

Gender Responsive Budgeting in India: Historical Context, Lessons Learnt and Agenda for Action

Aasha Kapur Mehta

Visiting Professor and Chair Centre for Gender Studies, Institute for Human Development

Former Professor, Indian Institute of Public Administration

Founder Member, Feminist Policy Collective

aashaihd@gmail.com

Gender Budgeting: Building on Legacy

Blazing the Trail:

- Research and advocacy: the Feminist Movement in India
- Committee on the Status of Women, Report in 1974
- Eighth Plan –need for benefits of development to reach women
- Ninth Plan – Women's Component Plan, not <30% funds for w
- 2000-01: Expert Group to review Legislation pertaining to women
- 2001: National Policy for Empowerment of Women
- Tenth Plan 2002-07: Both WCP and GB

Gender Budgeting: First Steps 2002-03

Concurrent processes

- NIPFP research on 100% women specific allocations for women, pro women allocations and other expenditure by Lahiri, Chakroborty and Bhattacharya 2002 and 2003
- 2003: Expert Group to review Classification System for Government Transactions. Subgroup on Gender Budgeting.
- UNIFEM - Stree Adhar Kendra Seminar at Mumbai on 27-28 Nov 2003 draft presentations in the Follow the Money series
- NCW-IIPA Background paper on Gender Budgeting presented to NCW on 3 December 2003.
- NCW National Consultation on Gender Budgeting 22nd December 2003. Published by NCW.

Gender Budgeting: First Steps 2002-03

- Several articles analysing the Budget independently in 2002: Navsharan Singh, Vibhuti Patel, Jayati Ghosh, DWCD and NIPCCID, Others.
- UNIFEM Follow the Money Series 2003-04:
Nirmala Banerjee and Poulomi Roy,
Devaki Jain and Ahalya Bhatt
Maithreyi Krishnaraj, Divya Pande and Aruna Kanchi
Lekha Chakraborty
Others

NCW Background paper: Building National Budgets based on Women's priorities at the Micro Household Level

In household budget allocation, women give the highest priority to nutritious food for the family.

- You need purchasing power to buy food.
- For most of us, the income we earn depends on **availability of work** or employment opportunities and **Fair** wages/salaries received for work.
- Good health and lower mortality rates depend on:
 - adequate nutrients in food and in the way it is cooked and stored
 - access to **safe drinking water**
 - **Safe disposal of sewage**
 - **reduction** in levels of **drudgery** in work
 - access to inexpensive but **quality medical care** and medication in times of ill health.

So if the National Budget builds on Women's Micro or Household Priorities or is Gender and Poverty Sensitive

- Budget allocations - **first priority** to access to **food** for those in severe poverty. State to provide mandatory access to **food** for **the old, disabled and chronically ill**, for they must have first charge on public resources.
- Mandatory access to **work on demand** for those who are able bodied.
- The Budget must be designed to create **full employment**. Make the **right to livelihood** an effective right.
- Time bound access to **safe drinking water in each home**
- **Safe sewage disposal.**
- To decrease rural poverty, invest in **rural roads** and increase agri research and extension to increase **agri productivity**

Source: Mehta, Chowdhury and Baishya, NCW Background Paper on Gender Budgeting 2003

The NCW Background Paper Budget priorities: From Micro to Macro using a Gender and Poverty Sensitive Lens

- To prevent entry into poverty due to shocks caused by ill health, provide access to **Quality, Affordable Health Care**. Special provision for women patients in PHCs and Public Hospitals
- Enforce **minimum wages and equal wages for equal work**
- Correct gender gaps in **health (mortality, malnutrition, anemia) and literacy indicators**
- Adequate allocations for **shelters for women** – domestic violence
- **Safe transport** for working women and girls going to college
- Support **women's SHGs** and enhance micro credit availability
- **Safety nets**
- Correct the **Statistical Invisibility of Women's Work**

Mehta, Chowdhury and Baishya, NCW Background Paper on Gender Budgeting 2003

Gender Budgeting: First Steps 2004

- NCW held several follow up Consultations with State Commissions for Women and then sent a Memorandum with 11 demands note to the then FM
- Devaki built on the NCW background paper and prepared a note on an Overview and Proposal for Fiscal Policy and Women for NCW in 2004
- Devaki's "Ought Budget" resonates with the Micro household to Macro National Budget approach of the NCW background paper.

NCW Memorandum for the Union Finance Minister before Budget 2004

NCW Full Commission (including the present FM) unanimously prioritized a list of 11 demands.

- **Reduction in MMR in 300 districts where it was high;**
- Access to **basic village infrastructure - sustainable supply of water and hh latrines;**
- **Regenerating** 100 million hectares of **degraded lands and water bodies** to provide **employment** as well as environmental sustainability;
- Earmarking **funds for women through SHGs in 100 drought prone districts** for cultivation of medicinal herbs, flowers, vegetables and horticulture;
- **Support for families of unreached sections** such as migrant construction workers through identity cards, medical care, grain ration and children's education;
- Development of a programme exclusively for traditional fisher-families;
- **Employment linked training** for women in traditional and non-traditional trades;
- Provision of all untied Central funds directly to the Panchayats;
- **Satellite Account** to include in detail the **invisible work undertaken by women;**
- **Recognition of the invisible work done by women**, the "care economy" which saves the exchequer the burden of doles to the unemployed and relief to the sick and aged;
- Support due to the impact of globalization on women's **unseen and unpaid work.**

Devaki's UNIFEM Building Budgets from Below: "Ought Budget"

Elected women representatives of Honaganahalli and Kogali Gram Panchayat were asked to prepare an Ought Budget or Dream Budget. The priorities of the members were as follows:

- Drinking water- provision of potable water.
- Drainage system- toilets, both individual and community.
- Public infrastructure- laying of roads, tarring of culverts.
- Bus Stand.
- Security- streetlights.
- Houses for the poor under Ashraya Scheme.
- Administration.
- Hospital (Maternity).
- Self-Employment for women such as handicrafts, embroidery, etc.

Source: Ahalya Bhatt 'Building Budgets from Below' UNIFEM- KWIRC, 2003

Gender Budgeting: GBCs and Plans

Commonwealth Secretariat (where Sarojini worked) invited Finance Ministers of several countries for a meeting and discussed Gender Budgeting

2004-05: The Finance Minister mandated the setting up of GBCs in all Ministries/ Departments of Govt.

2005-06: GBS for ten demands for grants

2007-12, Eleventh Plan: Gender Budgeting and gender outcome assessment in all Ministries

Subgroup on Mainstreaming and Accountability for the Twelfth Plan: Recommended using Gender Budgeting as the mechanism to mainstreaming gender issues.

2012-17, Twelfth Plan: Gender Budgeting Key element for Mainstreaming Gender

Institutionalising GRB: Ministry of Finance Key Role

- Set up the GBCs
- the Ministry of Finance Classification Committee
- Supported the MWCD efforts at Capacity Building.
- Loreta Vaz and Dakshita Das spent hours in the MWCD-IIPA workshops to identify items that could be reported in Statement 20
- Charter for GBCs was issued based on the recommendations of the MWCD-IIPA workshops
- Outcome Budget required sex disaggregated reporting in several areas
- EFC formats

Institutionalising GRB: Planning Commission Key Role

- **Syeda Hameed** set up the Working Group of Feminist Economists
- Accepted several recommendations of the **Subgroup on Gender Mainstreaming and Accountability for the 12th Plan**
- In particular the 12th Plan stated that
 - the process of GB will be further strengthened and its reach **extended to all Ministries, Departments and State Governments.**
 - GBCs will be strengthened and empowered. **Charter** for GBCs will be included in the quarterly/half yearly/annual plan of action.
 - **Format and the methodology of the Gender Budget Statement** will be reviewed.
 - **Gender clearance** and specific approvals of GBCs mandatory for new PPS.
 - **EFC formats** will be modified to include confirmation that the scheme has been examined by the GBC of the Ministry.
 - **Functioning of Gender Budget Cells will be reviewed by Gender Task Force.**

While some of this has been done a lot more needs to be done.

Institutionalising GRB: MWCD Key Role

- Large number of capacity building workshops for GBCs and others across the country in partnership with IIPA, LBSNAA, NIPCCID, SIRDs and several other organisations.
- The MWCD – IIPA workshops in 2006 and 2007 led to the Charter for GBCs issued by Ministry of Finance on 8 March 2007
- MWCD supported the Subgroup on Gender Mainstreaming and Accountability for the 12th Plan that provided inputs for the Working Group on Women's Agency and Empowerment and the Chapter on Women's Agency and Child Rights for the 12th Plan
- Training conducted by MWCD at Kerala enabled Mridul to implement Gender Budgeting in infrastructure. MWCD supported Hafiza in conducting training programmes in Jammu and Srinagar as well as in several districts of J and K. Anita Nazare took it forward in Bengaluru as did several other State Governments and Budget Partners.
- MWCD prepared a Gender Budgeting Handbook and Manual for Government of India Ministries and Departments in 2007
- MWCD prepared a Gender Budgeting Handbook for Government of India Ministries/ Departments/ State Governments/ District Officials/ Researchers and Practitioners in 2015 in partnership with UN Women and Aasha at IIPA.

Institutionalising GRB: MWCD Key Role

A large number of capacity building workshops as well as background material were prepared by:

- Reva Nayyar, Deepa Jain Singh, Preeti Sudan, Manjula Krishnan, Aditi Ray, Sangeeta Verma, Nandita Mishra and Vinita Agarwal and Lopamudra Mohanty at the Ministry of Women and Child Development as well as Rashmi Singh and Sarojini at NMEW.

They received support from

- Loreta Vaz, Dakshita Das, Naresh Jha and Harish Srivastava at Ministry of Finance and Vinita at DST
- Swapna, Paramita, Sheena and Dharmistha in the GBC, MWCD and Moumita at MoRD,
- Ritu, Pam, Aasha, Mridul, Vibhuti, Gouri, and other academics
- Subrat, Kanika, Saumya, Pooja, Sona, Priyanka and team at CBGA
- Firoza, Benita, Yamini, Bhumika, Navanita, Subhalakshmi, Shrijana at UN Women and many others.
- Some of the Government officers who participated in the workshops took GB forward in their States

More recently the process was (and is) being taken forward by:

- K. Moses Chalai, Santosh and Prabha at MWCD with support from Ankita and Siddhi in the MWCD GBC
- Nishtha Satyam, Kanta, Arunima, Sanya, Pooja, Ajita and Abhiruchi at UN Women
- All the Members of the Feminist Policy Collective

Initial resistance but at the end of the MWCD workshops....Success!

MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES

- Crab and lobster tracking technology for elderly and widowed fisherwomen where cages are left in the water. Ensure a good catch to facilitate significant increase income.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- undertaking research and technology innovation on health and nutrition of women and children.
- Scheme to promote research by women and on subjects that would benefit women.
- Facilitate flexible work for women scientists to promote retention.

Source: Mehta and Krishnan (2007) and presentations by MWCD at MWCD-IIPA workshops

MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES

- Improved *Chulhas* (stoves) have been scientifically designed.
- A scheme for providing solar lanterns to girls studying in the 9th and 10th classes, so that they don't drop out of school.
- Training to women in SHGs in repairs, maintenance and the sale of renewable energy devices.
- Aditya solar shops run by women.
- Projects for village energy security in remote inaccessible villages that cannot be reached by the grid.

Source: Mehta and Krishnan (2007) and presentations by MWCD at MWCD-IIPA workshops

What works: the example of the State of Kerala

- Based on training workshops and use of the MWCD entry points and tools on Gender Budgeting, the Gender Advisory Board and the State Planning Board of Kerala decided that in 2010-11, a major focus would be on women friendly infrastructure.
- Mridul Eapen's work: women too need infrastructure, not just roads, bridges etc but basic amenities when they travel or where they work and a safe/secure environment at home and in public places.
- So toilets, rest rooms, working women's hostels, skill development, housing, police protection etc

Source: Report of the Subgroup on Gender Mainstreaming and Accountability for the 12th Plan

UNIFEM and UN Women

- Chandni Joshi and Firoza at UNIFEM supported Think Tanks for engendering the 10, 11 and 12 Plans and started the Follow the Money series
- Support to requests by Planning Commission for inputs on engendering Flagship programmes. Anne Stenhammer and Sushma at UN Women supported the preparation of a set of Policy Briefs: Ritu's PMGSY, Mridul's NRHM, Nirmala Banerjee's MSME, Mary's Higher Education, Aasha's ICDS, etc.
- Support to the Critique of the Approach to the 12th Plan.
- Support to MWCD in preparation of the Handbook on Gender Budgeting 2007, Manual 2007, Handbook 2015.
- Support to a study on HIV/AIDS and care needs that formed the basis for publications and presentations on GRB.
- Working with several State Govts
- Support to capacity building
- Support to research with Rajasthan Govt and other Govts
- Nishtha and team are supporting CSOs and Budget partners in states, including through NFI.

Other Initiatives

- **CBGA**
 - Annual analysis of the Budget from a Gender Perspective
 - Several publications
 - Detailed analysis of Statement 20 now Statement 13
 - Workshops and Consultations
 - Support to GRB training initiatives throughout the country and through International Budget initiatives
- **Women Power Connect** Ranjana Kumari and CSR
- **NFI and other Gender Budgeting partners**

What did not work?

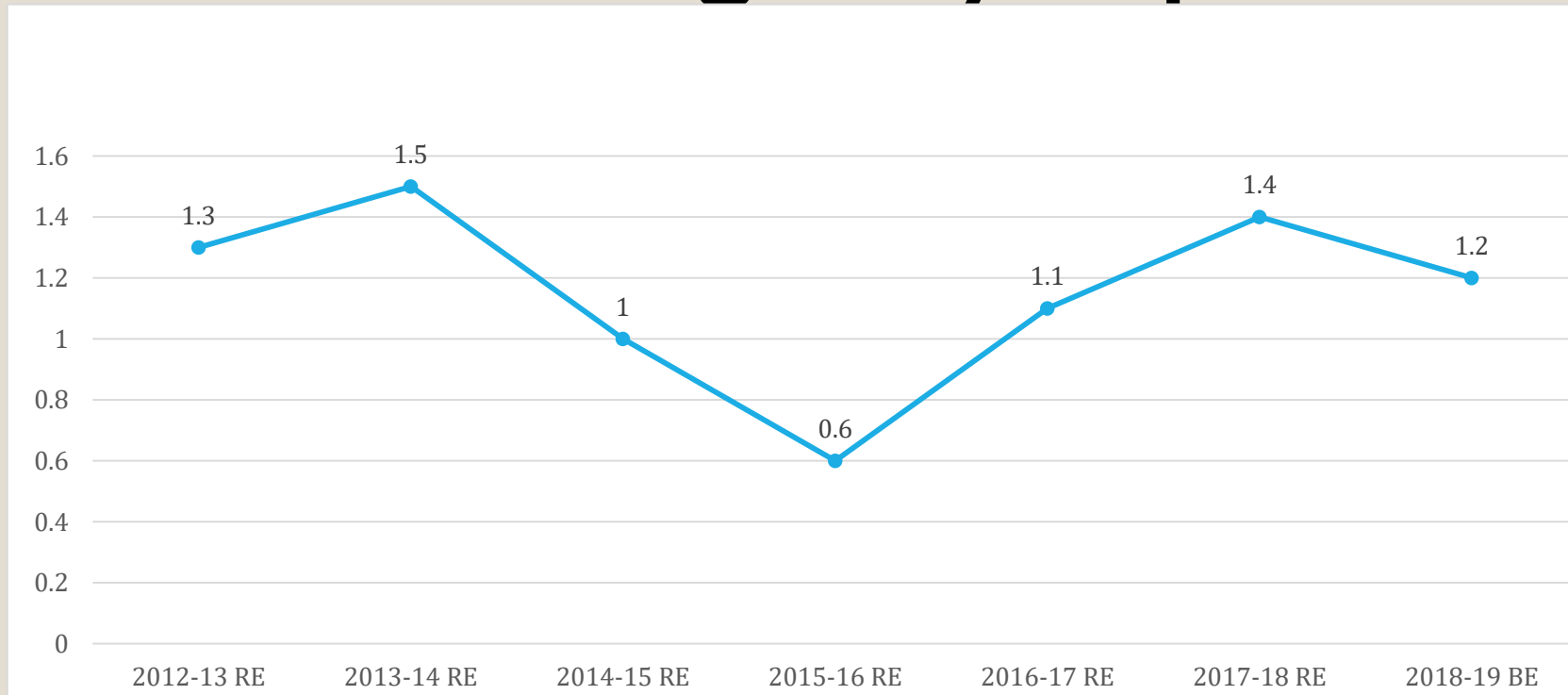
- **Gender Budgeting is not limited to the Budget. It is a process of incorporating a gender perspective at all stages of Policy Making:**
 - Legislation
 - Policy
 - Planning
 - Programme and Scheme formulation,
 - Resource allocation
 - Implementation and
 - review and impact assessment.
- However, **in practice it has remained limited to the Gender Budget Statement despite all the flaws of Statement A and B.**
- Since this is what the Ministry of Finance requires Ministries to report, this gets done but **without the time and thought that are needed prior to reporting in it.**

What did not work?

- Ex-post computational exercise, in which Ministries disaggregate their allocations in two categories:
 - Part A reflects Ministry wise the total amounts spent on 100% women specific schemes and
 - Part B covering those sector/ministries/departments s where a minimum of 30% is assumed to be utilised towards women's needs.
- These are then aggregated into a Gender Budget Statement, Statement 13 of the Union Budget, which is presented along with the Budget.
- **It should be used to identify and address gender gaps.**
- The share of expenditure on Part A has remained **around one percent of the total budgetary expenditure.**
- This clearly reveals that there is limited priority accorded to women within the existing array of welfare programmes and schemes.

Source: Thakur and Mitra (2019).

Share of expenditure for schemes reported in Part A of statement 13 in total budgetary expenditures



Source: Thakur and Mitra (2019) Financing for Gender Equality

Lessons Learnt: Agenda for Action

- **Creating Gender Budget Cells is not enough.**
- Officers move from one position to another. An officer sensitised to the importance of gender issues and Gender Budgeting may start the process but not stay in position for long enough to institutionalise it. **Hence continuous capacity building is needed.**
- Few officers take the mandate of one Ministry to another posting.
- While GBCs had been created, their performance needs to be monitored regularly. A Task Force for supporting Government in strengthening the functioning of GBCs was to be implemented in the Twelfth Plan. That should be implemented.

Agenda for Action

- ICDS accounts for 90% of MWCD's Budget.
- The allocation for women related programmes/ issues is not even 10% of the Budget of the Ministry
- To give gender equality the primacy it deserves in our development agenda, establish a **separate Ministry of Gender Equality**
- The Commissions for Women need to be given more teeth at par with the Human Rights Commissions.
- Government needs to **review its approach to GRB to make it inclusive for women in planning for both revenue and expenditures.**
- In addition to collating the nature of expenditure on women in Statement 13, prioritize certain issues or sectors and make a concerted effort to adopt a multi-pronged, multi-sectoral approach to address the issue.

Source: Thakur and Mitra (2019) Financing for Gender Equality

Agenda for Action

- Move from an ex post analysis of budgets to an ex ante analysis of priority sectors/ issues.
- Academics and civil society could also participate in the exercise.
- Gender responsive budgeting in the Indian context has focussed primarily on expenditure. It is time that we started to look at the revenue side using the gender lens.
- This would include understanding the impacts of direct and indirect taxation, subsidies, user fees on men and women. These of course would entail a transparent and accessible gender disaggregated data on the revenue and tax side.

Agenda for Action

- **Engage with the Finance commissions on GRB.** Suggestions have been extended on how the 15th Finance commission could devise formulae for allocation from the divisible pool of resources to the States based on child sex ratio, maternal mortality and so on for incentivising those that have performed well. (Rudra, Dewan).
- With the devolution of funds directly to panchayats and the formulation of **GPDPs** there is need to focus on ensuring women's participation in the formulation of plans and making these plans gender responsive.
- Make GRB an effective tool for **transformative financing for gender equality and pave the way forward for a 'feminist financing architecture'**.

Source: Thakur and Mitra (2019) Financing for Gender Equality

Agenda for Action: The Approach to Gender Budgeting cannot be number crunching and mechanistic

- Address the problems pertaining to Part B of the Gender Budget Statement.
- Use frameworks that make sense and are based on understanding what are women's needs.
- **Build the macro from the micro** and use Budgetary Allocations to close gender gaps and transform the situation of women.
- Ask women to prepare a Dream Budget or "Ought Budget" and **understand what their priorities** are in budget allocation.

Agenda for Action: Including Women, Girls and all those who are marginalised or deprived

- The Government has several flagship and other programmes and schemes to address poverty
- Can we use Gender Budgeting to ensure that women, girls and all those who are marginalised also benefit from each of these programmes.
- Across all identities, the poorest, the most deprived, all the colours of the spectrum
- Infrastructure for growth but what kind of infrastructure? FOR WHOM? Roads or roads **and pavements?**

Agenda for Action: The Context

We work so hard but the return is so low that we are not able to meet our household expenses.

- X is 42 years old. She lives in the *Kathikon ka Mohalla* in Kathputli Nagar slum in Jaipur and belongs to the Bhil tribe. Her husband pulls a vegetable rickshaw in the *subzi mandi* and earns Rs 150/- per day. She works as a casual labourer carrying head loads of vegetables every day for 30 days each month for 7 hours each day. She earns Rs 10 for carrying one person's vegetables. How much she earns depends on how many people hire her to carry their vegetables. Additionally, she spends 4 hours each day on domestic work. She says: We work so hard but the return is so low that we are not able to meet our household expenses (*Ghar ka kharch bhi pura nahin padta*). Her main concern is that she does not have any fixed income. If she is able to work and gets work, she gets paid (Mehta and Pratap 2017 paper on Estimating Women's Contribution to GDP).
- This needs to be rectified.
- How can gender budgeting and budgetary allocations be used in a transformative way to make a difference to her life and lives of others like her?

THANK YOU