GENDER BUDGETING IN GENDER MAINSTREAMING

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Abstract: Women who constitutes half of the population, are generally not treated as equal with men in the matter of self development although their betterment and wellbeing are crucial to the progress, prosperity and peaceful existence of mankind Development is meant to widen opportunities for all people .Continuing exclusion of women from many opportunities for all people life substantially negates the process of development Mainstreaming has been widely adopted as a strategy for attaining the goal of gender equality. In the 1970s and 1980s,advocates of women development talked of integrating women into development talked, in the 1990s the emphasis changed to the institutionalization of gender issues in the development policy and planning (Goetz,1995).Mainstreaming gender is a technical, as well as a social and political process. It requires changes at different levels such as in agenda setting, policy making, planning, budgeting practices, and resource allocations. Gender mainstreaming in programme budget process brings gender perspective explicitly to the fore by making it an integral part of planning and decision making –making processes. The Fourth World Conference held in Beijing in September 1995 and the subsequent platform for Action emphasized a gender perspective in all macro-economic policies. The twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in June 2000 also explicitly in budgetary processes at national, regional and international levels. The outcome document of the UN General Assembly urged all the nations to integrate a gender perspective into key macro-economic and social development policies. The sixth conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Women’s Affairs held in New Delhi in April, 2000 also made similar recommendations (Sharma 2008). “The realization and the achievement of the goals of gender equality, development and peace need to be supported by the allocation of necessary human, financial and material resources for the specific and targeted activities to ensure gender equality at the local, national, regional and international levels is essential “ (Twenty – third Special Session of the General Assembly to follow up implementation of the platform for Action, June 2000(A/S-23/10/REV.1)

I. THE CONTEXT

Financial and human resources have generally been insufficient universally for the advancement of women and the effective implementation of the recommendations made both at the Beijing platform for Action, and other United Nations’ summits and conferences The fulfillment of these obligations requires a political commitment to make available human and financial resources for the empowerment of women. Needless to emphasize that unless resources are allocated adequately and spent optimally, there can be no incremental change in the lives of women. National budget reflects how governments mobilize and allocate public resources, and how they aim to meet the social and economic needs of their people. Gender budgeting is a strategy for ensuring, gender-sensitive resource allocation and a tool for engendering macro-economic policy. It enables tracking and allocation resources for women empowerment. It is noteworthy that national budgets may appear to be gender-expenditure and revenues would impact equally on men and women.

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

What is Gender Budgeting- At first glance; the budgets appear to be a gender neutral policy instrument. It deals with financial aggregates; expenditures and revenues, the surplus level of policy. Yet policy-makers should not assume the government expenditure and taxes impact equally on men and women, since men and economic position. -Isabella Bakker

An exercise to translate stated gender commitments of the Government into budgetary commitments. Strategy for ensuring Gender Sensitive Resource Allocation and a tool for engendering macro economic policy

- Entails affirmative action for empowering women.
- Covers assessment of gender differential impact of Government Budgets and policies (Revenue and Expenditure).
- Enables Tracking and Allocating resources for women empowerment
- Opportunity to determine real value of resources allocated to women.
- Women budgets, “Gender Budgeting”,” Gender sensitive budgets” and” Gender responsive budgets” Are all terms that are used to describe initiatives that have used gender as lens from which to analyze budgets at national, regional and civic levels.

II. UNDERSTANDING GENDER BUDGETING:
Since the mid 1980s attempts have been made to integrate gender perspectives into national budgets. Initially the initiatives were called women’s budgets; later these were called gender budgets to reflect the ongoing shift from a focus on women to the focus on gender and the relations between sensitive budgets.Recently, there has been a broader use of the term mainstreaming gender perspectives into national budgets, which seems a more appropriate term since the objective is not to produce a separate gender budget but to incorporate relevant gender perspectives into national budget processes. Gendering the budget is not meant to bargain is not meant to bargain for a larger share of the resources for women or to create a separate budget for them. The aim is to analyze the budgetary expenditures from a gender perspective (Menon, 2002) Gender Budgets initiative is a methodology and set of tools and processes designed to facilitate the application of gender analysis in the formulation of government budgets and the allocation of budgetary resources.

It involves analysis of any of public expenditure, or method of raising revenues from a gender perspective. It includes analysis of gender-targeted allocation (e.g. special programmes targeting women); disaggregated by gender, the impact of mainstream expenditures across all sectors, services within government services. (Adarsh Sharma, Women’s work, Health and Empowerment)

III. GENDER BUDGETING: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
Australia was the first country to develop a gender-sensitive budget, with the Federal Government publishing in 1984, the first comprehensive audit of the government budget to assess its impact on women and girls. Women’s budget exercises were also undertaken by each of the Australian state and Territory was one of the few countries that began mainstreaming gender and development budget policy was formally adopted in 1995. South African also initiated the formation of a Gender-sensitive in 1995, through a participatory process of initiative parliamentary and NGOs.The commonwealth initiative to integrate gender into national budgetary processes was started in 1977 in few countries other than south Africa such as Fuji, St kittens and Nevis, Barbados and Sri Lanka; several other nations have also taken steps to engender their national budget. Gender budget
initiatives are currently being attempted in 35 countries following diverse trajectories in terms of the process and the partners involved in undertaking the activity.

IV. GENDER BUDGETING IN INDIA

In India, the gender perspective on public expenditure had been gaining ground expenditure had been gaining since the publication of the report of the committee on the status of women in 1974. The need for focusing on women’s issues as an exclusive subject was felt as early as in the seventh Plan when a separate Department of women and Child Development was created in the year 1985 and 27 women specific schemes were identified for monitoring by the Prime Minister’s Office through this Department.

What are gender commitments in the Indian context?
- Constitutional Provisions
- Legal Framework
  - Women Specific Laws
  - Laws affecting Women
- Policies
- Public Expenditure Programmes.

V. GENDER BUDGETING IN MAINSTREAMING OF GENDER

Women and Legal Framework vis-a-vis Women specific Legislations

- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- The Maternity Benefit Act 1961
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

Forty one laws covering various spheres.

A. Economic
- Factories Act 1948
- Minimum Wages Act 1948,
- Equal Remuneration Act 1976
- The Employees’ State Insurance Act, 1948
- The Plantation Labour Act, 1951,
- The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976

B. Protection
- Relevant provisions of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973;
- Special provisions under IPC
- The Legal Practitioners (Women) Act, 1923

C. Social
- Family Courts Act, 1984,
- The Indian Succession Act, 1925,
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971, The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929,
- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955,
The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 (& amended in 2005), The Indian Divorce Act, 1969

Gender Mainstreaming- new Mantra for “Women’s Development

- Women as a beneficiary segment
- Need for Gender mainstreaming
- Fiscal and Monetary Policies, Legislations
- Need to Change Programme formulations and implementation processes
- More gender friendly
- Optimize Participation of Voluntary Sector
- Gender budgeting – not an end in itself

Rationale of Alternative Strategy

- Empowerment has to be
  - Holistic (Political, Social and Economic)
  - Universal (equal opportunity and level playing field)
  - Participative and Inclusive

Framework of Gender Budgeting

- Quantification of allocation of resources for women
- Gender Audit of policies of the Government
- Impact assessment of various schemes in the Union and State budgets
- Analyzing schematic and policy initiatives and link with impact on status of women related
  Macro Indicators
- Institutionalizing the generation and collection of gender dis-aggregated data
- Consultations and Capacity building
- Promote gender equity in participation in decision making

Holistic approach to Empowerment

Action Areas

- Women availing services of public utilities like road transport, power, water and sanitation, telecommunication etc.
- Training of women as highly skilled workers- top end skills
- Research/Technology for women
- Women in the work force
Asset ownership by women
Women as Entrepreneurs

Implementation of Laws
Equal remuneration
Minimum Wages
Factories Act

Infrastructure for women
Water and sanitation at workplace
- Crèches
- Working Women Hostels
- Transport services
- Security

Preliminary Findings
Higher percentage share of states in expenditure on women
Expenditure on Health is largest component
Broad trend reflects increase in expenditure
Wide annual fluctuations in many states
Some states reflect relatively less expenditure compared with population of women

Path Ahead
Pursue Gender Mainstreaming in the Government through coordination with Gender Budget cells
Widening scope of National Statistical System
Widening scope from public expenditure to Revenues, Fiscal and Monetary Policies
Pursue gender budgeting by States with help of planning Commission and MOF
Capacity Building- Coordinate with training institutes and experts to standardize methodology and tools

VI. CONCLUSION
“It is more important to create a general awareness’ and understanding of the problems of women’s employment in all the top policy and decision making and executive personnel. There is also the special problem facing women like the preference for male children for social and cultural reasons. This will require awareness, understanding and action.

The best way to do so is to educate the children, orient the teachers, examine the text books and teaching-aids and ensure that the next generation grows up with new thinking.” It can be stated at the end that the gender budget initiative can contribute directly to improving the efficiency of resource allocations and to the strengthening of economic governance through a frame work that can enhance accountability and transparency. Gender budgeting is not just about looking at specific schemes for women. It is important to take the understanding that since gender budgeting cannot be seen in isolation from overall political economic scenario

REFERENCES