

# Gender Perspective of Union Budgets in India

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## ABSTRACT

*Gender budgeting has been internationally recognized as a key tool for empowering women by incorporating gender perspective and concerns at all levels and stages of development planning, policy, programmes and delivery mechanism. Government of India has adopted budgeting for gender equity as a mission statement and is widely disseminating tools and strategies across ministries and departments. The importance of gender budgeting has been stressed time and again in different forums. The discourse in India on analyzing public expenditure from the gender perspective is usually traced back to the Report of the Committee on Status of Women, 1974. This Report pointed out that the development trajectory of the country had adversely affected a large section of women and created new imbalances and disparity. The consciousness generated by this report led to change in policies towards development of women during the fifth five year plan. However, it was only in the Seventh Five Year Plan that specific attention was paid to outlays for schemes which directly benefited women. The Ninth Five Year Plan marked a significant progress in this regard to adopt the strategy of Women Component Plan (WCP) which was a precursor to the adoption of Gender Budgeting. The Tenth Five Year Plan marked another significant step forward as it envisaged “immediate action in tying up these two effective concepts of WCP & Gender Budgeting to play a complementary role to each other, and thus ensure both preventive and post facto action in enabling women to receive their right share from all women related general development sector. The Eleventh and Twelfth Five Plans also made provisions for gender budgeting and focused on strengthening the process and mechanism for budget analysis in gender perspective. Ageist this backdrop, present paper attempts to review the union budgets in gender perspective during the period of 2013-14 to 2020-21.*

## Introduction

In India, since long back, women were considered as an oppressed section of the society and they were neglected for centuries. In pre-independence India, education among women was slow and limited to upper strata of society; however, it tremendously increased in independent India. The first task in

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post-independent India was to provide a constitution to the people, which would not make any distinctions on the basis of sex. Article 15(1) of the Indian Constitution guarantees equalities of opportunities for all citizens in matters of employment. Article 15(3) provides that the state can make any special provisions for women and children. Besides, directive principle of state policy which concerns women directly and have a special bearing on their status include Article 39(a) right to an adequate means of livelihood; (d) equal pay for equal work both men and women; (e) protection of health and strength of workers, men, women, and children. Article 42 provides for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. It is really important to note that though the Constitution of India is working since more than sixty years, the raising of the status of women to one of equality, freedom and dignity is still a question mark. Hence, Women empowerment is the buzzword now-a-days. No country can afford development without considering women who constitute about half of its stock of human resource. The concept of empowerment has been the subject of much intellectual discourse and analysis. Empowerment is defined as the processes by which women take control and ownership of their lives through expansion of their choices. Thus, it is the process of acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability has previously been denied. The core elements of empowerment have been defined as the ability to define one's goals and act upon them, awareness of gendered power structures, self-esteem and self-confidence (Kabeer 2001). Empowerment can take place at a hierarchy of different levels – individual, household, community and societal or in other words home, village, state and nation and is facilitated by providing encouraging factors like exposure to new activities which can build capacities and removing inhibiting factors like lack of resources, skills etc. In India, the plight of women is no better than that of women in other developing countries. Despite the honour and reverence accorded to them as deities in religion and mythology and tribute paid to them as personified in historical monuments, the ground realities have a very different tale to tell. Despite the fact that women are massively involved in different sectors of economy, their work remains unrecognized. Their activities as producers are not reflected in statistics thus making their contribution invisible. Culturally, in an effort to uphold cultural heritage, the past is glamorized and with it, the trend to equality of women enhancement of their role in development gets inhibited (Pinto, 1995). Women constitute half of the segment of population in India and cannot be afforded to be kept out of the mainstream. Secondly, women are vital and productive workers in India's national economy, and make 1/3rd of the labour force. Thirdly, the poorer the family, the greater is the dependence on women's economic productivity. Fourthly, there is a significant gap between women's potential and actual productivity. Therefore, women will gain proportionally more if investment allocation and development efforts are shifted in their

favour. Fifthly, women's earnings have a positive correlation with children's health, nutritional levels and education (Singh and Singh, 2004).

Gender equality and women empowerment are the key terms that defined and determined the direction of diverse discourses on women, nationally and globally. The Beijing conference was the most significant milestone in journey towards ensuring gender equality and enriching pragmatic insights into the issues concerning women empowerment (Singh & Srivastava, 2001). Gender equality is central to realizing Millennium Development Goals. Gender equality will not only empower women to overcome poverty but also their children, families, communities and countries. Thus, gender equality produces a double dividend benefits to both women and children. However eliminating gender discrimination and empowering women will require enhancing women's influence in the key decisions that save their lives. Women themselves are the most important catalyst for change. (Singh, *et.al.* 2018) However, challenging attitudes towards women at work requires a multifaceted approach. Gender equality, leading to increased work opportunities, enhanced capacities for livelihood developments, labour rights to women, enhanced social protection and overall increasing voice can enable women to participate equally in productive employment, contributing to women's development leading to economic growth of the nation. Gender equality, linked with women's empowerment, is thus seen as key aspect of economic growth (Singh, 2009).

### **The Existing Gender Gaps**

The Gender Gap Index of India is quite low as compared to even the countries, like, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania. This index includes indicator for economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment of women. Comparing to the per capita spending requirement of these countries to ensure gender equality, India requires a sum Rs. 89 lakh crores (US \$ 1408 billion) by 2030 (World Economic Forum, 2020). The current trend in gender budgets of the country shows a gap of Rs.69 lakh crores (US \$ 1091 billion) under this component. These finances are largely required for access to basic social, political and economic rights for women and are therefore covered in goals that deal with universal access to such basic needs. Against such requirement, the availability of finances indicates towards the limited reach and delivery of benefits of social schemes and entitlements to women. Even though these costs are covered in various other goals, therefore, it is a caution for India to immediately increase the gender budget in its various schemes/ programmes.

The Global Gender Gap Report, 2020 released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), for instance, indicates that India slipped four ranks from last year to 112 among 153 countries. The Report measures how countries perform

in reducing women's disadvantages in comparison to men in politics, economic empowerment, health and education. India's overall ranking is 14 positions lower than what it was in 2006, when the WEF first started measuring gender gap. The economic disparity between men and women in India is particularly staggering, according to the report, with only one-third (35.4 percent) of the distance being bridged. India ranks among the bottom four countries of the world when it comes to economic participation and opportunities for women. The economists and policy experts believe that budgetary allocations have not translated into on the ground development, largely because of the lack of targeted expenditure backed by adequate research and analysis. Other factors include, low level of implementation of gender focused policies and programmes at the state and district-levels, less emphasis on data collection and interpretation, incomplete inclusion of the informal sector into the process, and limited to no presence of accountability among the government officials. Report issued by the McKinsey Global Institute in April, 2018 says, India could add more than 18 percent (up to US \$ 770 billion) to its GDP simply by giving equal opportunities to women. Legislators and party representatives also suggest that this might also be key to India's goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy. The government must increase fair participation of all the three genders in budget preparation (Shekhar, 2020).

## Gender Budgeting

Budgets are the most important policy tools available to a government and reflect its political priorities. Although the numbers and figures compiled in the budget documents might seem gender-neutral, empirical findings show that expenditure patterns and the way that government raises revenue have a different impact on women and girls as compared to men and boys, often to the detriment of the former. This is due to the socially determined roles that women and men play in society, the gendered division of labour, different responsibilities and capabilities, and the different constraints that women and men face, which normally leave women in an unequal position in relation to the men in their community, with less economic, social and political power. Gender responsive budgeting is an approach designed to mainstream the gender dimension into all stages of the budget cycle. In general, gender responsive budgeting aims at analyzing the different impacts of a state's national and local expenditure as well as revenue policy on women and girls, and on men and boys, respectively. In addition to the impact analysis, gender responsive budgeting comprises making proposals to re-priorities expenditures and revenues, taking into account the different needs and priorities of women and men. *Gender-responsive budgeting* (GRB) allows policymakers to apply a gender lens on fiscal expenditure, earmarking funds for gender-specific outcomes in the Union Budget, rather than producing a separate budget.

Gender budgeting refers to the systematic examination of the budget programmes and policies for the impact on women. Studies show that programmes and policies design to improve women's economic opportunities lead to higher rates of economic growth. Gender budgeting has gained prominence in the policy circles in the recent years. Gender budgeting has gained prominence in the policy circles in the recent years. In view of the growing importance of the gender budgeting, the present paper purports to critically review the plans, policies, programmes and schemes and also to examine union budgets through gender lens. In 1984, Australia introduced the first gender budget. Taking budgets as essential instruments for promoting gender equality, pioneering analysis of the impact of public budgets on gender relations was carried out. Since then, more than 90 countries have adopted gender budgeting as a tool for women empowerment and engendering development. In India too, many states, local governments, corporate houses and private agencies have initiated gender budgeting and have introduced specific policies, programmes and schemes for gender mainstreaming.

Gender Budgeting refers to a method of looking at the budget formulation process, budgetary policies and budget outlays from the gender lens. Gender Budget, with regard to the government at any level, does not refer to a separate budget for woman, rather it is an analytical tool which scrutinizes the government budget to reveal its gender-differentiated impact and advocate for greater priorities for program and schemes to address the gender-based disadvantages faced by women. In fact, gender budgeting, as an approach, is not confined to government budgets alone; it also includes analyzing various socio-economic policies from the gender perspective. Gender budgeting makes the gender specific effects of budgets visible and raises awareness about their frequently implicit dimensions of discrimination against women. Thus, it identifies the gender specific implications of public finance. It is crucial tool for monitoring gender mainstreaming activities, because public budgets involve all policy areas. Gender budgeting also increases the transparency of, and, participation in the budget process. It aims at democratizing budgetary process as well as budget policy in general. Gender responsive budget initiatives can contribute to growing practice of public consultation and participation in the preparation of budgets and in monitoring their outcomes and impact. Gender budgeting also contributes to better targeting of policy measures and hence to the pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency. Gender budgeting may be regarded as an important strategy in the pursuit of equity in distribution of resources and helping to redress inequalities and to reduce poverty. Thus, gender responsive budgets are tool for strengthening economic and financial governance. A gender responsive budget is a budget that acknowledges the gender patterns in society and allocates money to implement policies and programmes that will change these patterns in a way that moves towards a

more gender equal society. Gender budget initiatives are known by a range of different names such as gender sensitive budget, applied gender budget analysis, gender perspective budget analysis, etc. however, gender budgeting is the most popular term. Political will, accountability, allocation of specific human and financial resources, coordination of information and training and availability of gender disaggregated data can be regarded as preconditions of gender budgeting. Transparency, partnership and cooperation throughout the budgeting process are key principles of gender budgeting. Hence, Gender budgeting is an important tool for women's empowerment.

According to the World Economic Forum, gender inequality is inefficient and costly to women, men, girls and boys (Ratnasi, 2008). These costs are manifested by lower levels of productivity, competitiveness and reduced levels of well-being. Diane Elson is of the view that "if women themselves have more control over resources there will be gains for society as a whole" (Elson, 2002). A national budget that is gender responsive recognizes the underlying inequalities between women and men and redresses them through the allocation of public resources" (Helena, 2003). It also views women not as "a vulnerable group who are beneficiaries of government assistance but rather as right holders, whose governments are under obligation to empower and protect them" (Noeleen, 2006). In order to understand the significance of gender budgeting and why gender budgeting is needed it is necessary to learn how women are faring in different areas such as, life expectancy, adult literacy rate and labour force participation.

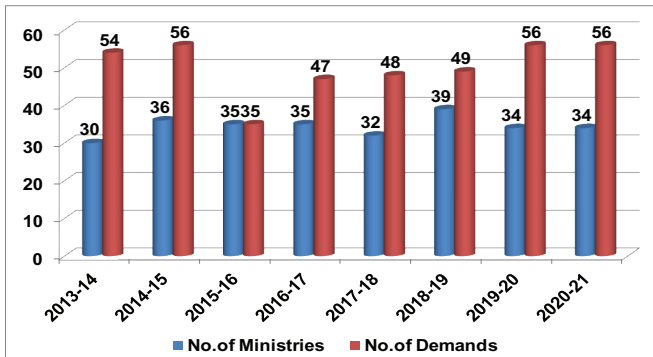
The importance of gender budgeting has been stressed time and again in different forums. In order to provide further impetus, the Finance Minister in his budget for 2004-05 mandated the setting up of gender budget cells in all ministries and departments and highlighted the need for budget data to be presented in a manner that brought out the gender sensitivity and budgetary allocation. In India, while some efforts had been taken in the earlier Five Year Plans to ensure a definite flow of funds from the general development sectors to women, it was in the 9<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (1997-02) that Women's Component Plan (WCP) was adopted as a strategy to ensure that not less than 30 per cent of the funds/benefit are earmarked for women in women-specific sectors. In order to provide further impetus, the Finance Minister in his budget for 2004-05 mandated the setting up of gender budget cells in all ministries and departments and highlighted the need for budget data to be presented in a manner that brought out the gender sensitivity and budgetary allocation. In 2005-06, the number of Ministries that reflected their schemes and programmes in the Gender Budgeting Statement was 9 with 10 Demands for Grants. An estimated allocation of Rs. 28737 Crores for benefits of women under 24 demands for grants in 18 ministries and departments was made in the financial year 2006-07 budget. This statement was extended in the budget of

2007-08, to include 33 demands for grants of 27 ministries/ departments. This had increased to 29 with 36 Demands for Grants in 2011-12. However, 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2007-12) noted that the progress made under Women Component Plan was sluggish. Moreover, the plan only focused only the plan budget of the Ministries and Departments and limited itself to looking at women specific sectors. Subsequently, in 2010-11, the Ministry of Women and Child Development discontinued WCP and stressed the move towards Gender Budgeting. During the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan, the reach of gender budgeting initiatives had been extended to all Ministries, Departments and State Governments. Steps were taken to institutionalize the gender budgeting processes by strengthening the Gender Budgeting Cells in order to enable them to undertake their envisaged role. Planning and budget approval system was also modified to make gender clearance and specific approvals of the Gender Budgeting Cells mandatory to ensure that plans are engendered from the design stage itself. Orientation and sensitization of the staff at the highest level ought to be pursued for strengthening the Gender Budgeting Cells. There are three classifications of schemes/ programmes (1) women specific- those schemes, programmes and projects which have 100 percent targets for women; (2) women centric -those schemes, projects and programmes which have target upto 30 percent women; and (3) gender neutral -those schemes, programmes and projects which target less than 30 percent women.

### Gender Budget Analysis

There are more than 70 ministries/ departments that draw grants from the government. Of the 70 ministries, 57 of them have gender budget cells. But, only 34 ministries/ departments have reported allocations in the gender budget schemes during 2020-21. Though there is increasing trend in number of demands and ministries reporting gender budgeting in India, however, a large number of Departments. Ministries are still far behind (Chart 1).

**Chart 1: No. of Ministries and Demands for Gender Budgeting in India**



Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Eighteen ministries/ departments have reported allocations in A Category of Schemes of the Gender Budgeting Scheme (GBS) 2020–21. Six of the 18 have reported allocations only in Part A. Twenty eight ministries/ departments have reported allocations in B Category of Schemes of the GBS 2020-21. Of them, 16 have reported only in B Category of Schemes. 12 ministries/ departments have reported allocations in both Parts A and B Category of Schemes. On the other hand, more than half of the total number of ministries/ departments did not comply with the directions of the Finance Ministry regarding the reporting of information. These include Commerce, Posts, Telecom, Consumer Affairs, Corporate Affairs, Finance, Defence, Parliamentary Affairs, and *Panchayati Raj* Ministries. However, some of the above Ministries/ Departments Had reported in GBS in the past. For instance, the Ministry of *Panchayati Raj* reported allocations in Part B of the GBS from 2008–09 for schemes, such as *Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan and Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojna*, which were subsequently subsumed into the *Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan* in 2012–13 and continued till 2016–17. It also reported large allocations for the Backward Regions Grants Fund in 2013–14 and 2014–15. However, it has not reported any allocations for women in either Part A or B since budget 2017–18. The Panchayati Raj ministry implements a centrally sponsored scheme called *Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan* since 2018, the allocations of which have not been reported either in A or B Category of Schemes of the GBS (Mehta, 2020).

Union Budget 2020–21 aimed to address the aspirations and hopes of the youth, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, and women, who have been in the pursuit of a better life. In her budget speech on February 1, 2020, the Finance Minister *Nirmala Sitharaman* highlighted that the budget has been worked out on the basis of a “three-pillar framework,” to attend to aspirational India, accelerate economic development, and work towards building a humane and compassionate society. The total allocation for the gender budget in 2020-21 has been Rs 1,43,461.72 crore, of which Rs 28,568.32 crore has been reported in A Category of Schemes and Rs 1,14,893.40 crore in Part B Category of Schemes. The share of gender budget as a percentage of total budgetary expenditure has been 4.98 percent in 2018–19), 4.91 percent in 2019–20 (budget estimates), 5.29 percent in 2019–20 (revised estimates), and only 4.72 percent in 2020–21 (budget estimates). Over the last 15 years, the size of gender budget has remained below 5 percent, with a few exceptions (Mehta, 2020). Only 18 ministries/ departments have reported allocations in A Category of Schemes and 28 in B Category of Schemes in budget estimates 2020–21. However, just four of them, namely, the Department of Rural Development, MWCD, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Police, account for as much as 96% of the estimates reported in the A Category of Schemes of the GBS. In Part B of the GBS too, just four ministries/ departments account for 75 percent of the allocations that have been made for women. These are the Department of Health and



Family Welfare, Department of Rural Development, Department of School Education and Literacy, and MWCD. The Rural Development department is the largest contributor to the budgetary estimates reported in the gender budget 2020–21. One-third of the value of the total gender budget, comprising both A and B Category of Schemes, is reported by the department. The department accounts for 75 percent of the total budgetary allocations reported in A Category of Schemes, and 21.86 percent of the total budgetary allocations reported in Part B of the GBS 2020–21. The department reports only two budget heads in the A Category of Schemes and two in the B Category of Schemes. As much as 90 percent of the amount reported by the Rural Development department for 100 percent women-specific allocations is allocated to the *Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana*. Two budget heads, National Rural Livelihood Mission – *Aajeevika* (NRLM) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), have been reported in Part B of the GBS. NRLM includes schemes, such as the *Deen Dayal Upadhyaya – Grameen Kaushalya Yojana* (DDU-GKY) and Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI), that provide skill development training to boys and girls. Hence, NRLM is correctly reported in Part B of the GBS. The budget estimate reported for NRLM was reported Rs.610.90 crore or around 50 percent of the total demand for the grant of Rs 9,210.04 crore. However, more than 50 percent should be reported in the GBS since the bulk of the benefits of NRLM are for women and girls. The second highest budgetary allocation in A Category of Schemes of the GBS is Rs 3,919 crore for the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Around 64 percent of this or Rs 2,500 crore has been for pregnant women under the *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana* (PMMVY). Over the last decade, four ministries viz. Rural Development, Education, Health and MoWCD have received between 85-90% of the Gender Budget expenditure. Flagship government schemes that received maximum allocation in 2019-20 were the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (15 percent); Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (14 percent); Anganwadi Services (9 percent); Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (8 percent); and the National Rural Health Mission (5 percent). This pattern of allocations suggests a concerning concentration of funds in a few sectors, as opposed to a widespread gender balanced budget. There has been growth of 34.75 percent in gross gender budget in India during the period of 2013-14 to 2020-21. The growth was recorded high in B category of schemes (48.29 percent) as compared to A category of schemes (0.64 percent). The gross gender budget was recorded Rs. 85495 crores in 2013-14 which increased to Rs. 115207 crores in 2020-21. However, gender budget under women specific schemes increased to Rs. 24440 crores in 2020-21 from Rs. 24285 crores in 20213-14.

Though it is mandatory to release the GBS, there are no accountability mechanisms mandating impact assessment of allocations for female beneficiaries ([Chakraborty, 2013](#)). About 16 states in India currently undertake

GRB, however, the quality of statements produced, and allocation undertaken vary significantly by State, owing to inadequate training for government officials (Joshi, 2013). Chakraborty et. al (2020) have analyzed the gender budget in terms of fiscal marksmanship which is the accuracy of budgetary forecasting. It can be crucial information about how fiscal agents form expectations. The significant variations between actual revenue and expenditure from the forecasted budgetary magnitudes could be an indicative of non-attainment of the objectives of fiscal policy. The difference between the budget estimates and actual expenditure gives the extent of fiscal marksmanship. In India, budget comes in three stages, first is the Budget Estimates (BE) released during the Budget Speech. The second is the Revised Estimates (RE) after a year, and the third is the actual spending. The actual spending data comes with a significant time lag. Higher BE does not ensure higher spending. There is significant deviation between BE and RE and Actuals in India. The specifically targeted programs for women implemented by the Department of Agricultural Research and Education, the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Ministry of Petroleum and Gas had fiscal marksmanship ratios of less than one, meaning Budget estimates were revised downward to lower Revised Estimates. In other words, fiscal Marksmanship ratio less than one show that BE is greater than the RE. The Ministry of External Affairs reported good marksmanship. The fiscal marksmanship of 1 is a perfect forecast, while other deviations are either underestimates or overestimates.

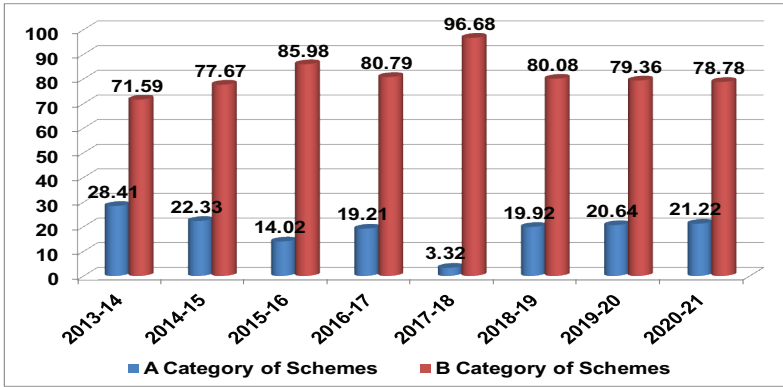
The amounts budgeted for police for the safety of women under the *Nirbhaya* fund show a decline relative to the budget estimates of 2019–20. The decision to reduce this allocation may have been determined by the unspent amounts of Rs 40 crore in the revised estimates of 2019–20. The allocations by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship for women-specific schemes have decreased to the tune of Rs 107 crore between budget estimates of 2019–20 and 2020–21. Similarly, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment was unable to spend Rs 93 crore allocated in the budget estimates of 2019–20 for hostels meant for girls from SC households. Similarly, MWCD was unable to spend Rs 120 crore out of Rs 165 crore allocated towards the benefit of working women's hostels in the budget estimates of 2019–20. In addition to the unspent balances in *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* and working women's hostels' scheme, MWCD has unspent balances to the tune of Rs 150 crore in the Scheme for Adolescent Girls, Rs 100 crore in the allocations for *Mahila Shakti Kendra*, Rs 70 crore in one-stop crisis centres, and Rs 15 crore in *Swadhar Greh* scheme ( Mehta, 2020) .

Ministry of Home, Government of India has introduced *Nirbhaya* Fund for safety of women. Rs. 1000 crores were earmarked in the budget during 2014-15 , however, funds were not utilized and Rs. 849 crores were spent

during 2018-19 . The budget slightly increased to Rs. 891 crores in 2019-20. Ministry of Home also introduced scheme for women hostel for CRPF with the budgetary allocation of Rs. 90 crores in 2016-17. The Ministry also launched a scheme for Assam Rifles with the budget of Rs. 38 crores in 2019-20. Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, introduced rural housing schemes with the budget of Rs. 11000 crores in 2014-15. The budget under the scheme reduced to Rs. 10025 crores in 2015-16 however, Rs. 16000 crores were allocated under *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana* during 2016-17 . The funds under the schemes increased to Rs. 19308 crores in 2018-19 and Rs. 19000 crores in 2019-20 . Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, initiated DISHA Programme for Women in Science with the budget of Rs. 44 crores in 2014-15 which increased to Rs. 70 crores in 2016-17 . Deptt. of School Education and Literacy under Ministry of Human Resources , Government of India, launched scheme for incentives to girl child for secondary education with financial support of Rs. 45 crores in 2016-17 which increased to Rs. 165 crores in 2018-19 . Ministry of Social Justice , Government of India allocated budget of Rs. 120 crores girl students of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in 2015-16 .Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas , Government of India, initiated a scheme of clean energy , LPG connections for poor households with the financial package of Rs. 2500 crores in 2016-17 . The budget increased significantly to Rs. 3724 crores in 2019-20 however, it decreased to Rs. 1118 crores in 2020-21 . It is to be noted that a huge amount has been earmarked under infrastructure development programmes, housing and institutional development which is should not be treated as gender budget. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, also allocated huge amount under NIPPCED, National Commission for Women, National Women Empowerment Mission, National Child Protection Commission, National Nutrition Mission and ICDS programme which include major benefits to children including girl children.

The composition of gross gender budget during the period of 2013-14 to 2020-21 has shown fluctuating trend. The lion's share of gross gender budget has been in favor of women centric schemes while share of gender budget under A category of schemes has declined over the period. Even during 2017-18, it recorded share of just 3.32 percent. It is because of the fact that Government has launched schemes and programmers in Mission Mode approach which are mostly in nature of gender neutral while a few programmes during the year were shifted from A category to B category of schemes (Chart 2).

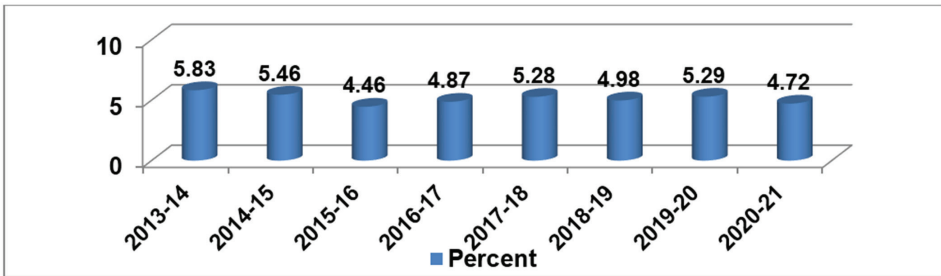
Chart 2: Composition of Gross Gender Budgets in India (In Crores)



Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Gross gender budget constitutes less than 5 percent of union budget in 2020-21. The share of gross gender budget against total budget was accounted significantly high in 2013-14 ( 5.86 Percent ( followed by 2014-15 ( 5.46 percent and 2019-20 ( 5.29 percent). However, it showed as low as 4.46 percent in 2015-16 and 4.72 percent in 2020-21 ( Chart3).

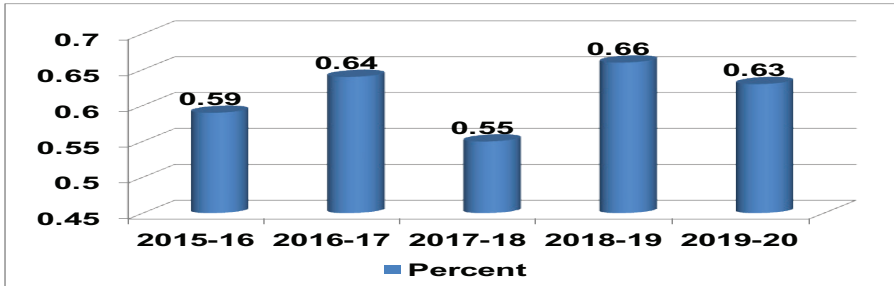
Chart 3: Gender Budget As Percentage of Total Budget in India



Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Gross gender budget accounted for less than one percent of GDP of India. It recorded 0.63 percent in 2019-20 while it was reported 0.59 percent in 2015-16. It further increased to 0.66 percent in 2018-19. India has been producing a Gender Budget Statement (GBS), as part of the Union Budget since 2005-06. Yet even today, the gender budget is less than 1% of the GDP. The total resource envelope dedicated to the gender budget in 2019-20 amounted to Rs. 1,317 billion, just 0.63 percent of GDP. The gender budget was about 0.7 percent of the GDP, over the 2008-09 to 2019-20 period ( Chart 4).

Chart 4: Gender Budget As Percentage of GDP in India



Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of India

### Women Specific Schemes

*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana* was launched in **2015, in Panipat, Haryana**. It aims to generate awareness and also improve the efficiency of welfare services for the girl child. The initial aim of the campaign was to address the declining Child Sex Ratio but has come to include gender based sex-selective eliminations, and propagating education, survival, and protection of the girl child. It is being implemented through a national campaign and focussed multi-sectoral action in 100 selected districts low Child Sex Ratio, covering all states and UTs. The *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana* is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Ministry of Women and Child Development, the government launched *Mahila-E-Haat* in **2016**. It is a bilingual online marketing platform that leverages technology to help aspiring women entrepreneurs, self-help groups, and NGOs to showcase their products and services. Among the many services provided by *Mahila-E-Haat* is **facilitating direct contact** between the vendors and buyers, sensitisation, advocacy, training, packing and soft intervention workshops, and offering a web-based approach. The government launched the *Mahila Shakti Kendra* in **2017** to empower rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition. The *Mahila Shakti Kendras* are expected to work through community engagement through student volunteers in the 115 most backward districts. Each *Mahila Shakti Kendra* will provide an interface for rural women to approach the government to avail of their entitlements through training and capacity building. It works at the National, State, District, and Block levels. The government launched the **Working Women Hostels to ensure availability of safe, convenient accommodation for working family**, along with day care facilities for their children, wherever possible in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Under the scheme, assistance is provided for construction of new hostels

and expansion of existing ones. The working women hostels are available to any woman **provided her gross income does not exceed Rs 50,000 per month in metropolitan cities and Rs 35,000 per month in any other place**. Rent charged from the women should not exceed 15 percent of their total emoluments/gross salary in the case of single bedrooms, 10 percent in case of the double bedrooms and 7.5 percent in the case of the dormitories. Fees charged from the children in the day care centre should not be more than five percent of the emoluments of their mother, or the actual expenditure, whichever is less. Under this scheme, around 890 hostels have been sanctioned so far and over 66,000 women have benefited from it. The STEP scheme was set up to provide skills to women so that they can take up gainful employment. It also provides the right competencies and training for women to become entrepreneurs. Open to every woman above the age of 16, it is run through a grant given to an institution/organisation including NGOs directly. However, the scheme has been merged with skill development mission.

According to the Ministry website, the assistance under **STEP Scheme will be available in any sector for imparting skills** related to employability and entrepreneurship, including but not limited to the agriculture, horticulture, food processing, handlooms, tailoring, stitching, embroidery, *zari*, handicrafts, computers & IT-enabled services along with soft skills and skills for the workplace, such as spoken English, gems and jewellery, travel and tourism, and hospitality. Falling under the ambit of the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme, the *Sukanya Samridhi Yojana* is a government-backed savings scheme for girl children. The account can be opened at any India Post office or a branch of an authorised commercial bank anytime between the birth of the girl child and till the age of 10 by a parent or guardian. The girl child can operate the account once **she reaches 10 years of age and the account allows for 50 percent withdrawal for higher education at the age of 18**. The account reaches maturity in 21 years after opening it. Deposits can be made till the account completes 14 years and thereafter the account will earn only applicable rate of interest. The Ministry of Finance, Government of India had set-up a dedicated fund called *Nirbhaya* Fund in 2013, for implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety and security for women in the country. It is a non-lapsable corpus fund, which lies with the Ministry of Finance. Women helpline scheme is being implemented since from 2015 by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development. The Scheme is meant to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence through referral /linking with appropriate authority such as police, One Stop Centre, hospital) and information about women related government schemes programs across the country through a single uniform number. One Stop Centre Scheme, popularly known as '*Sakhi*,' it was implemented in 2015 with the '*Nirbhaya*' fund. The One Stop Centres are established at various locations in India for providing

shelter, police desk, legal, medical and counselling services to victims of violence under one roof integrated with a 24-hour Helpline. The *Nari Shakti Puruskars* are national level awards recognizing the efforts made by women and institutions in rendering distinguished services for the cause of women, especially vulnerable and marginalized women. *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana*, a flagship scheme of the Government for pregnant women and lactating mothers has achieved a significant milestone by crossing one crore beneficiaries. It is a direct benefit transfer scheme under which cash benefits are provided to pregnant women in their bank account directly to meet enhanced nutritional needs and partially compensate for wage loss. Implementation of the scheme started in 2017. Under the 'Scheme', Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers receive a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000 in three instalments on fulfilling the respective conditionality, viz. early registration of pregnancy, ante-natal check-up and registration of the birth of the child and completion of first cycle of vaccination for the first living child of the family. The eligible beneficiaries also receive cash incentive under *Janani Suraksha Yojana*. The *Swadhar* scheme was launched by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2002 for rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances. The scheme provides shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls who are in need. The beneficiaries include widows deserted by their families and relatives, women prisoners released from jail and without family support, women survivors of natural disasters, women victims of terrorist/extremist violence etc.

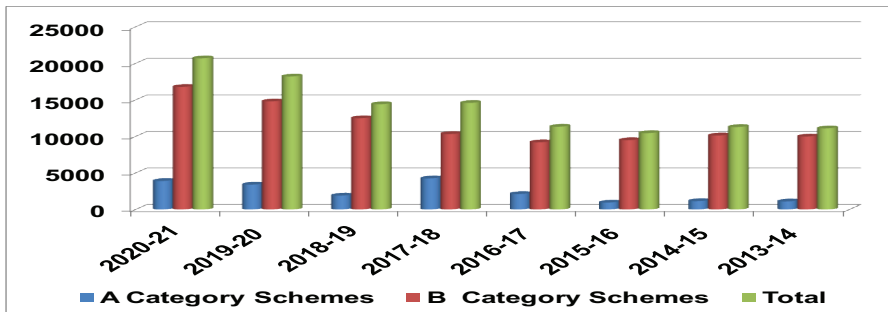
The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India has launched a scheme for home for widows and destitute as large number of widows and destitute women are staying in *Vrandavan*, Varanasi, Mathura and other religious places. The *Mahila* Police Volunteer scheme is a joint initiative by the **Union Ministry of Women & Child Development** and the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs**. The broad mandate of *Mahila* Police Volunteers (MPVs) is to report to authorities/police the incidences of violence against women such as domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment and violence faced by women in public spaces Haryana has become the first state to operationalise the *Mahila* Police Volunteers scheme. *Ujjawala* is a comprehensive scheme to combat trafficking. The Scheme was launched in the year 2007 with the objective to prevent trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation, to facilitate rescue of victims and placing them in safe custody, to provide rehabilitation services by providing basic amenities/needs, to facilitate reintegration of victims into the family and society, and to facilitate repatriation of cross border victims. The Scheme is being implemented mainly through the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Realizing the multi-dimensional needs of out of school pre-adolescent girls (11-14 years) and with a aim to motivate these girls to join school system, the Government approved implementation of restructured Scheme for Adolescent Girls to

focus on out of school adolescent girls in the age group of 11-14 years. With expansion of the scheme to all the districts of the country, the *Kishori Shakti Yojana* has been phased out. Scheme for Adolescent Girls to be implemented using the platform of *Anganwadi* Services of Umbrella ICDS Scheme through *Anganwadi* Centers (MoWCD, 2020) .

There has been growth of 86.12 percent in gross gender budget of Ministry of women and Child Development during the period of 2013-14 to 2020-21. However, gross gender budget under A category of schemes has shown an increase of 3.5 times over the corresponding period. The budgets under B category of schemes have increased by 67.77 percent during the period. The gross gender budget of the Ministry has increased from Rs. 11126 crores in 2012-14 to Rs. 20709 crores in 2020-21. However, the budget under A category of schemes increased from Rs. 1119 crores in 2013-14 to Rs. 3919 crores in 2020-21.

The composition of gross gender budget of the Ministry shows that there has been fluctuating trend. The lion's share of gross gender budget was reported under B category of scheme. About 87 percent expenditure was recorded under B category of schemes in 2018-19, however, its share is likely to decrease in 2020-21. Budget allocations under A category of schemes recorded 10.06 percent share in 2013-14 which increased to 29.23 percent during 2016-17 (Chart 5).

Chart 5: Composition of Gender Budget of MoWCD (Rs. In Crores)



Source: Union Budgets, Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Budgetary allocations under major schemes shows interesting trend. There has been massive increase of budget under Working Women's Hostel, *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana* Scheme, ICDS, and National Nutritional Mission while budget allocations under Scheme for Adolescent Girls, *Nirbhaya* Fund and STEP has fallen down over the period. Government has massively invested in National Nutrition Mission, *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana* Scheme, One Stop Crisis Centre, and *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* Scheme. It is to be noted that Government has merged STEP in Skill Development Mission, while *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana* Scheme is upgraded scheme of *Indira Gandhi Matratu*



*Sahyog Yojana* and *Kisori Shakti Yojana ( Sabala )* has been integrated with Scheme for Adolescent Girls. It is to be noted that many women schemes have been implemented by Central Social Welfare Board, National Commission for Women , NIPPCED and *Rastriya Mahila Kosh*. However, government has decided to close down *Rastriya Mahila Kosh* while Central Social Board has been weakened by withdrawing financial support and work of monitoring of centrally sponsored schemes .

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India being the nodal Ministry has implemented both the schemes categorized under A and B category of schemes. A large amount has been earmarked under B category of schemes which mainly include Aganwadi services, nutrition, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Systems Strengthening and Nutrition Improvement Program (ISSNIP) aim to improve nutritional outcomes of children and women in India, however, the major beneficiaries of such programmes are children which include both boys and girls. The Ministry has also failed to utilize the allocated amount due to administrative reasons .

## **Conclusion**

The issue of engendering development and women empowerment has been in the central stage with the shifting of paradigm of development and governance at the global level and in India. The Government has introduced a number of flagship programmes to enhance employment and income opportunities for poor people with special targets for women. A government budget is a financial statement of the expected revenue and intended expenditure of the government over a given period. The government budget is not simply a technical instrument for compiling and reporting on government revenue and expenditure plans, but it is also a primary policy statement made by the government. The budget has three crucial economic functions viz. allocation of resources, distribution of income and wealth, and stabilization of economy. Gender budgeting has gained prominence in the policy circles in the recent years. Gender responsive budgets seek to uncover the impact of resource allocations on women, men, girls and boys. It is important to have gender disaggregated data in order to determine how different groups are affected. The increased gross gender budget is likely to bridge the gender gaps and ensure gender equality in India. There is imperative need of **increasing the allocations for women centric programmes**. There is a pressing need to prioritise women's safety, education, health, and workforce participation; which necessitates a significant increase in allocations. Funds need to be targeted towards priority sectors, which suffer from the gender inequalities. These sectors should be determined by rigorous research to ensure that targeted spending creates a virtuous cycle, and has a multiplier impact on

women's living standards. It is recommended that the outcome budget should be focussed on gender mainstreaming. Gender audits of centrally sponsored schemes and flagship programmes should be undertaken to measure their impacts on gender equality.

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