

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

International experience with gender budgeting indicates that success of Gender Budgeting Initiatives depends on a lot of factors, within or outside the domain of Government. These initiatives may fail if those responsible for the work do not appreciate as to why they are doing it, or do not really believe in its effectiveness. Government of India's plan is that the gender budgeting should be institutionalized as part of the standard budget process. The process has already started. However, there are areas of satisfaction and that of gross errors/ negligence, coexisting simultaneously. There are certain basic requirements for the success of attempts of the Government. Somewhere Government is finding it difficult to take it further and dealing with numerous problems. A lot of work needs to be done in a time bound manner.

With the analysis of the Gender Budgeting statements and realization of shortcomings in the allocation of funds, let us now list out the areas that need attention and more focused approach of the Government. The thrust areas are described here.

Increases in Gender Budget Allocations:

Analysis of Gender Budget documents carried out in the previous section has categorically revealed that the proportion of targeted schemes for women (for both plan and non-plan expenditure), do not go beyond 5-6 % of the total budgetary allocation. The analysis of the gender budgeting done by CGBA for the last two budgets, published in 'Times of India' on 8th March 2010 and 7th Feb 2011 respectively, states that Government spends not more than Rs.1200/- per woman a year. This figure has definitely increased from Rs. 410/- in 2007-08 to Rs. 1100/- in 2009-10 and to approximately Rs. 1200/- in 2010-11. It appears that a sort of plateau has come and the efforts of Government are not able to move further. The share of Gender Budgeting

component earmarked for women till now is really too low by any measure. Whether we look at it with reference to the population of females, in relation to the GDP or by general international comparison, this needs an immediate correction. A major area of intervention, therefore, should aim at

- (a) Increasing the number of gender specific schemes and
- (b) Increase in resource allocation in the budget for expenditure on women

The record of the Government on this account indicates that the exercise of Gender Budgeting is being taken more as an accounting exercise, which it is not. It has to be seen and treated in correct perspective as an exercise with focus on 'higher women related allocations'. This can be achieved by more Ministries and Departments identifying such areas/ policies and programmes which are beneficial for women, in how so small measure it is. Some so called gender neutral Ministries can start with imparting awareness training to its officials as part of Gender Budgeting initiative and then can move on to other areas of concern. It is not that nothing is being done in Departments which are not reporting in Gender Budgeting Statements till now. The need is to push the cause by a strong political will and executive actions. Unless the share of women is increased in the total pie of resources, visible impact of the Gender Budgeting initiatives will be missing.

The analysis of Gender Budgeting Statements also reveals that social sector schemes are not getting their due share in the allocation. These sectors/schemes have a direct and visible impact in improving the status of the beneficiaries and are required for a dignified living. Though Education is getting a major chunk in allocations, it is still not commensurate with the size of the target group. The spending on girl child is still lower. If an attempt is made to calculate per girl share in the pool of elementary education, the figure will definitely be far below than what the parents might be spending on her education. The situation needs immediate attention of policy makers. Similarly, on the Health front more funds are required to help build the infrastructure to support the services to a large female population. Attention is also required on development of trained human resources i.e. doctors and

other paramedical/technical support staff for sustenance of services. The remuneration to the workers like ANM, Anganwadi workers and others need to be revised as what they are now getting is just too little. This aspect needs to get more focus and allocation. Skill development and employment generation is also an area which must get attention of the policy makers. It is observed that share of this sector has not increased considerably in last few budgets. Providing further opportunities of employment is essential for improving the condition of women.

Availability of Data Base:

For success in conceptualization and implementation of any scheme/programme of the Government, reliable data plays an important role. Gender budgeting relies heavily on data, so that policies/ programmes and budgets can be based on actual figures rather than based on assumptions and presumptions. In the absence of reliable data, the determination of gender needs or gaps can become largely arbitrary. Some sectors may be totally left out because of non availability of data.

Data are needed at different stages of budgeting process. The compilation of sex –disaggregated and other gender relevant data is one of the most important pre-requisites for any kind of Gender Budgeting. Initially data are required to describe the situation of women and men, girls and boys. Subsequently, data are needed to see the scope/delivery of the programmes and projects i.e. how many women and men, girls and boys are in the target group. Finally data are also needed to show the impact of the policies and programmes, whether they have made a difference to the situation of the target group.

Gender relevant data consist of two types –

- a. Sex –disaggregated data i.e. data that are given separately for males and females,
- b. Data on gender issues that affect only one sex e.g. data on maternal mortality, or violence against women.

Most of the Central Ministries/Departments have not been collecting and reporting the gender-disaggregated information on their programmes and schemes which is essential for undertaking Gender Budget analysis. Government services like Health and Education generally collect information on the number of male and female people served. In other cases, Government generally doesn't get the sex –disaggregated data. This is the problem area which is creating hindrance in the Gender Budgeting work. Here concerted efforts are required to get desired data. There are some sectors where Government might be getting sex-disaggregated data, but the same is not processed for want of an effective Management Information System (MIS). To tackle such situation, appropriate changes are needed in the Information systems so that there is separate collection and reporting. Each Ministry/Department should develop a data base that has relevant data on women/girls and men/boys, disaggregated by other factors such as region, community and household income etc. A proper MIS is required so that the key data are available for planning and monitoring of programmes, projects and budgets. A centralized system may be developed by NIC to facilitate compilation of data in the same format by all the Ministries and Departments. As of now no such centralised MIS is available. Further, access to data through networking within Ministries/Departments should also be devised in the times of technology advancements in the area of information and communication.

Monitoring the implementation of schemes targeted for women:

The analysis of gender budgeting statements has revealed that there is a significant deviation between Budget Estimates and Revised Estimates. It indicates that though provision is initially made for funds in the budget, somewhere in between the provisions earmarked for women are reduced during the course of the year. At the same time, implementation problems in terms of utilization of funds are also an area to be kept under strict watch. Funds often remain unutilized or do not reach the targeted group. It is therefore important that while emphasizing gender issues by way of specific proposals, equal importance is given to implementation and monitoring part

as well. Such implementation measures should be included in the scheme itself that ensures the funds are targeted and well utilized. Only strict monitoring can help in ensuring that money earmarked for a specific scheme is not diverted in the due course.

Field interactions have brought a point in our notice about complex and time consuming procedures for disbursement of funds for utilization. In many cases, schemes fail to take off due to procedural delays in their finalization or getting the appropriate approvals etc. The entire bureaucratic process from approval to release and utilization of funds is so intricate and time consuming that at times it overtakes the implementation process. It appears that there is also an immediate requirement to have a serious relook to make the process less time consuming and more user friendly.

Strengthening Gender Budgeting Tools:

India has adopted the commonly known five-step framework on Gender Responsive Budgeting. In this approach, the exercise starts with a 'situation analysis of men and women in a particular sector which helps in identification and recognition of the disadvantages women face. This fundamental step makes the ground ready for further work. . The second step is an assessment of the extent to which the sector's policy addresses the gender issues and gaps described in the first step. This helps in scrutiny of the policies with a gender perspective. The third step is to assess whether the budget allocations to implement the gender-sensitive policies and programmes identified is sufficient to meet the requirement. The resource gaps are to be identified at this stage. The fourth step is about monitoring whether the money was spent as planned, what was delivered and to whom. This involves checking both financial performance and the physical outcomes. Here having sex disaggregated data will make the exercise effective. The last step is assessment of the impact of the policy/programme/scheme through a gender lens.

The Gender Budgeting exercises being undertaken by the Government are not moving much beyond allocation for schemes meant for women. Even for this step, strong foundational work has not been done as prescribed in the framework. The need is to strengthen the tools of the Gender Budgeting exercise for its effective results.

Orientation and Capacity Building for Gender Budgeting:

One of the most basic requirements for success of gender budgeting exercises is a clear understanding and appreciation of gender, gender equality and women's empowerment. Vigorous efforts for regular orientation on these issues are needed for all the stakeholders. Another requirement is orientation and capacity building regarding the concept and tools of Gender Budgeting, for all concerned officials and policy makers. Very often the will to do gender budgeting is there but 'how to do' is not known. Ministry of women and child development has been arranging for such trainings, in association with IIPA and other Institutes / administrative training schools. The training needs and potential in the area is immense. More resource allocation for such trainings is also going to be a positive step.

Participatory Planning, Budgeting and Transparency:

Since the Government cannot spend or raise public money without the authorisation of Parliament (i e, democratic process), people have a right to know how the public resources are being arranged and utilized. And there is also need for their increased involvement in shaping the budget proposals.

Open and participatory budget making is imperative for good governance. A closer interaction between scholars, activists in the women's movement and policy makers may prove to be an ideal environment for deciding about the areas and allocations under Gender Budgeting statements. It has been accepted widely that success of gender budgeting initiatives depends largely on involvement of women in decision making. Women have to be treated as

equal partners in decision making and implementation rather than only as beneficiaries. For this approach to work in the desired direction, Banerjee and Krishnaraj, (2004), suggest action in two stages. Firstly, policy makers must learn about the ground realities and the expectation of women from the Government. This can be achieved through initiatives by women's studies activists in translating the demands into schemes. In the second stage, the consultation teams of the Government must include these activists who helped in devising the schemes. This exercise needs to be taken at all the levels of Government i.e. local, state and central. Different problems can be dealt at different levels. Further, the budget making process is also required to be open and transparent. There has been a growing interest in budget work and analysis by public through civil society groups. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure the interests of all citizens by way of their participation and by maintaining high standards of transparency. Transparency in the budget process along with other budget related work will enable women's / citizens' groups to have a more participatory role in the budget making and gender budgeting.

Strengthening the Role of Local Self Government:

Actual implementation of the policies and programmes is done by the State Governments, with the help of the local bodies in a village/block/district.

In the three-tier federal set up of India, ideal way of taking gender budgeting initiatives is to review the allocation and expenditures of all the three levels of Government. For success in the Gender Budgeting exercise, the action has to be taken with the same seriousness at all the three levels. A greater coordination among all the levels of Government is also a vital link for success of the efforts. For this to take place in practice, sufficient training to the concerned local body personnel is an important and an essential requirement. Simultaneously strengthening local bodies by providing them sufficient funds is also essential. It may be noted that with the introduction of 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution, these locally elected institutions have

33.33% reservation for women. Involvement of women in decisions about expenditure is thus easy to come. However these women have come to the positions of authority only recently. As they are not much experienced about the whole process of budgeting, their capacity building is a real challenge. In this regard findings of an action research project 'Building Budgets from below' are relevant. The project, conducted in three phases in Karnataka, investigated the degrees of freedom available to women elected to self-government bodies to determine local and macro fiscal policies. The study by Bhat et al, (2002), found that not having formal education was not an impediment in working of these women representatives. However intensive training of these female functionaries is required for the work they would be undertaking.

Sectoral Analysis of Gender Budgeting:

As a follow-up of budgeting exercise, each year Government should undertake a sectoral analysis of budgetary allocations and their impact on women. Assessment of the quantum of allocations helps in deciding the priorities and outcomes helps in assessing the visible / tangible impact of the allocation on the intended beneficiaries. This will help in mid-term corrections as well as review of the policy and allocation in the next budget.

Separate Account Head:

One of the recommendations of the Steering Committee Report (2001), reiterated in the Tenth Plan document, is about having a separate account head in the 'Demands for Grants' for women component, on the pattern of *Tribal Sub Plan* and *Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes*. This seems to be relevant and implementable at this juncture. To make the system more women friendly, no re-appropriation from Gender Budgeting component to the general programmes / schemes should be permitted without the prior approval of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It was also observed in the Mid-Term Appraisal of Tenth Plan that all

Ministries/Departments are women-related. Hence, Gender Budgeting should be extended to all Ministries/Departments –both in the Union Government and in the States. For ensuring that these funds are exclusively used only for women, a 'non lapsable pool' of women's fund could be created in every state and at the Centre. If there is under-utilisation of funds allocated for women specific programmes / schemes under any Ministry (Central or State), the balance amount of funds should be transferred to this pool. So the pool will ensure that the resources once earmarked for women are being used only for them.

Elimination of Discrimination within Women:

One weakness of most of the planning process and Gender Budgeting initiative is that it treats women as one homogenous group. In reality, there are abundant situations where one can observe strong element of discrimination even within women. Though recently government has started looking into this aspect, yet more concerted efforts are desired. Even within the Gender Budgeting component, some guidelines for designing programmes and schemes focused at the most vulnerable women, like dalit women, HIV positive women, sex-workers, etc. should be drawn to cater to the special needs of these women.

Strengthening the Functioning of Gender Budgeting Cells:

As per the directives of Ministry of Finance, so far approximately 60 Ministries/Departments have established Gender Budget Cells. The role chartered for these cells by Ministry of Finance is very broad and ambitious, as may be seen from Appendix I. In practice, the work of these cells is limited to identification of schemes and computation of allocation meant for women. For strengthening the Gender Budgeting exercise in true sense, a drastic change / improvement in the functioning of these cells is desired. Some suggestions are listed here which may prove to be implementable and can

help Government in holistic review of the policies/programmes and budgetary allocations-

- Gender Budgeting Cells may look into identifying constraints in flow of funds to women through studies which monitor expenditure
- The entire work related to generation, collection and compilation of sex-disaggregated and other gender relevant data
- 'Assessment of benefit' or what is also termed as 'Impact Assessment' of schemes/programmes
- Concerned Ministry (Gender Budget Cells) and the Finance Ministry together should work on assessment of national level gender outcomes for the Ministry specific programmes/schemes

Road Ahead

It can be concluded that on the part of the Government a lot is being done in the form of legislations, planning, policy commitments and resource allocation. Still, women remain a vulnerable group. For gender budgeting initiatives to be effective, a more comprehensive approach needs to be adopted where planning, resource allocation, programme design and formulation, focused intervention and implementation based upon the requirement of women with their participation all are present. When there is synergy in the efforts of all stakeholders, positive results can be expected. The success of the entire exercise depends on a number of other factors also, such as addressing all aspects of development (social, economic and political) simultaneously, for all women without any discrimination among within women, with participation of women and with positive attitude of society. The most serious efforts may be needed for molding the attitude and mindsets of the society. The stage for the same has to be set with the birth of a girl child, by giving her equal opportunity of survival as is being given to a male child. This daunting task has to be handled by beginning of gender sensitisation from the very childhood, through formal classroom material and interaction along with the informal ways. Once the gender sensitivity is ingrained in the society, the Gender Budgeting initiatives will bring desired change.