



Gender Budgeting in India: A Tool for Women Empowerment

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Gender Budgeting:

Gender Budgeting is a tool for gender mainstreaming, which uses the Budget as an entry point to apply a gender lens to the entire policy process. Gender Budget is not a separate Budget and also not about spending the same on women and men. Further, it is not just about addressing programs targeted specifically at women and girls, and not confined to budgets alone. In short, Gender Budgeting covers analyzing various economic policies of the Government from a gender perspective. It involves gender-sensitive formulation, resource allocation, and continuous monitoring to address vulnerabilities face by women throughout their lifecycle in areas that are reflective of the general public, such as education, health and nutrition. Gender budgeting is becoming increasingly important and necessary in the contemporary Indian setting, where women were traditionally isolated, underestimated and marginalized for a variety of reasons. Despite the fact that the Indian government's experience with gender budgeting is frequently cited as a model for other gender budgeting efforts, there seems to be a clear disparity between what was envisioned and what has been achieved under the banner of gender budgeting in the country. The Gender Budgeting Handbook, 2015, released by the Ministry of women and child Development observes that, "Gender Budgeting is concerned with gender-sensitive formulation of legislation, policies, plans, programs and schemes; allocation and collection of resources; implementation and execution; monitoring, revive, audit and impact assessment of programs and schemes; and follow-up corrective action to address gender disparities". It is not only about the Budget and it is a continuous process that must be applied to all levels and stages of the policy process.

Methodology:

This study makes use of the secondary data collected from the Government of India's gender budgeting statements and the Ministry of Women and Child Development's annual publications. The data were analyzed using various tools for arriving at broad findings of this study.

Findings:

There seems to be a clear disparity between what was envisioned and what has been achieved under the banner of gender budgeting in the country. There is an urgent need for particular policy involvement from the government in order to address the issue of violence against women and to promote gender equality.

Introduction of Gender Budgeting:

Women constitute half of India's Population, ensuring gender equality and women's empowerments are important accelerators for the country's rapid economic development. India is fundamentally patriarchal it is only through the empowerment of women that overall human development will be possible. Women currently lag far behind their male counterparts in term of education, health, earnings and decision making at both the household and administrative levels. According to the Global Gender Gap Index, India was rated 114th out of 142 nations in 2015. India's ranking on the Global Gender Gap Index continues to decline with the country dropping from 108th position in 2019 to 112th position among 153 countries in 2020 and further 140th position among 156 countries in 2021. Women and girls are being denied the opportunity to share in the benefits of growth and development, which would be in the country's long-term prospects because the socio-economic advancement of women's critical to the funding for initiative and programs that address the discrimination and disadvantages experienced by women on a national and international level. It is the core goal of gender budgeting to improve budgets and related tactics in order to promote gender equality. The Union Budget 2023-24 has been [resented in the Parliament. In 2005, the Government had started releasing a Gender Budget along with the Union Budget. Gender Budgeting is a strategy to ensure that promised on gender equality through Gender Budgeting has remained a challenge. The share of Gender Budget (in total Government Budget) has remained low despite growing at an annualized rate 13% since inception. With some reforms in the implementation, the Government can improve the efficacy of Gender Budgeting in terms of outcomes.

Evolution of Gender Budgeting: It was first introduced in 1984 in Australia to evaluate the impact of the national budget on women and girls. The approach was adopted by other countries including Canada, South Africa and Philippines etc. In 1995, the United Nations' Beijing Platform for Action called for integrating a gender perspective into government budget processes.

In 2015, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) called for adequate resources and tools to track budget allocations for gender equality(SDG indicator 5.c.1). The Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Development (2015) recognized the importance of tracking resource allocations for gender equality and strengthening capacity for Gender Budgeting.

In 2020, G20-Women, an official engagement group to the G20, called for greater investment in GB to ensure that fiscal policies advance gender equality in the short and long-term recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Status of Gender Budgeting:

The Government of India had adopted Gender Budgeting in 2005-06. In India, Gender Budgeting comprises two parts:

1. Part A reflects women-Specific Schemes i.e., those which have 100% allocation for women;
2. Part B reflects Pro-Women Schemes i.e., those where at least 30% of the allocation is for women.

The Gender budgeting framework has helped the gender-neutral ministries to design new programs for women.

Importance of Gender Budgeting:

Women and girls face various vulnerabilities and gender budgeting is crucial to achieve gender equality and empowerment. It ensures the efficient allocation of public resources based on different gender needs addressing discrimination and exploitation. Gender Budgeting also takes into account gender-based disparities to ensure legislations, programmes & schemes are gender sensitive, Legal women-specific frameworks such as the Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013, Sexual Harassment of Women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressed) Act, 2013 etc. have been strengthened through this lens.

Why Emphasis on Gender?

- Women represent nearly 49% of the total population in the country.
- Women face disparities in access to and control over services and resources.
- There are specific needs of women that need to be addressed specifically.
- Bulk of the public expenditure and policy concerns are in the "Gender Neutral Sectors".

The Five-Step Framework for Gender Budgeting

Step - 1: Situation analysis in relation to the condition of women.

Step - 2: An assessment of the extent to which a particular sector's policy addressed gender issues and gaps described in Step 1.

Step - 3: An assessment of the adequacy of budget allocations to implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes identified in Step-2.

Step- 4: Monitoring whether the money was spent as planned, what was delivered and to whom?

Step - 5: An assessment of the impact of the policies/programmes/schemes and the extent to which the situation described in step-1 has changed.



Rationale Behind Gender Budgeting:

The following aspect is relevant in understanding the rationale behind Gender Budgeting:

- **Equality vs. Efficiency**

Integrating gender perspective into budgetary policy has dual dimensions an equality dimension and an efficiency dimension.

- **Systemic Differences across Gender**

Men and women frequently have different priorities for budgetary policies and are, therefore, affected differently by most of these policies due to gender differentials in terms of constraints, options, incentives and needs.

- **Problem of Gender Neutrality in the Budgets**

Gender-neutral budgets ignore the gender specific impacts of budgetary policies. Generally Budgeting involves four components:-

- i. Budgetary allocation of resources to various heads;
- ii. The actual Government outlays on various heads;
- iii. Accounting of how resources are utilized for a particular purpose (e.g. on administrative overheads and wages and salaries, operation and maintenance etc.);
- iv. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the resources utilized in delivering the intended results.

- **Ensuring Transparency and Accountability**

Gender-budgeting ensures transparency in the budgetary allocation for women and accordingly enhances accountability in the utilization of such allocations.

Seventh Plan (1985-1990): Identical 27 major women-specific schemes for monitoring to assess quantum of funds/benefits flowing to women.

Eighth Plan (1992-1997): Highlighted the need to ensure a definite flow of funds from general developmental sectors to women-specific programmes.

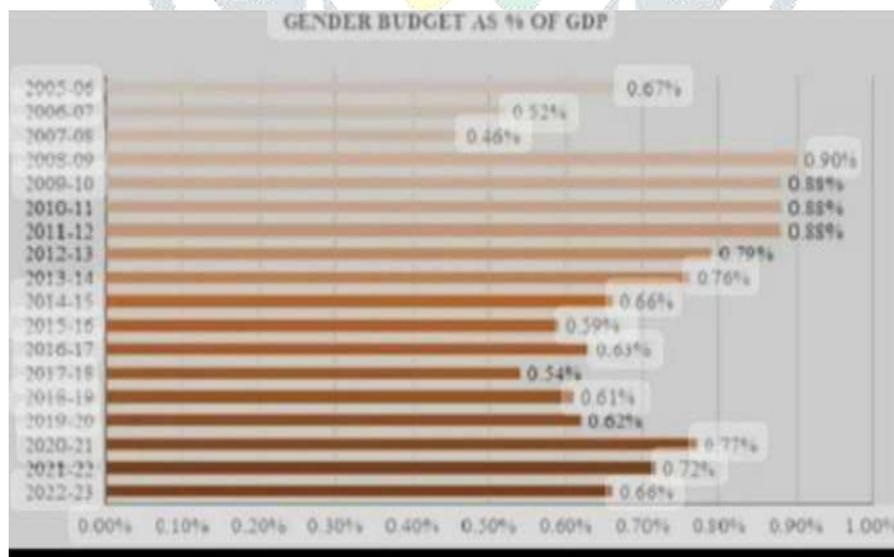
Ninth Plan (1997-2002): Worked out Women's Component Plan (WCP) - 30% of funds were sought to be earmarked in all women related sectors.

Tenth Plan (2002-2007): Aimed at tying up concepts of WCP and Gender Budgeting.

Eleventh Plan (2007-2012): Emphasised gender equity to find due place in policies and schemes across Ministries and Departments.

Twelfth Plan (2012-2017): Further strengthening the process of Gender Budgeting and extending its reach to all Ministries, Departments and State Governments.

Gender Budgeting in India - Evolution



Implementation of Gender Budgeting:

Gender Budgeting is implemented through Nodal authorities including the Ministry of Women and Child Development at the Central level, spearhead gender budgeting implementation. Department of Women & Child Development/Social Welfare, Finance or Planning Department is also responsible for gender-budget implementation in States & Union Territories. Districts subs for Empowerment of Women are also active in States and Union Territories to co-ordinate and fulfill the objective of schemes. These hubs are also required to have at least one gender specialist.

Role of the Ministry of Women and child Development in Gender Budgeting:

The Ministry has made consistent efforts to support the institutionalization of GB at the State/UT level. The Ministry also provides financial support to Government training institutions for capacity building of Government officials to enhance Gender Budgeting in States/UTs.



Source: Mint, Lok Sabha
Gender Budgeting in the States - Year of Adoption

In a reply to a question in the LookSabah (March 2021), the Government responded that 27 States/UTs have adopted Gender Budgeting and have taken various steps to address gender gaps and advance gender equality. Goa, Haryana, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Telangana, Chandigarh, Ladakh, Puducherry haven't adopted GB yet. These steps by States include identification of a nodal Department for Gender Budgeting, Constitution of Gender Budgeting Cells, formulation of State Women/Girls Policy, creation of Gender Data Bank and offering Gender Budget Statement in the State Budget. Additionally, 21 States/UTs have established designated State Nodal Centers for sustained capacity building efforts on GB.

Budgetary Allocations:

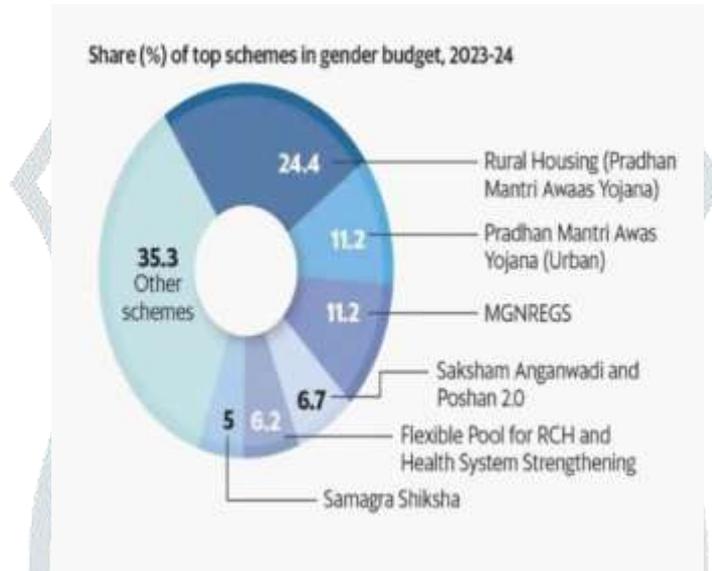
India's Gender Budget has allocated INR 2.23 lakh crore in the Union Budget 2023-24. This is ~30% higher than budgetary allocation in 2022-23 (INR 1.71 lakh crore, Budget estimate) but only ~2% than actual allocation (INR 2, 18 lakh crore, Revised Estimate).

Part A of the Gender Budget has allotted over INR 88,000 crore in FY 2023-24. It is dominated by the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (both Urban and Rural Housing). These two schemes attracted 90% of the total funding for part A of the Gender Budget. Part B has received INR 1.35 lakh crore. Part B comprises several schemes pertaining to rural development, health, education and women empowerment.

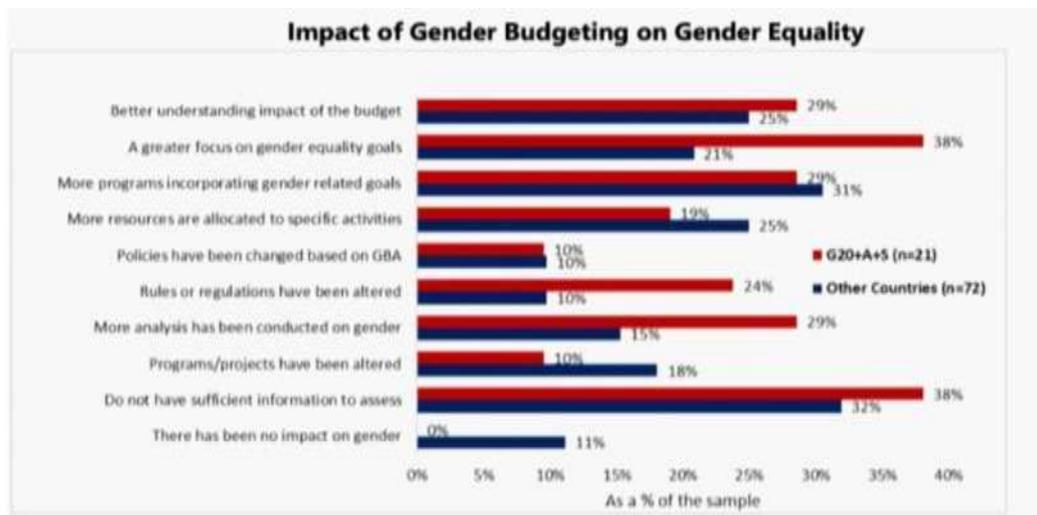
Important women-centric schemes include:

- Safe City Project, and initiative under the Nirbhaya Fund Scheme for ensuring safety of women and children;

- (b) SAMBHAL a sub-scheme comprising of old schemes like One Stop Center, Women Helpline and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao;
- (c) SAMARTHYA, included women empowerment programmes like Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana and Swadhar Greh. SAMBAL and SAMARTHYA are part of the larger umbrella scheme 'Mission Shakti', an integrated women empowerment programme.



1. **Understanding Impact of Budget:** Gender budgeting approach leads to better informed policy choices. This approach makes then policy makers more aware of the potential impact of policy decisions on gender.
2. **Better Utilization of Resources:** It can support efforts to not only design, but re-design fiscal policies, adjusting resources to better address persistent gender gaps.
3. **Achievement of Gender Equality Goals:** It leads to greater focus on achieving gender equality goals. A focused approach leads to better results. Is IMF Working paper on the impact of Gender Budgeting in G20 countries noted that Gender Budgeting leads to more programmes incorporating gender related goals. Every country analyzed in the research paper had some positive outcome in terms of Gender equality.



- 1. Wider societal Outcomes:** There are many other factors that impact the achievement of gender equality, including societal attitudes and behaviors. Gender Budgeting practices can make a difference in the way governments consider policy in respect to gender and lead to more conscious and better-informed decision making.

Gender Budgeting Cell:

Gender Budgeting Cell is an institutional mechanism to facilitate the integration of gender analysis into the Government budget, so as to tackle gender imbalances and promote gender equality. At the Government of India level, 57 Ministries and Departments have already set up Gender Budgeting Cells to pursue Gender Budgeting.

Different Stakeholders in Gender Budgeting:

There are a range of different actors who can be involved in Gender Budgeting. They have different roles and carry out different activities. Some of them are:

- Ministry of Finance (both at the Union and State Levels)
- Ministry of Women and child Development/Social Welfare Department.
- Comptroller and Auditor General of India/Local Audit Departments
- Sectoral Ministries like Health, Education, Labor, Agriculture, Power, Roadways, Urban Development, etc.;
- Researchers, Economists and Statisticians
- Civil Society Organizations
- Parliamentarians, Budget-related Committees of both the Houses and other representatives of the people at the municipal/panchayat levels.
- Development Partners/Donors, etc.
- Media

First Gender Budget in India

First Gender Budget in India: India adopted its first gender budget in 2005-06, making a significant step towards addressing gender disparities in resource allocation. Mission Shakti: The government of India launched the "Mission Shakti" initiative under the Ministry of Women of Child Development (MWCD). It comprises two sub-schemes, "Sambal" and "Samarthya". Gender Budgeting comes under the Samarthya sub-scheme.

Gender Budgeting: Annual Report of 2022-23

1. Institutional mechanisms and processed on Gender Budgeting

A. Gender Budget Statement - Reporting Allocations

The Budget is an important entry point to apply agender lens in the entire policy spectrum. A Gender budget Statement is [published annually along eighth the U ion Budget since 2005-06. The General Budget Statement (GBS) is a gender-specific accountability document [reduced by the Government of India with the Union Budget.

In 2022-23, 41 Ministries/Departments/Union Territories reported an amount of RD 1,71,006.47 crores in the GBS, an increase of 11.5 percent over 2021-22.

In November 2022, the MWCD constituted a five-member working Group of GB experts to review the format and methodology of then GBS and suggest measures to strengthen it.

A. Gender Budget Cells

The Ministry of Finance mandated setting up of Gender Budget Cells (GBCs) to implement Gender Budgeting initiatives in each Ministry/Development in 2004-05. In October 2021, MWCD sent D>O Letters to all Ministries/Departments to strengthen and reconstitute GBCs, nominate nodal officials and strengthen reporting in the Gender Budget Statement.

B. Gender Aware Policy Appraisal through EFC/PIB Memorandum.

In April 2014, the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) document included a gender perspective at the planning stage for all new programmes, projects and schemes.

C. Using Gender-sensitive Checklists/Suggestions for Gender Budgeting

The Ministry has developed tools for implementing GB. These include specific guidelines in the form of Checklist I and Checklist II based on Five Step Framework, and spatial mapping.

B. Capacity Building Gender Budgeting.

A. Organizing/ Supporting GB Trainings/Workshops

These capacity building exercises involve:

1. Addressing the gap between policy commitment and allocation for women through adequate resource allocation and gender sensitive programme formulation and implementation.
2. Enhancing knowledge and skills on Gender Budgeting tools and mechanisms.

B. State Initiatives on Gender Budgeting

1. MWCD has made consistent efforts you support the institutionalization of GB at the state level. Till date, 27 States/Union Territories have undertaken GB initiatives to address gendergaps.
2. During 2022-23, a total of 18 states and 6 union Territories published Gender Budget Statements. A total of 21 states have designated nodal training institutes for capacity building on GB.

C. Technical Assistance Project to Advance Gender Budgeting in Select States

To strengthen GB in the States, a Technical Assistance (TA) Project on "Advancing Gender Budgeting in Select States in India" with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific (JFPR) was initiated during 2021-21 with MWCD as the Executing Agency. The TA is being implemented by UN Women since August 2020 in four states, viz., Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Manipur with an aim to enhance institutional capacities in gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming of the state departments. The project ends on 31st May, 2023.

D. Collaborations with Key Stakeholders

Following the Honorable Finance Minister's Budget speech 2019-20, a Broad-Based Committee for Gender Analysis and Budgeting was constituted in November 2019 comprising of 12 Government representatives and 11 private stakeholders to evaluate and suggest actions for advancing GB. In 2022-23, the Committee conducted gender analysis of the Union Budget of the past three years and recommendations were drafted to strengthen gender responsiveness of plans and budgets in the form of a report that is under review.

The year 2022-23 has been significant for Gender Budgeting in India. The Ministry has consistently made efforts towards mainstreaming gender as well as advocating gender budgeting interventions at the national and sub-national levels. Two new states initiated implementation of gender budgeting in the year. Across the country, Zonal and Cross-Zonal learning programmes created awareness on the good practices of gender budgeting in different states.

Gender budgeting for 2023-24:

The gender budget for 2023-24 witnessed a 4.3% rise to Rs 2.23 trillion constituting 4.9% of the total budget. Within the gender budget rural housing (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) was allocated the highest budget of Rs 54,487 crore. Mahila Samman Saving Certificate, small savings scheme launched in Budget 2023 to promote investment among women. The government has also included the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme within the gender budget valued at Rs 25,000 crore. Other schemes are Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan, National Health Programme & National Urban Health Mission, the Samagra Shiksha Scheme & Samarthya Scheme. The five Schemes were worth nearly Rs 45,000 crore.

India's Gender Budget 2023-24: Moving towards Women-Led Development

Budget 2023 moves from the paradigm of women's development to women-led development. While presenting the final budget before the 2024 elections, India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, announced that the top-most priority of government is inclusive development which is also the first principle of the seven principles guiding her outlook. She stressed on "the importance of Nari Shakti (women power) as the harbinger of our bright future and for women-led development during the Amrit Kaal (the 25 year-long lead-up to India@100)."

Talking about the economic empowerment of women, Sitharam highlighted the success of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihood Mission that mobilised rural women into 81 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs).

The budget provided financial assistance of more than INR 2,25 lakh crore to small farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, benefitting about three crore women farmers, who will now have access to INR 54,000 crore as part of the scheme.

The Mahila Samman Savings Certificate will, in fact, offer a deposit facility of two lakhs—made either in the name of a woman or girl—for a tenure of two years at a fixed rate of interest of 7.5 per cent with partial withdrawal option.

As per the current statistics, the Union government has, in fact, allocated INR 2,23,219.75 core to the gender budget for schemes focused on mitigating the prevailing gender gap, which is more than 2 percent of the revised estimate of INR 2.18 core in 2022-2023 and 30 percent more than the budget estimate of INR1,71,006.47 core in the last fiscal year.

Part A of the gender budget, in fact , went up to a whopping 70 percent, increasing from INR 26,772.89 crore during the last year to INR 88,044.21 crore this year. The lion's share went to the rural housing scheme as specified under the Pradhan Mantri AwasYojana, which holds an allocation of INR 54,487 crore targeted towards enhancing women's access to land and resources.

Budget allocation for autonomous bodies - that include the Central Adoption Resource Agency, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and the National Commission for Women have also witnessd an increase from INR 162 crore in the earlier budget to INR 168 crore in the current fiscal year.

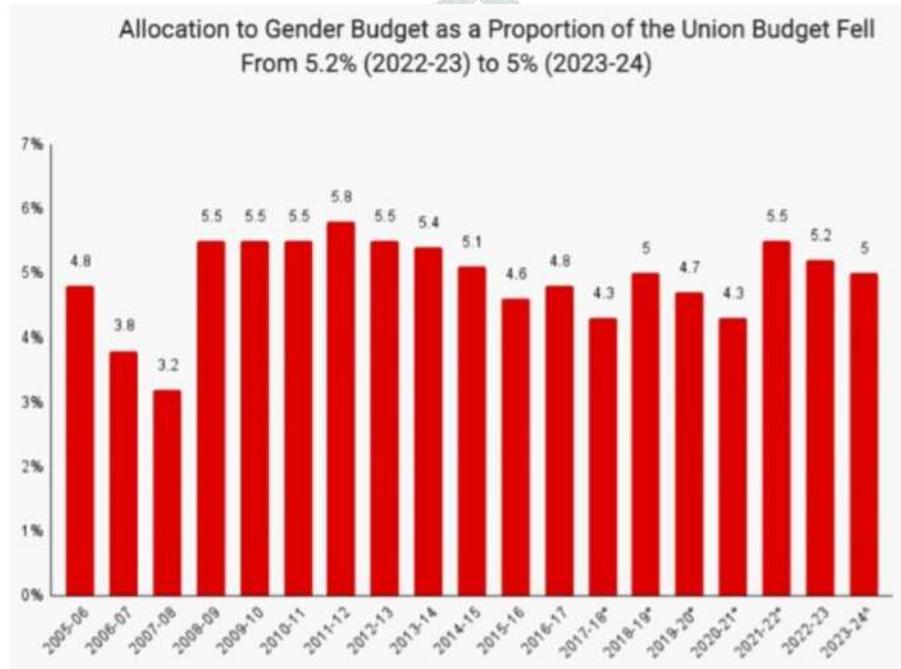
CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH GENDER BUDGETING IN INDIA:

According to a survey by the International Monetary Fund in 2022, the pandemic exacerbated existing

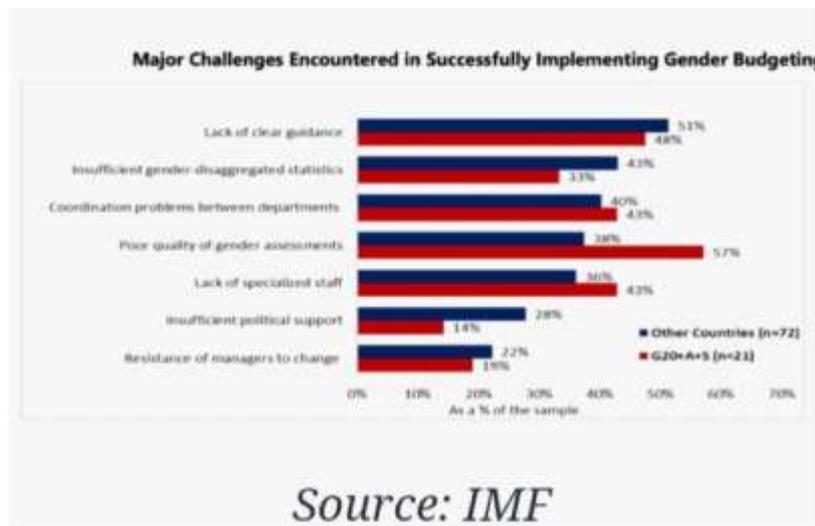
The Union government has also included the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme within the gender budget, which is worth INR 25,000 crore.

gender gaps, emphasizing the need for effective gender budgeting practices. While all G20 Countries have enacted gender-focused financial policies challenging persist in operationalizing, evaluating and monitoring these policies.

- 1. Low Allocation:** Despite increase in allocation in absolute terms, the share of Gender Budget in overall Union Budget has always remained less than 6%. The highest allocation was in 2011-12 at 5.8%.



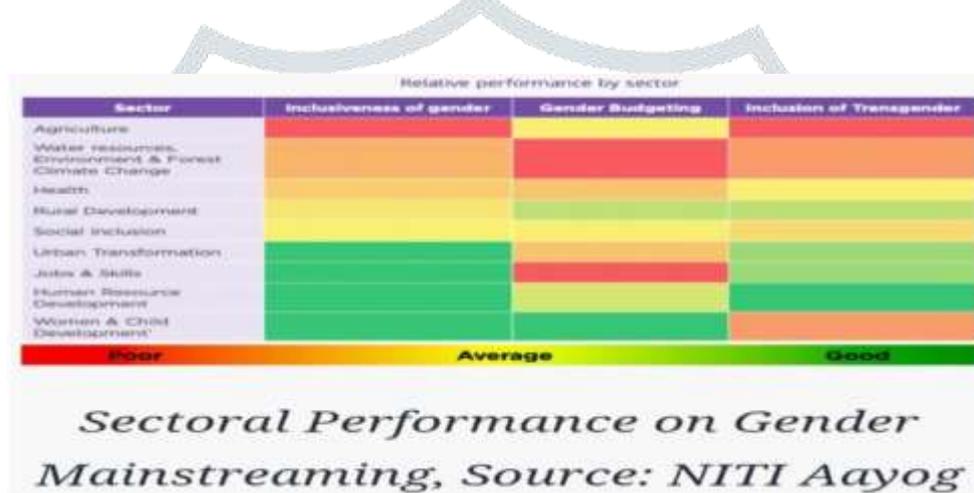
- 2. Skewed Allocation:** The Gender Budget consists of two parts based on fund allocation. Part A with 100% allocation for women has lower share in the Gender Budget. . The highest share for Part A was 46% in FY 2021-22. Since 2005-06, the share of Part A was less than 30% of the overall Gender Budget for 12 years.
- 3. Technical Challenges:** Implementation of Gender Budgeting faces several challenges like lack of guidance, coordination, expertise among personnel, and low quality of gender impact assessments (GIAs).



- 4. Absence of Gender Disaggregated Data:** Lack of gender disaggregated data makes it difficult to formulate effective policies. Additionally, it limits the ability to accurately measure the effectiveness of the Gender

Budgeting policies and initiatives.

5. **Skewed Implementation:** Many sectors/schemes that can have impact on women, do not practice Gender Budgeting. NITI Analog paper on Gender Mainstreaming (June 2022) has noted that only 62 out of 119 centrally-sponsored schemes are practicing GB. The paper noted that the record of Ministers associated with Environment and Climate Change, Urban Transformation, Skill etc., have done poorly.



6. **Under-Reporting:** The Gender Budget does not take into account some of the major schemes that benefit women. For instance, the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) aims to provide household tap connections to all rural households by 2024. Tap water can particularly improve women's quality of life because it is mostly women and girls who gather water in households that do not have regular water access. Yet, none of the allocations in the JJM have been reported in the Gender Budget.
7. **Lack of Accountability:** There is no mandate to have a minimum allocation with respect to Gender Budget. In the absence of any accountability mechanisms regarding Gender Budgeting, monitoring and implementation continue to be inadequate.

Conclusion:

A well designed, appropriately planned and properly integrated training initiative is a step towards achieving integrated Gender Budgeting. The gender budget initiatives definitely suggest that India has recognized the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspects of its developmental agenda with a large share of the current government spending being targeted towards dealing with issues affecting women as compared to those outlined in the previous budgets. This is therefore, a budget that is set to build a future-ready India, ready to compete among the biggest economies of world, moving from the paradigm of women's development to women-led development. Gender Budgeting is one of the most potent tool for gender mainstreaming and achieving gender equality. India has been one of the early adopters of Gender Budgeting. Yet the process faces several challenges. The next step should be to plug these gaps and make the process more effective. As India enters the phase of Amrit Kaal, the Prime Minister has highlighted the importance of the role of Nari Shakti in achieving the goal of developed economy by 2047. This should be actioned through more responsive and effective Gender Budgeting.