

# GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING: A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH TOWARDS WOMEN IN INDIA

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## Abstract

The concept of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is a kind of fiscal tool that uses fiscal-related goals in the budgetary process and helps the country to achieve gender equality. The current study is an attempt to examine Gender Budgeting: a progressive approach towards women in India. The study uses secondary time series data to find out the trends and progress of gender budgeting in India. The study is divided into four sections section one is based on an overview of Gender Budgeting and its origin, the Second Section is based on a Review of the literature on Gender Responsive Budgeting, the third section deals with the trends and progress of gender budgeting in India, and fourth section leads to opportunities and challenges of the gender budgeting in India. The study shows that the overall trends and progress of gender-responsive budgeting have improved in terms of volume and number of programs but in terms of percentage it has declined slowly.

**Keywords:** Gender Responsive Budgeting, Gender Budget, Fiscal Innovation,

## Introduction

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is one of the important concepts used by the authorities to examine the budgetary allocation of resources and its impact on the different genders in the economy.

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The major intention of such a kind of budgeting is to ensure that government funds are distributed in ways that improve the quality of life of different genders in society and promote gender equality in society, especially in women and marginalized groups in society. The idea of gender-responsive budgeting is very important for bringing transparency and accountability in the allocation of resources. In short, it is the approach to ensure that the authorities can use the allocation of their resources in such ways to promote gender equality and the overall well-being of the women in the society which is ultimately good for the society.

The concept of gender budgeting was first developed by Australia in the year 1983-84 (Sharp and Broomhill, 2002; Chakraborty, 2016). The Austrian model of gender budgeting approach has motivated both developed and developing countries to take such initiatives to reduce discrimination against gender equality and women empowerment. Gender budgeting was given more importance by the Fourth World Conference held in Beijing in 1995 based on the "Beijing Platform for Action" (United Nations, 1995) for ensuring the gender perspective and gender needs in budgetary policies and other programs initiated by the authorities. It is the application of gender mainstreaming in the overall budgetary process which involve conducting a gender-based assessment of the budget, incorporation of gender perspective at all budgetary process, and restructuring the overall revenue and expenditure process to promote gender equality. In short, it is a strategy and process to achieve gender equality goals. (Council of Europe, 2005),

The main intention of the gender-responsive budget is to work for everyone. The other aim of gender responsive budgeting is to include gender consideration in all the stages of the allocation process such as planning to the formulation and implementation of the budget. It is very important for everyone for social and economic changes in society. It reduces discrimination and helps government in the smarter ways to formulate and implement various policies for the country. It also improves the overall efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of the budget.

### Gender Responsive Budgeting in India

In India, the concept of gender-responsive budgeting is an approach to fiscal policies and formulation that transforms gender-related gender obligation into fiscal obligation through properly identified processes, resources, and institutional mechanisms that impact both the spending level and revenue level of the budget. (Chakraborty

2014). Gender-responsive budgeting is not a separate budget for women in the country. It is an attempt to disaggregate the government budget according to its differential impact on different segments of society and try to bridge the gap between different genders in society (GOI, 2023).

India, one of the most populous countries in the world next to China, has a lot of gender disparity between various genders in terms of health, education, employment, and opportunities in society. The government of India has adopted a gender-responsive budget in the financial year 2005-06. Today, it is the 18<sup>th</sup> year since it was initiated but the size in terms of distribution of budget of the gender budget remains very small.

Now when we are talking about the gender disparities among women in the country, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) shows that India ranked 122<sup>nd</sup> out of 191<sup>st</sup> countries in the world in the year 2021. As per the World Economic Forum which introduced the Global Gender Gap Index first time in the year 2006. The main intention behind this index is to benchmark the progress of gender parity across the globe based on four parameters such as economic opportunities, education, health, and political leadership. India ranked 127 out of 146 countries in terms of the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) (WEF, 2023). It has improved by eight places from last year's data. Another parameter to measure the gender gap between male and female participation in labour forces and representation in parliaments. Women's representation in the Indian parliament is only 13.4 percent out of the total members and labour force participation rate of women is only 19.2 percent as compared to 70.1 percent of male participation. In terms of the Human Development Index (HDI), India ranked 132 out of 191 countries in the world in the year 2021. Our neighbouring nations such as Sri Lanka 73<sup>rd</sup>, China 79, Bangladesh 129<sup>th</sup> and Bhutan 127<sup>th</sup> ranked, all these nations are above India (UNDP 2021).

### Review of Literature

There is various research carried out by research scholars, policymakers, and educationalists, and their evidence shows that ensuring better gender balance in police, organizations, and society is not only right and fair, but also economically desirable. It shows that if women are economically empowered, it would be good for the country to have more productive output, more development, and a higher level of well-being. Here are some of the reviews of the research carried out by the research scholars to justify the said

statements on gender budgeting and these are as follows. Janet G. Stotsky (2016), examines the approach to gender budgeting that uses fiscal policy and overall administration to promote gender equality and women's development. According to him, properly designing gender budgeting is important for improving government spending. He has provided an overall overview of the policies and practices associated with gender budgeting. Ronnie Downes, Lisa von Trapp, and Scherie Nicol (2017), examine the situation of gender budgeting in OECD countries and response based on the survey from OECD shows that almost half of the OECD countries have introduced gender budgeting, and they are having a good practice of gender budgeting. Chakraborty, and Lekha, (2010), have talked about the new policy space for the feminization of local governance, coupled with an engendered fiscal devolution to the third tier can lead to public expenditure decisions more closely related to women. Stotsky, Janet G., and Asad Zaman, (2016), have stated that the Indian state offers a relatively different framework for assessing the effects of gender budgeting equality at the primary school enrolment level. Another research paper presented by Das Subrat and Mishra Yamini (2006) stated that the gender budget statement presented in the union budget 2006-07 covered a significant number of departments and ministries and that was a very welcome step by the government of India, but the figures given in the statements was highly questionable and quite patriarchal.

### Research Problems

India is one of the most populous countries in the world next to China. As per the census 2011, the female population is 48.5 percent of the total population which is around half of the population in the total population but gender disparity between various genders in terms of health, education, employment, and opportunities in society is high. As per the Gender Inequality Index (GII) which shows that India ranked 122<sup>nd</sup> out of 191<sup>st</sup> countries in the world in the year 2021. India ranked 127 out of 146 countries in terms of the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) (WEF, 2023). it has improved by eight places from last year's data. The women's representation in the Indian parliament is only 13.4 percent out of the total members and labour force participation rate of women is only 19.2 percent as compared to 70.1 percent of male participation. To overcome the disparity among women in India, the government of India has adopted a gender-responsive budget in the financial year 2005-06.

Today it is 18 years now since it was initiated, but the size in terms of distribution of budget in the form of gender budget remains very small. It is around 5 percent of the overall union budget (Akanksha Khullar 2023), Based on these disparities among Indian women, the current study is intended to examine Gender Responsive Budgeting and to find out whether is there any increment is added for the benefits of women and girls in India or not.

### Research Objectives

The study intended to explore the various objectives based on the gender-responsive budget which is one of the tools for women's empowerment in the Indian Economy. The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study trends and progress of the gender-responsive budget in India since 2005-06.
- To study the gender-responsive budget adopted by the Indian States.
- To study the various challenges arising during the implementation of a gender-responsive budget.

### Research Methodology

The current study is an attempt to investigate Gender-Responsive Budgeting: A Progressive Approach Towards Women in India. For this study, secondary data is used. The secondary data is collected from the published work in journals, magazines, newspapers, and various international and national reports. For the data, the time series data is collected from the various issues of the union budget, the government of India. The study period is from 2005-06 to 2022-23. Various statistical tools such as ratio methods, percentage methods, and CAGR methods are used to justify the arguments based on the study.

### Trends and Progress of Gender Responsive Budgeting in India

The existing budget ignores the gender-specific impacts of the overall budgetary policies of the government of India. Normal budgeting involves four dimensions such as 1) the allocation of budget resources to various heads, 2) the actual government expenditure on various heads 3) an accounting of the resources utilization for purposes,

and 4) an evaluation of the effectiveness of the resources utilized in the intended results. In All four components of the budget, gender budgeting involves looking for the women's beneficiaries. In India, the concept of gender budgeting started in 2005-06 and now it is an integral part of the country's budget process. This section deals with the percentage of gender-responsive budgets to national GDP and the percentage of Gender-responsive budgets to union budget expenditure. The analysis is divided into two parts, the first between 2005-06 to 2013-14 and the second part is between 2014-15 to 2022-23. These trends are given below.

### Growth Trends of Gender Responsive Budgeting before 2014-15

This section is going to deal with the growth trends of gender-responsive budgeting in India for the period of nine years starting from 2005-06 to 2013-14. The details analysis of these trends in terms of the total GDP, Total Budgetary Expenditure, Total Gender Budgeting Expenditure, Gender Budgeting to National GDP, and Gender budget to Total Budget is Given below:

As per Table No. 1, the total Budget Allocation expenditure during the financial years 2005-06 was around Rs. 508705.37 Crores while Gender Budgeting allocation was Rs. 24240.51 crores only. The total union budget expenditure to National BDG was less than one percent 0.4 percent, and the total gender budget to the union budget was around 4.8 percent. In the financial year 2013-14, the total budgetary expenditure to GDP increased up to 0.9 percent which is also less than one percent, and the total gender budget to total union budgetary expenditure has increased up to 5.4 percent. The analysis shows that as per the population allocation between different genders, the allocation of the budget is not justified by the government of India. There needs to be a proper allocation of resources in the union budget so that it can be a utilise in proper ways to give the benefits of the specific gender in the society.

As per the data shown in Table No. 2, at the end of the financial year 2013.14, there were 30 ministries and departments plus union territories that set up the gender-responsive cell and had 35 demands as compared to 9 ministries and 10 demands in the year 2005-06. In India MWCD is the primary nodal agency for the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting. As per the data calculated by the research scholar which shows that India's gender-responsive budget remains less than 1 percent of the national GDP and around 5

Table No. 1: Allocation of the Gender Budget (RE) in the Total Budget Expenditure and National GDP, India

Fiscal Years	Total GDP at Factor Cost (Rs. In Crores)	Total Budget Expenditure (Rs. In Crore)	Total Gender Budget (Rs. Crores)	(%) of Gender Budget to GDP	(%) of Gender Budget to Total Budget Expenditure
2005-06		508705.37	24240.51	0.4	4.8
2006-07		581637.04	22251.41	0.3	3.8
2007-08		709373.26	22348.09	0.3	3.2
2008-09		900953.41	49623.35	0.7	5.5
2009-10		1021546.53	56294.22	0.7	5.5
2010-11		1216575.73	67074.68	0.8	5.5
2011-12		1318719.71	76946.09	0.9	5.8
2012-13		1430825.24	78111.44	0.8	5.5
2013-14		1590434.13	85495.42	0.9	5.4

Source: Union Budget, Government of India, Various Issues

Table No. 2: Distribution of the Gender Budget (RE) in the Total Budget, India

Fiscal Years	No. of Ministries/ Departments/ UT	No. of Demand Involved	Magnitude of Total Gender Budget (Rs. Crores)	Percentage of Gender Budget to Total Budget (%)
2005-06	9	10	24240.51	4.8
2006-07	19	24	22251.41	3.8
2007-08	27	33	22348.09	3.2
2008-09	27	33	49623.35	5.5
2009-10	28	33	56294.22	5.5
2010-11	28	33	67074.68	5.5
2011-12	29	34	76946.09	5.8
2012-13	29	34	78111.44	5.5
2013-14	30	35	85495.42	5.4

**Source:** Union Budget, Government of India, Various Issues

percent of the total union budget expenditure. It means out of a 100 percent union budget only around 5 percent of budget expenditure is allocated for the women.

### Growth Trends of Gender Responsive Budgeting after 2014-15

This section is going to deal with the growth trends of gender-responsive budgeting in India for the period of nine years starting from 20013-14 to 2014-15. The details analysis of these trends in terms of the total GDP, Total Budgetary Expenditure, Total Gender Budgeting Expenditure, Gender Budgeting to National GDP, and Gender budget to Total Budget is given in Table No. 3.

As per Table No. 3, the total Budget Allocation expenditure during the financial years 20014-15 was around Rs. 1681158.00 Crores while Gender Budgeting allocation was Rs. 98029.80 crores only. The total union budget expenditure to National GDP was less than one percent 0.9 percent, and the total gender budget to the union budget was around 5.8 percent. In the financial year 2022-23, the total budgetary expenditure to GDP increased up to 1.4 percent which is around more than one percent, and the total gender budget to total union budgetary expenditure has increased up to 4.8 percent

Table No. 3: Allocation of the Gender Budget (RE) in the Total Budget Expenditure and National GDP, India

Fiscal Years	Total GDP at Factor Cost (Rs. In Crores)	Total Budget Expenditure (Rs. In Crore)	Total Gender Budget (Rs. Crores)	(%) of Gender Budget to GDP	(%) of Gender Budget to Total Budget Expenditure
2014-15	1,05,27,674	1681158.00	98029.80	0.9	5.8
2015-16	1,13,69,493	1785391.00	81249.12	0.7	4.6
2016-17	1,23,08,193	2420796.70	96331.83	0.8	4.0
2017-18	1,31,44,582	2694608.60	117221.47	0.9	4.4
2018-19	1,39,92,914	3069848.80	125531.58	0.9	4.1
2019-20	1,45,34,641	3409117.09	142813.3	1.0	4.2
2020-21	1,36,87,118	4095793.65	207261.02	1.5	5.1
2021-22	1,49,25,840	4272488.64	166182.71	1.1	3.9
2022-23	1,60,06,425	4588333.50	218486.76	1.4	4.8

**Source:** Union Budget, Government of India, Various Issues.

as compared to its previous years. These trends were also positive for the growth and development of the countries. The one thing is there in the growth trends of gender-responsive budgeting is that the out of total budget the gender budget is only 4 to 5 percent which is not encouraging to the gender-specific group in the country. The population which is representing around 50 percent of the country and for them the budget allocation is only 5 percent, which is a demotivating factor for them.

Table No. 4: Distribution of the Gender Budget (RE) in the Total Budget, India

Fiscal Years	No. of Ministries/ Departments/ UT	No. of Demand Involved	Magnitude of Total Gender Budget (Rs. Crores)	Percentage of Gender Budget to Total Budget (%)
2014-15	36	39	98029.80	5.8
2015-16	35	35	81249.12	4.6
2016-17	35	47	96331.83	4.0
2017-18	32	48	117221.47	4.4
2018-19	38	49	125531.58	4.1
2019-20	38	49	142813.3	4.2
2020-21	55	55	207261.02	5.1
2021-22	52	52	166182.71	3.9
2022-23	52	52	218486.76	4.8

**Source:** Union Budget, Government of India, Various Issues

As per the data shown in Table No. 4, at the end of the financial year 2022-23, there were 52 ministries and departments plus union territories that set up the gender-responsive cell and had 52 demands as compared to 36 ministries, departments, and union territories and 39 demands in the year 2014-15. The number of ministries and departments which undertook gender-responsive budgeting in India has increased since 2005-06. It shows that India is keen to implement gender-responsive budgeting at a larger scale to give benefits to women and girls in the country.

### Growth Rate of Gender Budget in the Total Budget and National GDP

This section deals with the compound annual growth rate of selected variables for the research work. These details are as follows:

Table No.5: Compounding Annual Growth Rate of Gender Budget in the Total Budget and National GDP, India

Fiscal Years	Total GDP at Factor Cost (Rs. In Crores)	Total Budget Expenditure (Rs. In Crore)	Total Gender Budget (Rs. Crores)
2005-06 to 2013-14			
20014-15 to 2022-23			
2005-06 to 2022-23	5.7	13.0	13.0

**Sources:** Calculated from the Data obtained from the Union Budget. Government of India, various Issue

Table No. 5 shows the compounding annual growth rate of GDP at factor cost, total budget, total gender budget, gender budget to GDP, and Gender Budget to total union budget during the two phases and in a total of the study period. Between 2005-06 to 2013-14, the GDP at factor cost growth rate was 5.8 percent, the total union budget growth rate was 13.5 percent, and the total gender budget growth rate was 15 percent. The CAGR shows that the growth trends of selected variables were more than ten percent in terms of union budget and gender budget, which was a good trend for the gender-responsive budgeting in the Indian economy that amount distribution has increased for the betterment of the specific gender in the country.

Table No. 6: Compounding Annual Growth Rate of No. of Ministries/Departments and Union Territories and Demands, India

Fiscal Years	No. of Ministries/ Departments/UT	No. of Demand Involved
2005-06 to 2013-14	14.3	14.9
20014-15 to 2022-23	4.2	3.2
2005-06 to 2022-23	10.2	9.6

**Sources:** Calculated from the Data obtained from the Union Budget. Government of India, various Issue

Table No. 6 shows that the compounding annual growth rate of ministries, departments and union territories adopting gender-responsive budgeting in India. As the calculation, the total growth rate of ministries and departments as well as the demand involved is 10.2 percent and 9.6 percent respectively.

### *Gender Responsive Budgeting in Indian States*

The Gender Responsive budgeting is well adopted by the Indian states from time to time. As per the report published by the Times of India on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021 by Ambika Pandit, there are Eight states and Union Territories yet to adopt gender budgeting in India. A total of 28 states and union territories have adopted this budgeting process in their states. According to the TOI Report 2021, regarding the states adopting gender-responsive budgeting, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has shared the report and classified the three categories of adopters in the states, first is early adopters, second is subsequent adopters and third is recent adopters.

The states that adopted gender-responsive budgeting at the early stage between 2004-05 to 2006-07 are Odisha, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Lakshadweep, and West Bengal. These states are called early adopters of gender-responsive budgeting. The second category of the state that adopted gender-responsive budgeting between 2007-08 to 2009-10 is Madhya Pradesh, Jammu, and Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland are called subsequent adopters. The last categories of the states that adopted the scheme are Rajasthan, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Andaman and Nicobar, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Manipur, Maharashtra, NCT Delhi, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, and Meghalaya, these states are called as recent adopters of gender budgeting.

### Policy Towards Gender Responsive Budgeting

There have been various policy initiatives taken by the government of India under gender-responsive budgeting since its inception. Gender-responsive budgeting is divided into two parts, part A, which is a 100 percent budget allocation for women and girls-specific programs, and Second Part B which 30 percent budget allocation for women and girls-specific only. Part A of the gender budget is only for women and girls-related programs which are giving benefits only to the specific gender.

### Challenges for the Gender Responsive Budgeting

There is various gender-specific barriers that prevent women and girls from gaining access to the rightful share of public goods and services. Unless these barriers are addressed through the

planning and development process, the fruits of economic growth and development are likely to bypass a significant section of the population which is not good for future growth of any country. To meet the specific needs of women and girls, there is one of the tools is gender-responsive budgeting. It is a tool for women's empowerment in the country. There are various challenges faced by the government at various levels to achieve the real objectives of gender-responsive budgeting and these are as follows:

1. Gender Responsive Budgeting in India has been operating since 2005-06, it has completed around 18 years, but the budget allocated in the name of gender budgeting remains very low.
2. Around 4 to 5 percent budget is allocated by the government of India in the name of gender responsive budgeting which for around half of India's population.
3. If we compare it with the national gross domestic product is only 1 percent of GDP.
4. Another challenge of Gender responsive budgeting is to get the actual data for beneficiaries.
5. The various departments and ministries do not have proper data on women beneficiaries and that's why not possible to assess the overall impact of such kind of budgeting.

### Conclusion

The concept of gender budgeting is an integral part of India's budgetary system. The government of India and the state government are making lots of efforts to consider the gender budget across the government policies and programs. The government of India added many ministries, departments, and union territories which have started gender-responsive cells and created large demand as compared to 2005-06. Even though many departments and ministries are involved in gender-responsive budgeting in India during the budget allocation, still it is very low in terms of GDP and in terms of total budgetary expenditure in the Indian economy. The well-designed infrastructure, appropriate policy decisions proper planning, and properly integrated training program need to be designed to achieve the actual aim of a gender-responsive budgeting system in India.

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