



GENDER BUDGETING AND WOMEN EDUCATION

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Abstract

Women constitute almost half of the population in the world. Women education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women play important role in development of the country. India is poised to emerge as one of most developed nations by 2020, more literate, knowledgeable and economically at the forefront. No doubt, women will play a vital role in contributing country's development. Women power is crucial to the economic growth of any country. In India this is yet to meet the requirement despite of reform. Though India could well become one of the world's largest economies in the world, but it hinders due to lack of women's participation. One of the reason is due to illiteracy of women in India. The objective of writing this paper is that till today India has not targeted 100% literacy, may be one of reason is gender budgeting is not taken into consideration. Through gender budgeting women education will improve and will benefit the country.

KEYWORDS: *gender budgeting, women education.*

INTRODUCTION

Indian women is at par with men in all kinds of tasks like reaching the moon, conquering mount everest and participating in all fields. All this is possible because of education and profound impact it had has on women. Women constitute almost half of the population in the world. Women education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women play important role in development of the country. India is poised to emerge as one of most developed nations by 2020, more literate,

knowledgeable and economically at the forefront. No doubt, women will play a vital role in contributing country's development. Women power is crucial to the economic growth of any country. In India this is yet to meet the requirement despite of reform. Though India could well become one of the world's largest economies in the world, but it hinders due to lack of women's participation. The National Committee on Women's Education was set up by the Government in May 1958, with Shrimati Durgabai Deshmukh as Chairman. The Committee, in its report published in 1959, recommended co-education up to the middle school stage but separate institutions for girls at the high school stage where more diversified curriculum suited to girls should be introduced. The Committee desired ample provision for school mothers, creches, training of women teachers and employment facilities for adult women.

Gender Budgeting

“Gender budgeting initiatives analyze how governments raise and spend public money, with the aim of securing gender equality in decision-making about public resource allocation and gender equality in the distribution of the impact of government budgets, both in their benefits and in their burdens. The impact of government budgets on the most disadvantaged groups of women is a focus of special attention.” (IRDC, 2001)

It is the budget that acknowledges the gender pattern in society and allocates money to implement policies and programmes that will change these patterns in a way that moves towards the more gender equal society. Gender budget initiatives are exercises that aim to move the country in the direction of a gender responsive budget.

Gender budgeting initiatives are known by a range of different names like women's budget, gender sensitive budgets and applied gender budget analysis. Gender Budget Initiatives are tools and processes designed to facilitate a gender analysis in the formulation of government budgets and in the allocation of resources. Gender budgets are not separate budgets for women, they are attempts to break down or disaggregate the government's mainstream budget according to its impacts on women and men.

Need for gender budgeting:

The budget is the most important policy instrument of government because no other policy will work without money as such, the government budget can be a powerful tool in transforming our country.

The women and girls not only comprise large part of the valuable human resource of the country, there are also individuals and their socio economic development sets the foundation for sustainable growth of the economy and the society as a whole. In addition, the constitution of India has mandated equality for every citizen of India as a fundamental right.

Never the less, the reality is that women in India continue to face disparities in access and excess to control over resources. These disparities are reflected in indicators of health nutrition literacy educational attainment, skill levels, occupation status among others the poor status to women is also reflected in the fact that the female ratio for 0 to 6 age groups decline from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001 and 917 in 2011 implying the millions of girls went missing in just a decade or female feticide.

There are a number of gender specific barriers which prevent women and girls from gaining access to their rightful share in the flow of public goods and services. Unless these barriers are addressed in the planning and development process, the fruits of economic growth are likely to completely bypass a significant section of the country's population.

One of the tools that can be used to promote women's equality and empowerment is gender-budgeting. Because unless sufficient money is allocated to implement all the other tools and strategies they will not be effective.

Gender budgeting is based on the modern idea that budgeting is not simply an accounting or book keeping exercise. Instead budgeting is a key part of the planning and implementation process. Thus budget should follow policies rather than policies being determined by budgets and among the policies that budgets should follow, is government of India's Commitment to promoting gender equality.

Gender Budgeting serves varied purposes. These include, among others:

- Identifying the needs of women and reprioritizing and /or increasing expenditure to meet these needs.
- Supporting gender mainstreaming in macroeconomics.

- Strengthening civil society participation in economic policymaking
- Enhancing the linkage between economic and social policy outcomes
- Tracking public expenditure against gender and development policy commitments ;
and
- Contributing to the attainment of of the millennium Development goals(MDGs).

Gender budgeting can help to improve economic governance and financial management. It can provide feedback to government on whether it is meeting the needs of different groups of women and men girls and boys. These different groups might be rich or poor women and men, those from different caste and tribes, those from rural and urban areas, young vs old and so on.

GENDER BUDGETING AND INDIA'S INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT

A number of international meetings have been convened that have the potential for transforming the reality of women's lives. At many of these meetings government including government of India, have committed taking action to improve the situation of women. The following are among the international commitments to which government of India is party:

- The convention of the elimination of all forms of discrimination Against women (CEDAW), which government of India has signed in 1980.
- The world conference of human rights in Vienna(1993) asserted that women's rights are human rights.
- The international conference on population and development(ICPD) in Cairo (1994) placed women's rights and health at the centre of population and development strategies.
- At the fourth conference of women in Beijing (1995), government declared their determination "advanced the goals of equality development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity".
- In the (1995) commonwealth plan of action on gender and development governments declared their vision of a world "in which men and women have equal rights and opportunities in all stages of their lives."

WHAT GENDER BUDGETING IS AND IS NOT?

Gender budgeting and policies are often assumed to affect everyone more or less equally to serve the public interest and the needs of the general person. This is a myth for 2 reasons :

1. The type and extents of needs differ between people and so there is no general person even if we look to a single state or country.
2. All government budgeting involves prioritization, because there is never enough money to address needs fully.

The ideal government budget focuses in those who are least able to provide for themselves. Gender budgeting thus tends to focus more on the needs of the women's and girls than those of men and boys, because women and girls are usually at a disadvantage economically and in other ways.

Gender budgeting looks at every part of the government budget to access how it will address the different needs of women and men girls and boys & different groups of women and men girls and boys. For example, in the area of health male and female people will have similar needs in respect to influenza and malaria. But women will have greater needs than men in terms of reproductive health.

Gender budgeting initiatives do not seek to create separate budgets to address women or genders concern. The overall aim is to ensure that every part of the government budget takes gender are sometimes helpful in addressing specific needs, but they are of limited use if the rest of the budget continues to privilege some citizens above others

The Scope of Gender Budgeting:

Gender Budgeting expands our concept of the economy to include things that are not usually valued in money. In particular, gender budgeting recognizes the unpaid care economy the work that mainly women do in bearing, rearing and caring for their families and the people in our society. Gender budgeting recognizes that unless this unpaid care work is done, the economy will not function effectively and people's well-being will be very negatively affected. Government therefore needs to find ways of supporting those who do this unpaid care works lessening their burden, and ensuring that the work is done well.

Gender budgeting should, however not be confined to the social or soft areas such as education, health and welfare. Gender budgeting is a tool for gender mainstreaming in the

developmental process as a whole. As such it needs also to be applied in areas such as agriculture, power, defence, commerce and information technology where the gender implication may not be immediately apparent.

Gender budgeting focuses on women:

Around the world, gender budgeting tends to focus on women because:

- Nearly 2/3rd of the illiterate people in the world are women.
- In developing countries, maternal mortality continues to be a leading cause of death for women of reproductive age.
- Women are underrepresented in decision-making in both government and business sectors, especially at senior levels.
- Women's economic work continues to be very different in nature from men's. Women are engaged in less formal lower status types of work and continue to receive less pay than men for the same work.
- Women also continue to do most of the unpaid work of bearing, rearing and caring for children and other citizens.

Women's component plan and gender budgeting in five year plan:

The planning commission of India has always focussed on women's issues as per the perceptions of their members on women's status within the economy. The first five year plan to eight five year supported women development. The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) marked a significant progress with 30% of funds earmarked in all women's related sectors. It adopted the 'Women's Component Plan' as one of the major strategies and directed both the Central and State Governments to ensure not less than 30 per cent of the funds/benefits are earmarked in all the women's related sectors.

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) highlighted on the need for gender budgeting to loosely commitments into budgetary commitments. It focused on tying up '...two effective concepts of Women Component Plan and Gender Budgeting to play a complementary role to each other'.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007- 2012) further reiterated the commitment to gender budgeting and clearly stated that, 'gender equity requires adequate provisions to be made in policies and schemes across Ministries and Departments. It also entails strict adherence to gender budgeting across the board'. The Eleventh Plan also envisaged the incorporation of Gender Budgeting beyond traditional areas like health, education etc to so called 'gender neutral' sectors like Transport, Power, Telecommunications, Defence, etc. In addition, the plan document emphasized on engendering of important national macro-economic policies and striving for inter-sectoral convergence.

Empowerment of women and gender budgeting:

Empowerment of women is closely linked to the opportunities they have in education, health and economic and political participation. Government has been operationalising this approach through legislative and programmatic intervention as well as by mainstreaming gender into the development planning process.

Major advancements over the years in the following women education:

The SarvaShikshaAbhiyaan has had positive outcomes for girl-child education leading to an increase in the gender parity index in primary (0.94) as well as upper primary (09.92) education. Enrolment of girls at primary level and upper primary level increased over the years. Data also show the number of girls in schools in the age-group of 5-14 years has increased from 79.6% in 2004-5 to 87.7% in 2009-10.similarly the number of girls in the educational system in the 15-19 years age-group increased from 40.3% to 54.3% and in the age-group 20-4 years from 7.6% to 12.8% over the same period.

Promoting gender mainstreaming through gender budgeting:

A significant breakthrough was the introduction of the gender budgeting statement in 2005-6 which is placed in parliament with the Union Budget documents every year. It serves as a reporting mechanism and provides an indicator of the funds flowing to women. Over the years the number of ministries/ departments reporting an the gender budgeting statement has gone up from 9(2005-6) to 29(2011-12). The magnitude of gender budgeting allocations as a % of total budget has also gone up from 2.79% in 2005-6 to 6.22% in 2011-12.

Researcher`s views:

Gender mainstreaming has to be a guiding force in the activities to maximize public expenditure and benefits for women. Gender budgeting should be seen as a way of shaping the main government budget rather than as an add on. It is more important to create a general awareness and understanding of the problems of women`s employment in all the top policy and decision making and executive personnel. The best way is to educate the children, orient the teachers, examine the text books and teaching aids and ensure that the next generation grows up with new thinking. Though more and more reforms are there for women`s education but awareness should be created by teacher educators in relation to take benefit from the policies. Gender budgeting can lead to women education and in support of women`s development in our country.

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