

GENDER BUDGETING CHALLENGES AND CAPABILITIES: WITH REFERENCE TO KERALA

Abstract

Gender Budgeting is a crucial strategy for achieving gender equality, ensuring equal access to development benefits for women and men through continuous policy formulation, implementation, and review. The process of gender budgeting is listed as that of lack of vision and clarity in innovation which limits the policy makers to take appropriate measures, insufficient quantity of data and the lack of skill or ability of the new institutional mechanisms. (Chakraborty, 2016) Kerala has the highest literacy rate in India at 94%, but still faces gender discrimination in education, health, employment, political participation, and unrecognized unpaid care work, violence, and harassment. This study is designed to achieve its main objectives to examine the concept of gender budgeting in Kerala, its planning process, to analyse the gender budgeting statements of Kerala state budgets 2021-22 and 22-23 and to study the main social and economic challenges pertaining gender budgeting.

Keywords: Gender Budgeting (GB), Gender Mainstreaming, Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

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I. INTRODUCTION

“Gender budgeting is a strategy to achieve equality between women and men by focusing on how public resources are collected and spent.” (eige)

Gender Budgeting (GB) is a crucial tool for gender mainstreaming, ensuring equal access to development benefits for both men and women, by considering gender perspectives in policy formulation, implementation, and review. (Ministry of Women and Child Development 2015). One of the important Sustainable Development goals adopted by governments around the world, including India, is to achieve gender equality by 2030. Public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment play an important role in achieving gender equality. The investment in public expenditure towards women’s needs not only showcase commitment of the govt. towards achieving goal five of the Sustainable Development agenda – gender equality – but an important aspect in bringing about equality between women and men, and ensure better lives for women and their families. It strengthens the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data for closing gender gaps and increases both accountability and transparency.

The purpose of Gender Budgeting is threefold:

1. The goal is to enhance accountability and transparency in planning
2. The goal is to enhance gender-responsive participation in the budget process.
3. The goal is to promote gender equality and women's rights..

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the concept of gender budgeting. Its planning processes.
2. To analyse the Gender budget statement of state Kerala budgets 2021-22 and 2022-23
3. To examine the social and economic cons pertaining gender budgeting in Kerala.

III. DATA SOURCE

The study uses Secondary data sources which is importantly collected from Kerala government gender budgeting statement, budget documents, budget briefs, budget speeches, union budgets, planning board documents, literature reviews, economic reviews, newspapers. Websites like WCD, OECD, IMF and UN WOMEN are also used for reference.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **A Jaysree (2017):** The study explores the potential, capability, and effectiveness of gender budgeting in Kerala to address gender inequality. It uses secondary data analysis to examine the role of budgetary allocation in the achievement of Kerala in terms of social development indicators. Also points out the gender sensitivity of Govt. budgetary allocation targeted towards women empowerment. The study made an analysis of the beneficiaries of the Government schemes and programmes among women and suggest appropriate measures for budgetary policies.

2. **Chakraborty, Lekha (2013).** This paper examines India's Gender Responsive Budgeting, highlighting its role in transparency, accountability, and gender development, with two dimensions: equity and efficiency. It highlights sectoral processes and policy conclusions.
3. **Chakraborty, Lekha (2016).** The National Institute of Public Finance suggests that the government can design policy priorities for optimal outcomes, such as gender budgeting, through national laws mandating sustainable environment, GST, infrastructure, and capital expenditure policies.
4. **Nishanti, P.U (2020).** The study examines the impact of gender budget initiatives on Kerala's budgetary allocations, highlighting a significant concern that the government's percentage share of women-specific schemes is under one percent, urging for increased gender budget initiatives.
5. **Pulikkamath, Ashraf (2020).** The study highlights that despite women being included in various schemes in agriculture, IT, ITES, and industry, their employment share is still small but growing.

V. GENDER BUDGETING AND PLANNING IN KERALA

Kerala's 9th Plan introduced gender-aware planning, mandating 10% of devolved outlays for women-specific schemes, known as the Women Component Plan, to promote gender-responsive budgeting at the local level.. (Gender Budgeting Statement Kerala 2021). Gender budgeting has put forward a system to analyse the approach of the budgets in its allocation with a gendered frame. It theoretically implies fiscal equality policies and programs in a governance process (Nishita,2020, Chakraborty 2013). In the 11th Plan period (2007-2012) as the gender budgeting statement of Kerala mentions a pragmatic approach using some of the tools i.e., situational analysis of girls/boys, men/women, and an ex-post analysis of the budget.

The main focus of GB work in Kerala has been on the expenditure side of the Gender Budget to:

Part A- Identify women specific programmes (that is 100 percent for women)

Part B - Allocation for women or an anticipated flow of at least (30 percent of the resources to women).

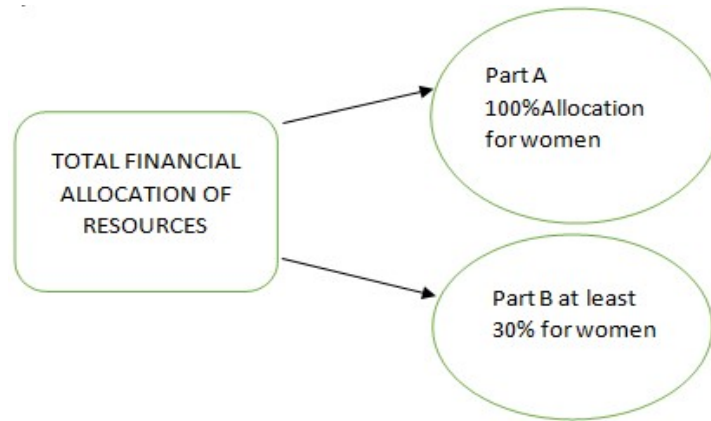


Figure 1

The main priorities as mentioned in the gender budgeting statement of Kerala 2021 in the 11th five-year plan was concerned with issues of women such as

- Gender based violence
- Empowerment of women
- Occupational health by formulating a Gender Awareness programme
- Finishing schools for women for soft skill and other job linked trainings
- Livelihood generation through self-help groups of women etc.

Kerala GB's 13th plan adopted a systematic approach, learning from the 11th Plan's experience, focusing on priority gender issues and integrating gender budget making into planning.

- Prioritizing vulnerable women for skill development, employment, and livelihood security, focus is on enhancing access to childcare centres, elderly day care homes, hostels, safe travel, and basic amenities at workplaces.
- The focus is on preventing gender-based violence, redressing and rehabilitating individuals affected by ongoing violence within the state. Some of the main limitations mentioned in the Kerala gender budgeting statements 2021 are
 - Lack of gender disaggregated data.
 - The efforts to implement GB methodology on real Budgets has only in its limited ability to estimating the flow of budgetary resources.
 - The lack of gender-disaggregated data at the macro level hinders the integration of women in development planning processes, necessitating a separate gender budgeting statement for convergence of planning, financing, and budgetary processes.

VI. ANALYSING GENDER BUDGET STATEMENTS 2021-22 & 22-23

The Kerala Gender Budget Statement 2017-18 recommended a 10% state plan outlay for women's schemes. The allocation increased from 11.4% in 2017-18 to 14.6% in 2018-19, 16.9% in 2019-20, 18.4% in 2020-21, and 19.54% in 2021-22. In 2022-23 it has increased to

an overall allocation of 20.90 per cent with a marginal increase of 1.36 per cent in 2021-22. Part A shows 7.26 per cent in 2022-23 (6.54 per cent in 2021-22) and Part B shows 13.64 per cent in 2022-23 (13.0 per cent in 2021-22), which is marginal but steady increase in both categories. The allocation in Part A is 1619.82 ₹ crore and Part B is 3045.38 crore which makes the total allocation for Gender Budget in ₹ 2022-23 to 4665.20 crore as mentioned in the gender budgeting statement 2022-23.

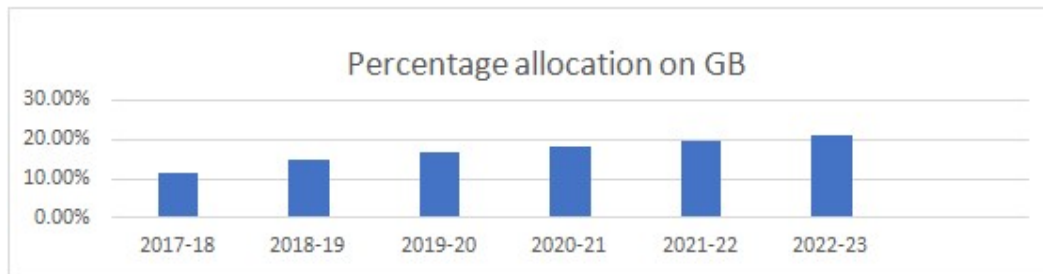


Figure 2

In 2021-22 we can see only a marginal increase in the overall allocation (18.4% to 19.54% i.e., only 1.14% increase) this was mainly due to the pandemic situation. The GBS mentions about the need for women specific schemes such as Funds which is allocated for livelihood 10 support projects for Kudumbashree, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Women and Child Development and Fisheries under the Rebuild Kerala Initiative of Kerala in which women play an important role.

Some of the important highlights mentioned in the 2021-22 gender budget statement of Kerala were:

Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) has proposed the Training and Employment Women Entrepreneurship Mission to help women entrepreneurs scale up their activities. The Corporation has also set up four Women Facilitation Centres and five Women Facilitation Centres in Industrial Parks, including Women Entrepreneurship Start-up Programmes and Skill Development Training and Employment for Women. The LIFE Mission Housing scheme is specifically for women. The 2021-22 Gender Budget Document mainly emphasized on skill development for women, training and employment generation, livelihood security, creating a safe place for women, prevention of gender-based violence. In 2022-23 Gender Budget Statement the main focus was same mainly done just modifying certain terms as women's safety and gender mainstreaming with education, skilling and employment, health and social security, and providing gender friendly infrastructure such as creating gender parks which was also some of the important highlights of the 2021-22 GBS.

Some of the important highlights of the 2022-23 gender budget statement are:

Firstly, mentioning the statement as “*Transforming the narratives of gender development in Kerala*” second, the mentioning of Community Policing programme The Pink Protection Project has been introduced in the state to protect women in public, private, and digital spaces. Schemes include Bhoomika, Swadhar Greh, Ujjwala, Special Package Scheme for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, mental health programs, and social

security measures like Nirbhaya, Aswasakiranam, and Snehasparsham. Mental health programs focus on addressing women's mental health issues, while social security measures include pension schemes, construction of women and children's homes, and One Stop Centres. These measures aim to benefit women entrepreneurs and caregivers.

VII. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES PERTAINING GENDER BUDGETING

Gender Budget document (2020-21) had pointed out the limitations on the implementation of the Gender Budget methodology. Also mentioned about the non-availability of gender disaggregated data and the absence of a wider vision in incorporating women in development planning process. The process of gender budgeting are also listed as that lack of vision and clarity in innovation which limits the policy makers to take appropriate measures, insufficient quantity of data and the lack of skill or ability of the new institutional mechanisms. (Chakraborty,2016).

The gender budget document is divided into Part A, which includes schemes which are 100 % allocated for women and Part B where at least 30% percent to benefit the needs of women. Under the plan schemes, Gender Budget 2022-23 has shown an overall allocation of 20.90 per cent with a marginal increase of 1.36 per cent compared to 2021-22. Part A allocation is 7.26 percent and part B is 13.64 per cent. Every year a marginal increase is seen in the budgetary allocation. These expenditures are only allocated through plan fund. So, the calculation of 20 per cent must be understood as only plan fund allocation and not from the total fund (Pulikamath,2022).

In 2021-22 and 22-23 gender budget document focused on its main priorities like employment generation, skill development and social security for women. As mentioned in the gender budget document 2022-23 overall 170 schemes under the category of education, skilling and employment are included (Part A – 34 schemes and Part B – 136 schemes) with an outlay of 1926.75 crore for women- specific schemes. Even though Kerala is a state with the highest literacy rate, still has a low female participation rate. One of the vital social and economic challenges women face are the gender inequality in wages, unpaid work still exists. The gender disparity in wages is evident in regular employed or a salaried class, but more crucial in casual labour. Though the wages or the remuneration given to women engaged in casual labour in Kerala are higher when comparing to other states in India, gender difference in wage gap persists. The Economic review (Chapter,7, 2021) the budget allocations does not showcase such gender inequalities, wages play an important part of the needs of women and discouraging financial freedom to a woman is an issue. therefore, the gender discrimination in terms of wages, unpaid work is yet to be tackled.

One of the important reasons for low participation in paid activities is because of the overburden of reproductive and caring activities of the women. The concept of “care economy” is very important in the society that assigns gender roles. It is also important to note that there is no provision for such activities of unpaid work mentioned in the budget allocation even though it is an important part of a women’s life and a women spent almost a huge part of their lives to their family. The government should plan and establish adequate number of caring centres for children, aged persons, and differently abled persons in order to make sure there is an improvement and also to meet the opportunity cost of caring and

rearing activities which is considered very high. A scheme introduced by Government, *Aswasakiranam* program which is an assistance provided to care givers (largely women) for which 4250 crores for women is allocated. Monthly assistance of only 600INR is provided to the caregivers of bedridden patients at home, including physically and intellectually disabled persons and old aged persons (Gender Budget document,2022-23) this amount in absolute terms is very low because there is high cost of caring and medical activities.

The state is only able to provide nominal social security measures like pensions. They are not entitled to any other provisions of sickness support or other social and health emergencies for women in the informal sector during the pandemic (gendering of the gender budget 2022).

The schemes included under rural and urban development in the PART B of the gender budget document such as *Waste management scheme in urban areas*, *Ayyankali urban employment scheme* *LIFE Mission: Housing scheme for houseless* etc is shown as job creation programmes. This is contradicting the process of 'gender mainstreaming' itself in the budget. Government should seriously focus on more gender specific objectives rather than employment generation because these schemes can be mentioned in the main budget document itself than the gender statement.

One of the important social challenges women faces is that In Kerala for the past few years there have been increasing incidences of gender-based violence particularly, domestic violence against women. This is the dilemma of high incidence of domestic violence and crimes against women coexisting with high female literacy, education and low female work participation rates. There are increasing reports of violence, rape, and other atrocities against women. Cases of depression and suicides among women are also high, this shows poor mental health of women which is a major issue to be considered. Only gender awareness as mentioned in the budget statement is not necessary to curb these cases of violence against women, Proper planning and implementation of law against this violence should also be applied. Men should be given proper awareness and strict action should be taken both in rural and in urban areas. High levels of gender development in terms of conventional indicators can co-exist with significant gender-based violence (Mukhopadhyay, 2007)

VIII. CONCLUSION

Kerala has the highest literacy rate in India at 94% Of that, 96.11 percent of men and 92.07 percent of women can read and write. But still has a low female work participation, high unemployment, increase in instances of gender based violence against women, poor mental health of women, poor participation and representation of women in politics, high work load and household responsibility on the women, gender differences in education, relatively unequal property rights, differential wage structure, lack of autonomy in decision making power, poor health situation of women, responsibility for contraception on the women, neglect of the poor state of the women from the marginalized communities, rising crime against women among others. Any initiative for empowerment or development of women can be successful only if there is change in the attitude of the society, in terms of thinking and acceptance. Attitudinal change can be brought only through education and participatory discussions. Apart from Government, NGOs and student groups in schools and colleges can play lead role. Government must formulate schemes and programmes in such a

way that it addresses the specific needs of women. Gender budgeting is a must for achieving gender equality and women empowerment in the society gender budgeting is potential and capable in bringing effective results in society. it needs proper planning, formulation of policies, execution and implementation of these policies and commitment of the Govt. and other authorities.

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