

An Overview of Changing Scenario of Economic Empowerment through

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Abstract

The mainstream of women in development planning is critical in determining the extent to how much women could participate and obtain benefit from development process. Understanding the relationship between macroeconomic policies and Central and State budgets in the context of economic reforms, as it has influenced women's lives in several ways. It is economic sense to make national budgets gender sensitive, as it is more effective way in targeting government expenditure to women specific activities. The present study is to spell out the Union and State level scenario towards Women Component Plan (WCP) as a gender budgeting tool. It analyses outlay/expenditure under component plan for the period ranging from 1997-98 to 2011-12. Under WCP, both Central and State Government are required to ensure that at least 30 percent of funds are earmarked for women under various schemes of 'women related' ministries/departments. The outlay/expenditure under WCP has been fluctuating during this period. There is an apparent fall of Rs. 2,441.43 crore in 2007-08 in Gender Budget allocation for women.

Index terms— women, component plan, empowerment, gender budgeting.

1 Introduction

The mainstream of women in development planning is critical in determining the extent to how much women could participate and obtain benefit from development process. Understanding the relationship between macroeconomic policies and Central and State budgets in the context of economic reforms, as it has influenced women's lives in several ways. It is economic sense to make national budgets gender sensitive, as it is more effective way in targeting government expenditure to women specific activities. Under Women Component Plan (WCP), both Central and State Governments are required to ensure that at least 30 percent of funds are earmarked for women under various schemes of 'women related' ministries/departments. The notion of WCP has entered in the planning process during the Seventh Five Year Plan with the initiation of a special mechanism to monitor twenty seven beneficiary oriented schemes for women. However, Ninth Five Year Plan has made a significance progress in this regard. The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) marked another significant step toward as it envisaged immediate action in tie up these two effective concepts of women component plan and 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 rightful share from all women-related development sectors. Like Pilot Scheme Leadership Development of Minority women, inclusive growth was the key guiding principle for the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

The main object of this paper is to spell out the Union and State level scenario towards women component plan as a gender budgeting tool. It analyses outlay/expenditure under WCP for the period ranging from 1997-98 to 2011-12. The paper is divided into five sections. Section I reflects on need of gender budgeting? Section II explains approach to gender budgeting. Section III explains Women Component Plan. Sections IV assess Gender Budgeting and Women Component Plan. Section V suggests counter balancing policies for remedial changes.

II.

3 Section I: Need of Gender Budgeting

Around the world, need of gender budgeting because it tends to focus on women because:

- ? Nearly two third of the illiterate people in the world are women.
- ? Maternal mortality continues to be a leading cause of death for women of reproductive age in developing countries.
- ? Women are denied effective role in decision-making in the institutional, developmental and planning framework.
- ? Women are engaged in low paid jobs and lower status types work and continue to receive less pay than men for the same work.
- ? In a market economy, women are engaged in part time jobs because of rearing and caring of children and other family members.

4 III. section ii Approach to Gender Budgeting

Though the concept of gender budgeting have come from western countries, this is very important from developing countries which have adopted globalization policies. Gender Budgeting refers to a method of looking at the budget formulation process, budgetary policies and budget outlays from gender lens. It is important to recognize that 'women's budget or 'gender sensitive' budgets are not separate budgets for women, or for men. They are attempts to break down or disaggregate; the government's mainstream budget according to its impact on women and men, and different groups of women and men with cognizance being given to the society's underpinning gender relations ??Sharp, Rhonda, 1999).

Internationally, gender budgeting is new concept. It goes back to women's initiatives in Australia and South Africa. The Beijing plan for action paid special attention to gender mainstreaming in all budgetary exercises (Budlender and Hewitt 2002; Budlender et al. 2002; Sharp 2003).

Gender budget initiatives analyze how government 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 their burdens (IDRC, 2001). Gender budgeting served various purpose. These include, among others:

- ? To identify the felt needs of women and increasing expenditure to meet these needs;
- ? Strengthening civil society participation in economic policy making and enhancing linkages between economic and social and policy outcomes;
- ? Strengthening gender and development and tracking public expenditure against of it policy commitment;
- ? Focus on gender awareness and mainstreaming in all areas of budgeting at all levels;
- ? Promote active participation of women and other disadvantaged groups who are excluded from decision-making;
- ? Changing and refining government budgets and policies to promote gender equality;
- ? Making government accountable for their gender budgetary and policy commitments; and
- ? Contributing to the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2015.

IV.

5 Section iii: Women Component Plan

As mentioned earlier, the notion of WCP has been adopted by Government of India in Seventh Five Year Plan as major strategy of gender budgeting and women empowerment. It is intended to convergence of existing services available in both specific and womenrelated sectors. Under this plan the Planning Commission directed centre and states to ensure 30 per cent of funds and benefits for all the sectors involved in the empowerment of women. It made provision in facilitating economic empowerment to women and giving them opportunities to grow with the growing economy. The notion of women component plan is a precursor to the adoption of gender budgeting, which represents a much broader and profound approach towards ensuring gender responsive budget and public policies. The domain of women component plan is restricted only to plan allocation by the ministries/departments and it provides a benchmark to assess the performance of ministries/departments. It is regarded WCP and gender budgeting as the complement of each other for granting benefit to women. Allocation for funds for gender budgeting and women component plan is explained with the help of (Table ??, Figure ??) and (Table 2, Figure ??(i), 2(ii)). V. Sections iv Assess Gender Budgeting and Women Component Plan

? The domain of women component plan is restricted only to plan allocation the ministries/department; it does not take account non plan allocations.

? Table ?? ? The government reports/documents available in the public domain do not explain the justification about the figure of 30 percent under the women component plan and how the planning commission arrived at this.

? The essential earmarking of 30 percent fund for women under this plan for all ministries at centre and state compels the policy makers to start thinking on the lines of gendered-impact of policies. But there is need of resources and commitment for its better implementation.

6 Section v: Suggestions for Counter Balancing Policies

1. There is need to ensure that at least 30 percent of beneficiaries should be women. A system should be set up to collect data in this regard. 2. To ensure that funds reaches to women, a nonlapsable pool of women's fund should be created in every state and at the centre also. If the ministries/departments did not exhaust the allocated fund, the balance amount should be transferred in non-lapsable pool. The ministries should ensure to spend this amount for benefit and incentive to women. 3. Grass root organizations should be involved to ensure the implementation of women component plan at grass root level.

4. Planning Commission should take meetings regularly to review the progress and it should be mandatory to obtain information from ministries in this regard.

5. The monitoring of women component plan under gender budgeting should be done at regular interval so that progress should be measured. 6. There is need to increase allocation of funds under women component plan in each sector. More schemes should be introduced to deliver benefit to women.

7. A gendered budget framework for women will raise awareness of their needs. Gender-disaggregated data will enable optimal allocation and utilization of resources for betterment of women.



Figure 1: Figure 2 :Figure 2 :

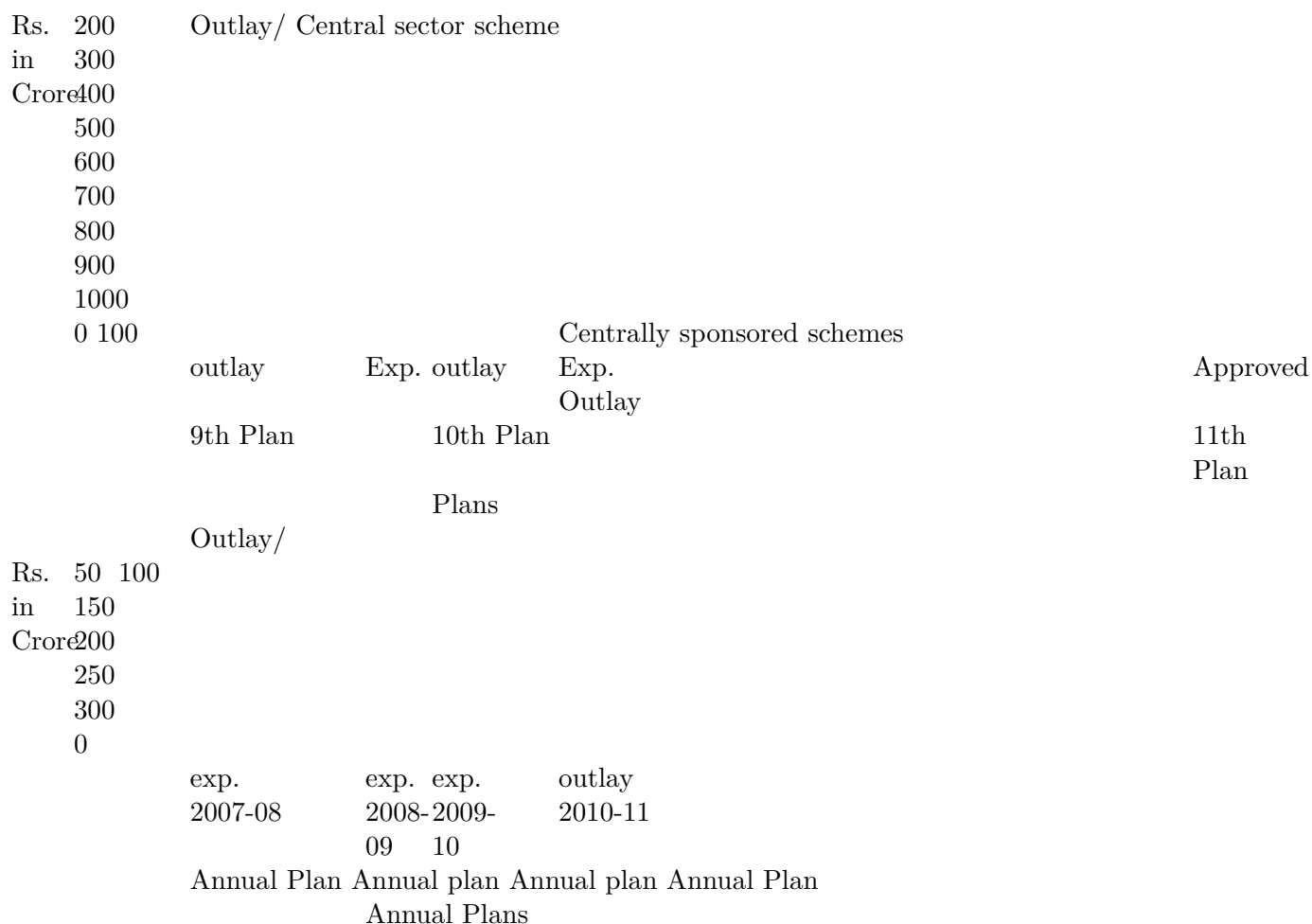
Year	No. of Ministries	(Rs. in Crore)		Total gender budget
		No. of de-	mands	
2005-06	9	10		14378.68 (2.79%)
2006.07	18	24		28736.53 (5.09%)
2007-08	27	33		31177.96 (4.5%)
2008-09	27	33		27661.67 (3.68%)
2009-10	28	33		56857.61 (5.57%)

Figure 2: Table 1 :

2

(Rs. in Crore)

Figure 3: Table 2 :



apparent fall of Rs. 2,441.43 crore in 2007-08 in Gender Budget allocation for women. This allocation further fell from Rs. 31,177.96 crore in 2007-08 to Rs. 27,661.67 crore in 2008-09. ? Table-2, figure 2(i) and 2(ii) shows the fluctuating trend of outlay/expenditure under central sector schemes and centrally sponsored schemes during Five Year Plans and Annual Plans for the welfare/development of women.

Figure 4: Expenditure under WCP in India during plans for women

Figure 5: Expenditure for women under WCP During Annual Plans in India

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