last 16 years, India's Gender Budget has increased from Rs 24,241 crore in 2005-06 to Rs 1,43,462 crore in 2020-21, a six-fold increase in absolute terms. The analysis of gender budgets reflects that allocations towards schemes that benefit women have remained constant in the last 13 years. Nearly 5% of India's total union budget 2020-21 is being spent on schemes that benefit women. The gender budget covers allocations made by different ministries for schemes that fully or partially benefit women. Gender-responsive budgeting, along with supportive laws and other policy measures, could help governments track whether public funds are effectively allocated in furthering gender equality and empowering women. India was ranked 112th of 153 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index 2020. In India, many crucial sectors such as health and education are funded by both central and state governments. The

Indian economy is affected by the pandemic and women are the most vulnerable communities affected in terms of loss of job, unpaid work, and domestic violence. The Gender Budget provided opportunities to address prominent issues faced by women. Some of the allocations under Part A of the gender budget have been on previously announced schemes such as Nirbhaya Fund, Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, Samagra Shiksha, etc. To this, the allocation for assisting women to work in all categories and also in the night shifts with adequate protection is a major step in bridging the gap that has been created by COVID-19. Women working across sectors like IT, ITeS, manufacturing, retailing, will benefit from this allocation as the country opens up.

### Gender Budget and GDP

## Gender Budget as % of GDP, 2005-06 to 2021-22



Source: [Union Budget Statements, 2005-06 to 2021-22](#) • Data visual by Gulal Salil

The total gender budget of 2020-21 amounted to Rs 1, 43,462, nearly 5% of the total budget expenditure but only 1.06% of contribution towards GDP. India has been producing a Gender Budget Statement (GBS) as part of the Union Budget since 2005-06. Yet even today, the gender budget is only 1% of the GDP. The key factor for meager GDP contribution is the lack of accountability mechanisms.

## Conclusion

Gender Budgeting is a process that demands continuous monitoring and assessment of budgetary policies and allocation of funds. There is a necessity for a clear methodology followed in the apportionment of funds to different ministries. The future gender budget should focus not only on mere allocations towards women also address issues like health, livelihoods, and education that has been aggravated by the pandemic. Hence it is crucial to boost financial aid via the self-help group model through schemes like the National Rural Livelihood Mission, which, in turn, provide a sense of solidarity to the rural poor and services for social security in the areas of health, nutrition, and gender. Gender-responsive budgeting should not be seen as the only policy action by the government. Instead, women's voices need to be heard through participatory governance processes, and continuously integrated with every step of the budget-making process and each legislative decision needs to be looked at through a gender lens.

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