

# Gender and Governance at the Grassroots: A Study of South Delhi Municipal Corporation's Budgets

2018

## 1. Why Urban Local Bodies need Gender Responsive Budgeting

It is a popular view that the functions and responsibilities of urban local bodies (ULBs) are gender neutral, i.e. - they affect men and women, boys and girls in the same manner. The main responsibilities of ULBs include water supply, sanitation, drainage, and street lighting; they also have some role in provisioning of health and education facilities to complement the services provided by the state and union government. The prevalent view is that these services are equally useful, or the lack of these facilities is equally detrimental to the potential beneficiaries of all genders.

Absence of street lighting makes women more vulnerable to physical and verbal abuse. Lack of sanitation has more harmful health effects on women.

However, this view does not take into account an important fact that biological, environmental and social factors have different effects on different genders. For example - while street lighting is useful for both, men and women, its unavailability is much more harmful for women. It has been observed that availability of street lights contributes to a feeling of safety among women and girls and is linked to a decline in cases of sexual and verbal harassment against them. A number of studies have found that women consider lack of proper street lighting an important factor contributing to the unsafe conditions for them, both in urban as well as in rural areas. Similarly, because of the biological differences, lack of sanitation in public and private places has more severe harmful effects on women as compared to men.

Budgets need to be prepared and executed taking into account the prevalent gender inequalities, in the society.

Because of these differing impacts of municipal services on different genders, it is essential that while making policies, programmes and budgets, ULBs also take into account these differential needs. Or in other words, ULBs should implement 'Gender Responsive Budgeting'.

At the Union level, first ever GRB was presented in 2005-06. Since then, it has been encouraged at states as well as local government budgets. There are, however, only few examples of gender responsive budgeting by ULBs in the country; notable among them are Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM), and Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC).

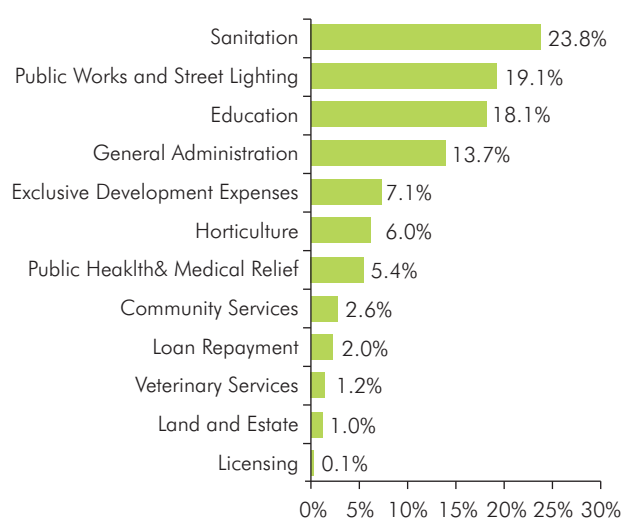
Even though a large number of poor women and girls are dependent on ULBs for basic services affecting their safety and well-being, the ULBs in Delhi have not implemented Gender Responsive Budgeting yet.

Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) in collaboration with Plan India, A.V. Baliga Memorial Trust and CASP Plan has carried out a study analysing the gender responsiveness of South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) budgets. This document presents the main findings emerging from the study and the corresponding policy recommendations for making the programmes and functioning of ULBs more responsive to needs to women and adolescent girls.

## 2. How Gender Responsive is South Delhi Municipal Corporation's Budget

With the revenue of over Rs. 4,500 crore and expenditure close to Rs. 5,000 crore during the financial year 2018-19, SDMC is among the largest and richest municipal corporations in the country. Chart 1 depicts the spending pattern of SDMC on different focus areas for the financial year 2018-19.

**Chart 1: Allocation Priority of SDMC in FY 2018-19**



Source: SDMC Budget Data 2018-19

Among the functions that SDMC carries out, there are some areas which have inherent gender aspect to it. This document focuses on four such areas of SDMC's work, which have significant implications for women's safety and welfare - Street Lighting, Sanitation, Health and Education.

### Street Lighting

In 2012, UN Women conducted a study in Delhi as a part of safe cities initiative. The study found that 92 per cent of women had experienced some form of sexual violence in public spaces and 88 per cent of the women reported having experienced some form of verbal sexual harassment. While, such harassments can and do occur in broad daylight as well, the likelihood of such incidences during the night-time increases in the streets or public spaces where proper lighting is lacking. Surveys conducted among young girls and women have also highlighted

lack of street lighting as among the major factors contributing towards unsafe environment. Because of this increased danger, women are less likely than men to independently walk on streets without lights. Hence, apart from security implication, the lack of proper street lighting also restricts the mobility of women. The constraint on mobility not only deprives women from many economic opportunities, but it also takes away their basic right to free movement.

The provision and maintenance of street lighting in Delhi is complicated, with multiple agencies responsible for the function. Municipal corporations have a critical as they are responsible for the majority (28,000 km out of total 30,000 km) of the roads. The analysis of SDMC's work on street lighting reveals the following points -

- No data is available in public domain to assess the number of functional street lights and prevalence of dark spots
- In many places, there are reoccurring incidents of damaging or dismantling of street lights by anti-social elements. Once broken, it typically takes 2-3 weeks to get the light fixed and the probability of sexual harassment increases during that time
- Inspections carried by various agencies have found no street lighting in many public areas in the city, either because there were no light posts in those places or they were not working
- Allocations have been made in recent years for street lighting the dark spots by SDMC
- The utilisation of funds allocated for street lighting is low

### Sanitation

The sanitation work of ULBs mainly consists of providing and maintaining toilets, drainage system and waste management. Availability, accessibility, and design - all three aspects of these facilities have different impacts on women compared to men. For example - because of biological differences and especially during menstrual period, women's need for sanitary environment is much greater. Also, water-

borne or vector-borne diseases, mainly arising out of absent or non-functioning drainage system, are more likely in case of pregnant women. Similarly, in accessing public toilet, women face difficulties different from men. Because of these factors, ULBs work on sanitation needs to be analysed through a gender lens. It is worth noting here that the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, ranks SDMC at 202, out of the 434 ULBs surveyed. Considering that SDMC is among the richest ULBs in the country, and Delhi being the capital of the country, this ranking points to unsatisfactory work by SDMC.

An analysis of SDMC's work on sanitation related responsibilities based on the perceptions shared in FGDs reveals the following points –

- Public toilets are not cleaned regularly, deterring people, especially women and adolescent, from using them
- Harassment of adolescent girls and women in public toilets guarded by a male caretaker is common
- There are also cases of levying of illegal user charges, locking of toilets during late night and early morning hours, and no separate entrance for female users
- Location and surroundings of public toilets also deter women's use of public toilets
- The shared responsibilities regarding management of sewerage system assigned to the Municipal Corporations, Delhi Jal Board (DJB), Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB) do not seem to work on the ground leading to high degree of inefficiency in the drains and sewage cleaning works in public streets.
- Many initiatives in recent years by SDMC, such as provision of low-cost sanitary napkins in female toilets, pilot project of constructing 'Pink Toilets', nurseries for children of working women in sweeper colonies, have been taken
- The utilisation of budgets across relevant sanitation departments is low; with no utilisation of discretionary funds for 'Mahila Toilets' in public places

## Health

According to The George Institute of Global Health, differences between both genders in terms of biological, environmental and social factors make women more vulnerable to certain diseases compared to men. For example - due to the biological difference, men and women have differing medical needs; however, women are also more prone to fall under mental health issues due to mental pressure arising out of wider social discrimination and dangers of sexual harassment. The neglect of these gender specific aspects in designing the health policies creates the situation where the health related indicators differ for men and women. World Economic Forum has created 'health and survival index' to study the gaps in the health outcomes for men and women. According to this index, India ranks 141 out of 144 countries, highlighting the gross inequalities women face in India availing the health facilities compared to men. Even when there is acknowledgement of differing needs of medical facilities for women, most of the policy interventions have focused only on the maternal and child health care, while neglecting the other issues, such as those of adolescent girls, mental health, non-communicable diseases etc.

It should be noted here that the municipal corporations are not responsible for providing major healthcare services, which is a function of the state government. They are responsible for providing a support system locally and strengthening preventive health care, such as protection against the spread of diseases. Municipal corporations operate hospitals, dispensaries and diagnostic centres to carry out their responsibilities.

An analysis of SDMC's work on health from gender responsiveness perspective reveals following points -

- There are very few dispensaries, making residents travel long distances to access basic healthcare, which is especially difficult for young, elderly, differently abled, and women
- There has been a slight increase in number of ante-natal/pregnancy cases registered between

2016-17 and 2017-18.

- Number of adolescent girls visiting maternity and child welfare clinics has almost doubled between 2016-17 and 2017-18
- For child delivery, many women are opting private clinics instead of SDMC run maternity homes
- Underutilisation of funds, both in the case of maternity and child welfare as well as the overall health budget is noticeable

## Education

When it comes to shaping the minds of young population, perhaps there is nothing as important as education. Education refines sensitivities and perceptions, develops faculty of reason and inculcates spirit of democracy besides developing a wide range of skills and competencies necessary for leading a quality life. Despite impressive strides in education since the year 2000, girls account for a substantial number of out-of-school children and women constitute a majority of illiterate adults. Societies pay a high price when girls and women are deprived of their right to education: the persistence of chronic poverty, high child and maternal mortality, poor nutrition, early marriage, vulnerability to exploitation and lack of voice in public life. In this perspective, it is important to have public provisioning by all the three tiers of the government right upto the grass root level for promotion of education and empowerment of women and adolescent girls.

Planning and implementation of the provisions for education have to take into account several fundamental concerns, gender is one of them. From school fees to infrastructure, curriculum and classroom practices gender plays an important role. Many a times, lack of a gender perspective adversely affects access to education as well as retention and learning of girls. For example - in poor families who cannot afford education for all children, boys are generally chosen to attend schools and girls to support the family. Gender determines choice of the school also. Girls are generally sent to government

schools because of free education provided there despite a generally agreed poor quality whereas boys are sent to fee charging private schools which supposedly offer better quality of education. Similarly, while lack of proper toilets in schools is also inconvenient for boys, in case of girls, it can lead to not attending schools or dropping out of school permanently. Gender stereotyping in curriculum and classroom practices strengthens patriarchy thereby limiting inclusion and gender justice. Also, a woman's education has more positive impact on the well-being of the household. Because of these factors, education policies need gender consideration.

It should be noted here that municipal corporations in Delhi have limited role in providing education; they are responsible mainly for provision of primary education. However, the municipal corporations in Delhi have recently upgraded their schools to the eighth standard to meet requirements of the Right to Education (RTE) Act. This means municipal corporations in Delhi now provide education to adolescent girls in the age bracket of 10 to 13 years also. SDMC, therefore, carries out important work related to education.

An analysis of SDMC's work on education from gender perspective reveals following points-

- There are initiatives for improving health through 'Anaemia Control Programme' using the school platform, which involves teacher training, community awareness, parent-teacher meeting and biannual mass deworming program
- There is a need for Interaction of girls students with medical practitioners to raise awareness on menstrual hygiene
- The 2018-19 budget announced that SDMC schools will provide free sanitary napkins to the girls students
- Scholarships are given to girls students,
- CCTV cameras are being installed to improve security in school premises

- There is a need for greater focus on job-oriented training to adolescent girls and women
- Perceptions shared in focused group discussions show that quality of education has improved in

SDMC schools. Schools also provide uniforms and books without any extra costs and good quality mid-day meal regularly.

### 3. Policy Recommendations

#### Making the Interventions of SDMC more Gender Responsive

##### Street Lighting



- Prioritise the lighting of dark spots
- Routinely check the functioning of light posts
- Immediate repairing of faulty light posts
- Dedicated toll free number for complaints
- Safety audits with local residents (women)
- Make data on street lights public, with information on nodal authorities responsible
- Utilise unspent funds to strengthen the monitoring and maintenance of streetlights

##### Sanitation



- Incorporate gender perspective in building toilets, including the location of toilets
- Ensure regular cleaning of toilets
- Scalability of 'Pink Toilets'
- Sanitation focus on Jhuggi Jhopdis (JJ), with improvements in drainage and waste disposal in JJ clusters
- Ensure good working conditions for women sanitation workers in the municipal area
- Using discretionary funds in priority areas to improve sanitation facilities
- Conduct Social audits in the use of toilets

##### Health



- Ensure dispensaries in areas where they are not available
- Strengthen health facilities for pregnant women in all zones, with regular awareness drives regarding services available
- Reserve a day for adolescent girls to enable their free and candid interaction with medical practitioners
- Conduct a baseline assessment of medical needs
- Maintain separate OPD records for men and women
- Expand focus of health policies for women, beyond reproductive to include mental health issues and non-communicable diseases

##### Education



- Improve awareness against sexual violence in schools
- Carry out gender sensitisation of teaching and non-teaching staffs
- Introduce female health issues in curriculum
- Ensure job oriented training for young women
- Consider after school hours programmes for adult women who want to resume education
- Ensure functioning toilets in all schools, with running water and waste disposal facilities

## Improving the Overall Functioning of SDMC

<b>Ensure Transparency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make information about functions, budgets and physical coverage etc. available in public domain</li> </ul>
<b>Address Under-utilisation of Funds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the reasons behind under-utilisation of funds and address the same across sectors</li> <li>• Use underutilised funds for funding areas and functions presently not prioritised within a department (e.g. identification of dark spots for providing street lights)</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure Public Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase public participations, especially of disadvantaged groups, in budget preparation to make budgets more inclusive and needs-based</li> <li>• Start social audit of programmes with support from women councillors, to improve outreach and implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Adopt Gender Responsive Budgeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalise Gender Responsive Budgeting to ensure that gender concerns in the SDMC area are recognised, and appropriately designed interventions backed by adequate budgetary outlays, are in place to address these concerns</li> <li>• Set-up Gender Desks / Cells in all SDMC departments to strengthen gender responsiveness in policies, programmes and budgets</li> <li>• Prepare a Gender Budget Statement to capture the efforts of SDMC in this domain</li> </ul>

Prepared by: Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA)

This document is based on a study of South Delhi Municipal Corporation's Budgets from the lens of adolescent girls and women. For details, please refer to the study report titled 'Gender and Governance at the Grassroots: A Study of South Delhi Municipal Corporation's Budgets', CBGA, 2018. The study was carried out through a collaborative project by Plan India, A.V. Baliga Memorial Trust, CASP Plan and CBGA.

