



# Millennium Development Goals & Gender Budgeting: Where does India stand?

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India is one of the 192 countries that have made a commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. With only five years remaining for this deadline, a review of the performance of different countries is scheduled to take place in September 2010. In this context, the present paper makes an assessment of the budgetary commitment of the Union Government towards achievement of the MDGs from the perspective of gender. Of the eight goals, only one i.e. Goal 3 has an explicit focus on gender equality and women's empowerment; the fifth goal also addresses gender based disadvantages of women as it aims at improving maternal health. However, taking cognizance of the fact that gender is a cross cutting issue, our assessment is not limited to goals 3 and 5 only, but the MDGs in toto.

That the Union Government has adopted Gender Budgeting since 2005-06 makes it imperative to ask: how is Gender Budgeting in the Union Government helping the country achieve the MDGs for its women? Guided by this question, the paper makes an assessment of the allocation priorities in the last three Union Budgets with the help of the information compiled by the Finance Ministry in the Gender Budgeting Statements (GBS).

The paper is divided into two sections. The first section presents a brief critique of the MDGs from a gender lens. In the second section, we focus primarily on the Union Government's efforts towards achieving the goal of gender equality. We look at the GBS for the last three years i.e. 2008-09 to 2010-11, to assess the overall priority for women in the Union Budget and the extent to which the Union Budget is responsive to the various MDGs especially for women. In this section, we also look at the gender responsiveness of some of the flagship schemes of the Union Government.

## Section I

### MDGs from a gender lens

Given that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) address key development challenges, one would expect a gender focus throughout the Goals. However, as mentioned earlier gender is only explicit in MDG 3 (promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment) and 5 (improving maternal mortality).

MDG 3 measures gender parity in education; the share of women in wage employment; and the proportion of seats held by women in national legislatures. Each of these three indicators—with regard to education, employment and political participation—is considered essential for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. While it cannot be disputed that each of these resources has the potential to bring about positive changes in women's lives, it is important to exercise utmost caution in assuming a seamless correlation between these indicators and gender equality/women's empowerment. Many studies have shown that education increases the likelihood that women will look after their own well-being along with that of their family. At the same time, there are studies which show that formal education alone may not automatically result in gender equality and empowerment. There are countries that have achieved the target of primary and secondary education yet are significantly behind in achieving the indicators like reduction in violence against women, extending the age at marriage, increase in decision making power etc. Similar is the case with indicator 2 (access to paid work) and indicator 3 (political participation).

Another criticism leveled at the MDGs is that the faces of women in the MDGs are predominantly those of a 'girl child', a 'pregnant woman', and a 'mother'. Although the indicators under Goal 3 call attention to women's roles as producers and decision makers in the formal economy, as the progress reports of many countries reveal, these indicators have been routinely overlooked (UNDP 2003).

The MDGs fail to explicitly articulate the social, political and economic context in which they are to be implemented at the regional and national levels. These limitations are compounded by the gender-blindness of other MDG indicators, and the fact that the gender dynamics that cut across the goals are relatively invisible in policy dialogues.

Many scholars argue that gender inequalities are multi-dimensional, and therefore the goals of 'gender equality' and 'women's empowerment' cannot be reduced to some single and universally agreed upon set of priorities. The MDGs have been criticised for being too narrow, resulting in the obvious neglect of many other gender specific risks and vulnerabilities, roles and responsibilities, and power relations. A case in point is, the

invisibility of women's sexual and reproductive rights as well as violence against women in the MDGs. This omission not only reflects disregard for the work which had gone into Cairo, Beijing, Cairo+5 and Beijing+5, but a complete oversight of critical issues at the heart of development, such as conflict, human security, and reproductive and sexual rights.

## Section II

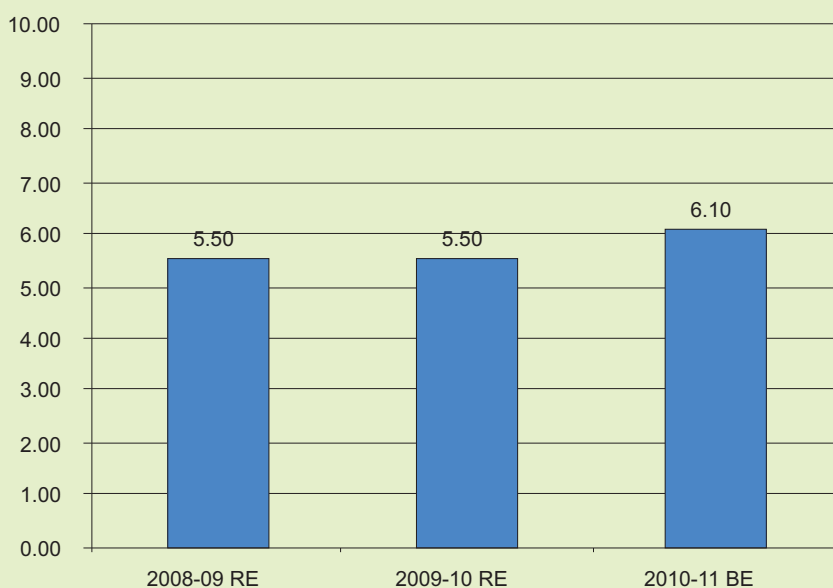
### Priority for Women in the Union Budget

The Gender Budget Statement was introduced leveling the Union Budget in the year 2005-06 and this practice has been sustained till date. Apart from listing those schemes where 100% provisions are meant for women in Part A, the statement in its current form also includes those schemes in which at least 30% provisions are meant for women in Part B.

Even a preliminary assessment of the GBS over the last few years reveals that the total allocations earmarked for women as proportion of the total union government expenditure have been in the range of 5-6%, which by any standard is significantly low. After stagnating at 5.5% of the Total Expenditure over the last two years, Union Budget 2010-11 has increased the proportion of the GBS to 6.1%. The year 2010-11 has been an improvement in real terms, because this increase is neither due to an increase in the number of ministries/department reporting in the GBS nor due to any significant methodological changes.

Figure 1

**Total Allocation for Women as % of the Union Budget**



Further analysis of the total magnitude for the years 2008-09 to 2010-11 (Refer to Figure 1) reveals that the increase in the per capita allocation has been rather insignificant – it has only risen from Rs. 900 in 2008-09, Rs. 1000 in 2009-10 to Rs. 1190 in 2010-11. It must be noted however that in the context of high inflation of 13.33% (Consumer Price Index, April 2010), this increase is nominal.

### How is Gender Budgeting helping in achieving the different MDGs for women?

In table 1, we look at specific schemes that have been reported in the GBS for the last three years to assess the quantum of allocations for women vis-à-vis the MDGs.

**Table 1**

Schemes Covered in the Gender Budgeting Statement	Allocations earmarked for Women in these Schemes (in Rs. Crore)			MDG addressed
	2008-09 RE	2009-10 RE	2010-11 BE	
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana, Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Indira Awaas Yojana, Mid Day Meal Scheme, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, ICDS, STEP, Swayamsiddha, Indira Gandhi Matritava Sahoyog Yojana, National Food Security Mission, Village Grain Bank Scheme, Nutrition Education Scheme, SCA to SCP, SCA to TSP and Self Employment Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers.	26746.14	26077.87	33871.1	<p><b>Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b></p> <p>Target 1(a) Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day</p> <p>Target 1(b) Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people</p> <p>Target 1 (c) Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</p>
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid Day Meal Scheme, District Primary Education Programme	9066	8822.42	11980.2	<p><b>Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education</b></p> <p>Target 2a: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling</p>
Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Support to Training and Employment Programme, Swayamsiddha, Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana, Mid Day Meal Scheme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Post Matric Scholarship for SCs, Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for SCs, Top Class Education for SCs, Boys and Girls Hostels for BCs, Post Matric Scholarship for BCs, Self Employment Scheme for Scavengers, Share Capital to SC, SCA to SCP, Finance and Development for Weaker Sections, Employment of Physically Challenged, National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls, Girls Hostel for SCs, National Empowerment Mission, Hostels for Working Women, Priyadarshini, Swayamsiddha, Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme for Girl Child, Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme, National Child Labour Project, Schemes Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Schemes under Dept of Biotechnology, Schemes under Dept of Information Technology, Schemes under Ministry of Home Affairs, Schemes under Ministry of Textiles, Schemes under Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Schemes under Department of School Education,	15084.79	17948.97	20960.07	<p><b>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</b></p> <p>Target 3a: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015</p> <p>3(1) Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education</p> <p>3(2) Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector</p> <p>3(3) Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament</p>

Schemes under Ministry of Minority Affairs, Schemes under Department of Higher Education Schemes under Ministry of Minority Affairs, Schemes under Department of Higher Education				
Reproductive and Child Health Project	3066.01	3431.37	3850	<b>Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality</b> Target 4a: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana, Reproductive and Child Health Project, Rural Family Welfare Services, Urban Family Welfare Services, Mission Flexible Pool, Contraception	7369.18	9438.92	11517.54	<b>Goal 5: Improve maternal health</b> Target 5a: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio  Target 5b: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health
National TB Control Programme, National Vector Borne Diseases Control Programme, National AIDS Control Programme and Contraception	1178.99	944.52	1160.37	<b>Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases</b> Target 6a: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS  Target 6b: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it  Target 6c: Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
No relevant schemes have been listed in the GBS.	—	—	—	<b>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</b> Target 7(a): Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources  Target 7b: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss  Target 7c: Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation  Target 7d: Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020
No relevant schemes have been listed in the GBS.	—	—	—	<b>Goal 8: A global partnership for development</b>

Table 1 shows that the allocations for women with respect to Goal 1 (reducing poverty and hunger) have gone up from Rs. 26077.87 crore in 2008-09 to Rs 33871.1 crore in 2010-11 which is an increase of approximately 30%. This increase can be mainly attributed to the introduction of Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahayog Yojana in 2010 and increase in allocations for Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) and Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub Plan and Scheduled Caste Sub Plan. This figure however is an overestimation of the actual funds meant for women since a heavily funded scheme like the Indira Awaas Yojana is listed under Part A of the statement which implies that 100% of its provisions are meant for women. It must be noted that although, 80% of houses constructed under

scheme are registered in the name of women, the remaining 20% are jointly held by husband and wife (Ministry of Rural Development 2009-10), thereby making its inclusion in Part A, incorrect. Another important concern is the exclusion of important schemes such as Public Distribution System and National Programme for Adolescent Girls which have a significant impact on women from the GBS.

Allocations for Goal 2 (universal primary education) have registered a moderate increase in the last three years on account of a rise in budgetary allocation for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

As far as Goal 3 is concerned (promoting gender equality and women's empowerment), allocations for 2008-09 in comparison to 2010-11 do show a notable increase of 39%. However, the increase in allocations in the last two years has been a moderate 17%. That too is mainly due to the introduction of two new schemes – Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and the National Empowerment Mission. There has also been a prominent increase in schemes such as Priyadarshini, Scholarship schemes meant for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and overall budget of the Department of School Education and Literacy and the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

Allocations for addressing child mortality (Goal 4) have registered only a marginal increase in the last three years. From the year 2008-09, the allocations have increased from Rs. 3066.01 crore to a meagre Rs. 3850 crore.

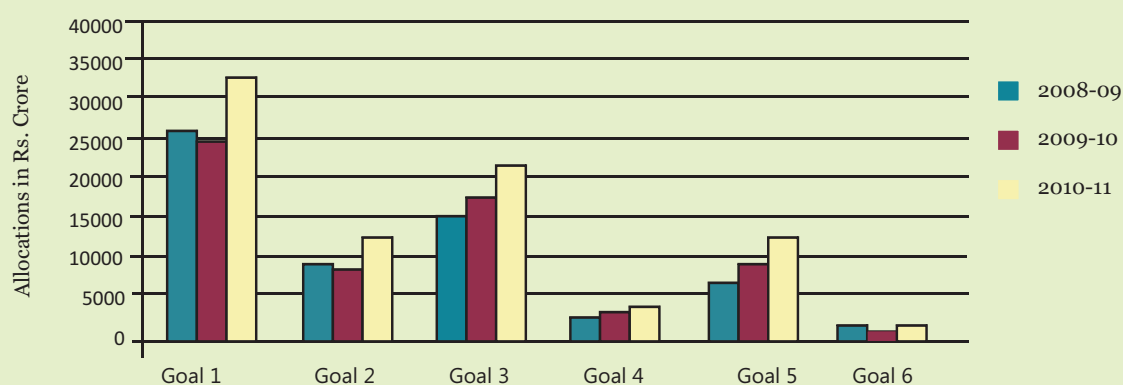
With regard to Goal 5 which aims at improving maternal health, there has been an increase in allocations for schemes like the Rural Family Welfare Services and Urban Family Welfare Services. As mentioned earlier, a new scheme aimed at providing conditional benefits to pregnant women has also been introduced.

Allocations for Goal 6 have registered a slight decline from Rs. 1178 (2008-09 RE) to Rs. 1160 crore (2010-11 BE). This has been mainly on account of a decline in allocations for Contraception.

Key areas such as water and sanitation, environment and sustainable development and improvement in the living conditions of the urban poor do not find a mention in the gender budgeting statement. Important schemes like Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme, total sanitation campaign, JNNURM, National Slum Development Programme are significant omissions. Therefore, we do not see any allocations for Goal 7.

**FIGURE 2**

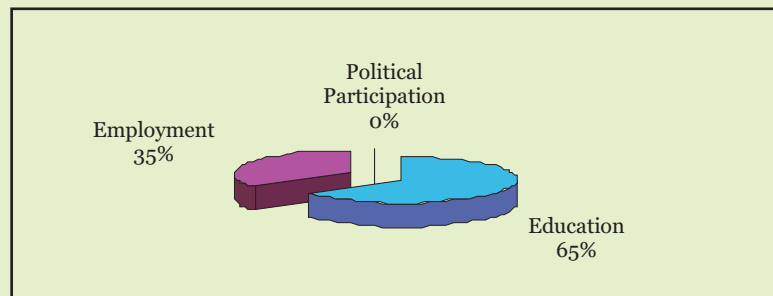
**Trend in Allocations for MDGs from 2008-09 to 2010-11**



If we look at the trend in allocations for the MDGs from 2008-09 to 2010-11 (refer to figure 2), it is evident that the largest chunk of funds earmarked for women are for schemes addressing Goal 1. This can be attributed to the fact that large schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), IAY and Mid Day Meal Scheme. This is followed by allocations for Goal 3 and Goal 2.

**FIGURE 3**

**Allocations for Goal 3 in 2010-11: Priorities for the three indicators**

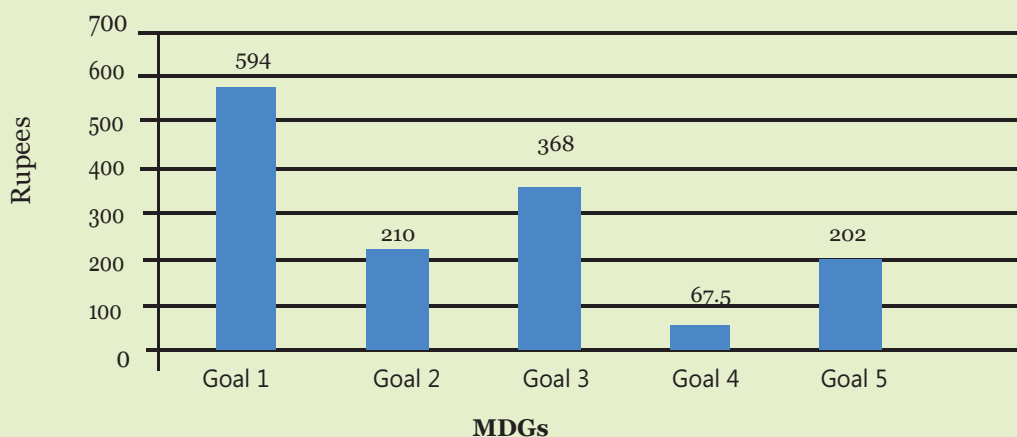


### Allocations for MDGs in 2010-11

Further analysis of allocations in 2010-11 BE for Goal 3 reveals that education received the largest pool of funds followed by wage employment (refer to figure 3). This includes allocations for schemes aimed at improving ratio of girls to boys in the primary, secondary and higher education (Indicator 1) and promoting women's employment in the non-agricultural sector (Indicator 2). However, with regard to indicator 3 i.e. increasing the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament, no noteworthy steps have been taken by the government. As we know, a critical legislation like the Women's Reservation Bill is still pending in the Lower House. However, it must be mentioned that a few efforts to enhance the capacity of women leaders at the grassroots have been taken by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The schemes under the ministry do not feature here because the indicator squarely mentions increase in the number of women legislators at the national level.

**FIGURE 4**

**Per Capita Allocation for Women in 2010-11**



### Per Capita Allocations for the different MDGs in 2010-11:

If we take the projected population of females for 2011, i.e. 570206000, an indicative estimate of the per capita allocation for girls/women vis-à-vis the different MDGs can be drawn up. As figure 4 reveals, this year the government has allocated Rs. 594 per woman to address Goal 1 i.e. poverty and hunger, while only Rs. 202 has been allocated per capita to address maternal health.



## Relating Outlays to Outcomes

While an assessment of the quantum of allocations helps us understand the government's priorities for different sectors, it is equally important to examine whether such allocations translate into better outcomes for its intended beneficiaries.

**Table 2**

Goals	Outcome Indicators	
Education	Drop Out Rate of SC Girls (for Class I-X)	73.42%
	Drop Out Rate of ST Girls (for Class I-X)	77.49%
	Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.	
Maternal Health	Maternal Mortality	301 per 1,00,000 live births
	Source: SRS 2001-2003	
Political Participation	Women in National Legislature	9.7%
	Source; Parliament of India Website	

If we look at the outcome indicators available for different areas, the situation does not appear to be very encouraging (refer to table 2). For instance, although there has been significant improvement in the enrolment rate of girls over the years, the drop out rates for girls particularly from the marginalised communities continues to be alarmingly high. Similar concerns emerge in the area of maternal health. Although, the maternal mortality rate has declined, the overall figure masks the huge interstate variations. High percentage of maternal deaths continue to occur in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Assam. If we look at women's political participation, at the national level the participation of women in the national legislature remains very low. Currently the percentage of women in the Parliament is only 9.7% which is far less than that of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Rwanda.

One of the major reasons for unsatisfactory outcomes is underutilisation of funds. This has been a key findings of study by Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (unpublished) on maternal health in two districts of UP and Chhattisgarh. The study clearly establishes the fact that better outlays do not necessarily translate into better outcomes. Two broad concerns can be identified: (a) pattern of spending and (b) quality of spending.

Data collected from the two districts indicate that maternal health grants under plan schemes are crowded towards the latter part of the fiscal year due to delays in clearance of funds and slow implementation at the district and block levels. Fund release and spending is also skewed across critical components within schemes or at the district, block and panchayat levels, since there are no comprehensive guidelines for them under the NRHM umbrella. In Chattisgarh, there were extremely low levels of und utilization in areas like mobile medical units, selection/training of ASHA/mitanin (community health volunteers) and staff, programme management and upgrading of district hospitals while family planning activities, the polio eradication campaign and JSY saw high utilization between 2006 and 2008. UP meanwhile lacks a proper State Programme Management Unit for monitoring state or Central Schemes. A similar pattern of underutilisation mars the implementation of many of the flagship programmes of the government.

## Assessment of some flagship schemes of the Union government from a gender lens

In this section we look at a few flagship schemes to assess whether outlays translate into better outcomes for women. We will focus on three issues namely maternal health, opportunities for employment (including working conditions) and education, that are evidently the focus of the MDGs as far as woman are concerned.

With regard to education of the girl child, the total outlay by the Union government in 2010-11 is Rs. 15,057 crore. Taking the projected population of girl children in the 5-18 years age group in 2011, i.e. 15.7 crore, an indicative estimate of the per capita expenditure on education of a girl child by the Union government would be Rs. 959. This is far less than the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by an average parent in providing elementary education at Rs.1163 and secondary/higher secondary education at Rs.2391 for girls in the country (NSS 64th Round). The situation could not have been more alarming. Spending by the Union government to ensure equal participation and retention of the girl child in the education system does not suffice and must be increased substantially (Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability 2010).

Another significant area is employment. In recent years the most significant initiative has been the introduction of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which entitles each rural household 100 days of guaranteed wage employment. The Act stipulates, 'priority shall be given to women in such a way that atleast one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered for work under the Act'. Thus from a gender perspective, the scheme holds great promise for protecting women's access through proactive inclusion especially in the context of larger economic dependence of women on men. However, various studies conducted to evaluate the implementation of the scheme from a gender lens paint a rather bleak picture. The major concerns include (a) excessive focus on labour intensive works often result in significantly lower earnings for women, (b) denial of jobcards to single women and (c) lack of worksite facilities especially crèche facility. All these, in addition to several other factors act as major deterrents for women seeking employment outside the home (see Narayanan, 2008; Khera and Nayak, 2009; PRIA, 2007).

A deeper analysis of schemes having a direct or indirect impact on women's employment reveals a broad trend. Almost all major government programmes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, National Rural Health Mission and ICDS – rely on unpaid and underpaid labour of women. Women work either as volunteers or are paid a meagre salary (Ghosh, 2009). For instance, in the case of ICDS, the Anganwadi Workers and Helpers are extremely overburdened, but are not even paid the minimum wages. Similar is the case with Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) and para teachers who are the frontline service providers for schemes related to education and health.

Lastly, with respect to maternal health, the government has taken a few significant initiatives. Amongst these is the Janani Surakasha Yojana (JSY) which seeks to promote institutional deliveries. However, as pointed out by many women's rights activists, the scope of the interventions under JSY are extremely narrow and limited. They argue that despite the thrust on institutional delivery, most Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Community Health Centres (CHCs) and district hospitals lack even the basic infrastructure and human resources. This raises doubts about the effectiveness of these institutions to become safe places to deliver. A persistent demand raised by civil society activists has been the need to shift the focus from institutional delivery to safe delivery so that women can exercise the choice of where they want to deliver. Moreover, with the inclusion of the National Maternity Benefit Scheme under JSY, the nutrition component has been gravely neglected.

## Concluding remarks

The above analysis reveals that the allocations for women vis-à-vis the MDGs are mainly aimed at improving the ratio of girls to boys in the primary, secondary and higher education and promoting women's employment in the non-agricultural sector. However, there are larger concerns that remain unaddressed. Some of these are (a) the overall allocations for women as proportion to the total Union Government expenditure remains abysmal; (b) there are many bottlenecks which impede the delivery of services to women; and (c) the manner in which certain schemes have been conceptualized may result in reinforcing gender stereotypes and inequalities, instead of challenging them. It is important to remember that the creation of an enabling environment for women, cannot be limited to certain schemes which address women's immediate concerns and needs but at the same time also work to challenge insidious and unequal power relations and structural inequities in our society.

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