

GENDER BUDGETING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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ABSTRACT

Inspired from the success of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the United Nation and its member countries extend its target specific approach to include more comprehensive and wide set of developmental goals in the form of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 Goals, 169 Targets and 232 Indicators as established by the SDGs came into force with effect from 1st January, 2016. One of the most important goals among seventeen goals is the goal 5 that is related to achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. However, performance of India as a nation and its constituent states and union territories on this goal as revealed through the sustainable development goal index score has been rated poor. To improve this dismal position and achieve the proposed sustainable development goals within the stipulated period the adoption of gender responsive budgetary practices is a must. The lopsided adoption of gender budgeting by country way back in year 2006-07 and mixed response from the states in adoption of the practice has been marked as a reason for low progress of the country on gender empowerment.

KEYWORDS: *SDG Index, Gender Budgeting, Women Equality and Empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

Inspired from the success of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the United Nation and its member countries extend its target specific approach to include more comprehensive and wide set of developmental goals in the form of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As against the Millennium Development Goals which was a set of 8 Goals, 18 Targets and 53 indicators, this much debated and wider approach of target based development initiative consists of 17 Goals, 169 Targets and 232 Indicators. The SDGs came into force with effect from 1st January, 2016. Table 1 provides the list of 17 sustainable development goals as adopted by the United Nations.

Success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lies in the achievement of quantitative set of goals, targets and indicators. Each member nation were required to come out with its own set of goals, indicators and targets in alignment with the United Nations set of goals, targets and indicators. While implementation of the 2030 Agenda occurs primarily at the national level, the achievement of SDGs depends strongly on progress made at local level. Therefore, need was felt to localize the efforts in the direction of achieving the SDGs. The Sustainable Development Goals therefore consists of setting up to targets, indicators and strategies at three levels i.e. United Nations, National and State.

Table 1: Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Source: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>

Being member of the United Nations, second most populous country of the world and also a country with diversity in economic, social and political front, the success of achieving sustainable development goals by United Nations by 2030 depends on the success or failure of India in achieving these goals. Also, one of the most important goals among seventeen goals is the goal 5 that is related to achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. This goal is important goal because achievement of each of the sustainable developmental goal depends directly or indirectly on the achievement of this goal. Therefore, given the fact that attainment of sustainable development goal by United Nations depending on its attainment of these goals by India and the attainment of sustainable development goals related to women influencing the overall attainment of all goals, a study to analyze the situation of women in India and the role played by policy instruments at government disposal in attainment of gender related goals becomes evident.

It is only through the social and political commitment that the issue of gender inequality can be handled and the best way to see the political commitment is through the looking at the way the resources are allocated by the government for the empowerment of women and girls. Therefore, gender budgeting can play a decisive role to see the efforts of the government concerned towards attainment of sustainable development goals related to women and also to highlight the shortcomings in government approach regarding the same. In this paper this has been done by looking at the role the gender budgeting can play in attainment of the sustainable development goals related to women.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Women

All the 17 goals of the Sustainable Development Goal of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable development have gender empowerment as its integral objective. However from gender perspectives for the sake of convenience these goals can be been put under two heads:

- Sustainable development goal(s) exclusively dedicated to women issues; and
- Goals and targets that are part of some other major sustainable development goal(s)

Out of 17 sustainable development goals, there is only one goal i.e. SDG 5 that deals exclusively with the issue of women empowerment. The goal read as “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” aims at attaining a total 5 targets by the year 2030. The targets to be attained by governments by the year 2030 under this goal are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2: Targets under SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls

Target	Statement
Target 1:	End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
Target 2:	Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
Target 3:	Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
Target 4:	Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
Target 5:	Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life
Target 5.a	Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
Target 5.b	Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
Target 5.c	Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels
Target 6	Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

Source: Extracted for the present paper from MoSPI, (2019), Sustainable Development Goals: National Indicator Framework Baseline Report, 2015-16, GoI.

Similarly there are various targets under sustainable development goals that have women as its target group. Table 3 shows all such targets and the goals under which these targets are kept in the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Apart from these Goals, targets and indicators, other SDGs also have targets and indicators the achievement of which depends to a great extent on the attainment of gender equality and empowerment. A closer look at these goals, targets and indicators tells that the achievement if each of these goals are influenced to a great extent by the national and local level government policies and programmes. The commitment of the government is evidenced through its budget document. Budget of the government through its financial allocations towards various sectors of the economy tends to influence each and every citizen of a country. Therefore the practice of gender budgeting or gender responsive budget can act as an important tool for the attainment of sustainable development goals in general and women empowerment in particular.

Table 3: SDG Targets and Indicators other than SDG5 having Gender Dimension

SDG	Target / Indicator	Statement
SDG 1	Indicator 1.3.1	Percentage of Households with any Usual Member Covered by a Health Scheme or Health Insurance (Gender Wise)
	Indicator 1.3.5	% of the population (out of total eligible population) receiving Social Protection Benefits under Maternity Benefit
SDG 2	Indicator 2.2.3	Percentage of Women with Body Mass Index (BMI) Below Normal (BMI)
	Indicator 2.2.4	Percentage of Pregnant Women Age 15-49 Years who are Anemic (Hb <12g/dl)
SDG 3	Indicator 3.1.4	Percentage of Women Aged 15–49 Years with a Live Birth (4 or More visit)
	Indicator 3.5.3	Percentage of Men 15-54 and Women Aged 15-49 Years Who Consumed Alcohol
	Indicator 3.7.1	Percentage of Currently Married Women Age 15-49 Years Who Use Any Modern Method of Family Planning
	Indicator 3.7.2	Percentage of Women Age 15-19 Years Who Were Already Mothers or Pregnant
	Indicator 3.7.3	Percentage of Institutional Deliveries (5 Years / 1 Years)
	Indicator 3.8.7	Percentage of Women Age 15-49 Years and Men Age 15-49 Years Who Are Currently using Tobacco
SDG 4	Indicator 4.5.2	Gender Parity Indices (GPI) for Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary and Tertiary education
SDG 8	Indicator 8.5.1	Unemployment Rate (gender wise) Rural, Urban and Total
	Indicator 8.5.2	Workforce Participation Ratio (WPR) (gender wise) Rural, Urban and Total
	Indicator 8.5.3	Wages earned by male-female in Regular wage/ salaried employees (gender wise) Rural, Urban and Total
	Indicator 8.5.6	Share of Unemployed Persons in Population Aged 15-24 (Percentage) (gender wise) Rural, Urban and Total
	Indicator 8.6.1	Unemployment Rate among Person Aged 15-24 years (gender wise) Rural, Urban and Total
SDG 9	Indicator 9.2.2	Manufacturing Employment as a Proportion of Total Employment

Source: Extracted for the present paper from MoSPI, (2019), Sustainable Development Goals: National Indicator Framework Baseline Report, 2015-16, GoI.

Sustainable Development Goals and India

In order to measure the progress made by countries in achievement of sustainable development goals, a composite index known as sustainable development index have been formulated by the United Nations. This index highlight the progress made by each United Nations member country in achievement of their respective sustainable development goal targets.

In India, NITI Aayog has been entrusted with the mandate to oversee the implementation of sustainable development goals in the country. NITI Aayog by estimating Sustainability Development Index for country as a whole as well as for all the states and union territories of the nation acts as an instrument to measures progress of the India in this direction. Sustainable development goal index is a composite score computed in the range of 0 to 100 on its aggregate performance across 16 SDGs and their respective targets. Based on the scores of each state and Union territories the states are classified into four categories i.e. aspirant states whose index score is between 0 and 49; performer states having score between 50 and 64; front runner states with composite index score between 65 to 99 and achiever states with index score 100 or above.

In its recently released report on the Sustainable Development Index the NITI Aayog of India have lauded the progress made by the country in improving its composite index score from 57 in 2018 to 60 in 2019. On the segregation of the index score, the maximum gain has been reported in the achievement of SDG 6 related to clean water and sanitation, SDG 9 related to industry, innovation and infrastructure and SDG 7 that is related to affordable and clean energy. The report also ranked states of the country in terms of their performance on the SDG Index. Kerala has been adjudged by the report as top ranked state in the country with its SDG index score of 70 followed by Himachal Pradesh having index score at 69. These two states are followed by Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu at third position. In This report it has been mentioned that now in India no state falls in the aspirant category as all the three states Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Assam that initially falls in this category have now graduated to performer category states. The report also categorically mentioned Uttar Pradesh as biggest improvers since 2018 as it moved in country ranking from 29th position to 23rd position by 2019 along with Orissa which improved its rank from 23rd to 15th and Sikkim that improved its rank from 15th to 7th in 2019.

However the performance of each state and union territory in terms of SDG 5 i.e. women equality shows the dismal performance of the country as a whole. This SDG index on the goal of gender equality is constructed with the help of eight national level indicators. For the entire country, the SDG index score for goal 5 ranges between 26 and 52 for states and between 27 and 53 for the union territories which by all means shows poor performance of the country in gender equality and empowerment. With only Himachal Pradesh and Kerala having respective sustainable development index score of 52 and 51 were the two top performing states, the union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh with their index score of 53 were the lone union territories that topped the country wide rankings. Ironically none of the state in India falls in the front runner and achiever state in the entire country and these few states that falls in the performer states category also have very low score.

The report highlighted the worst form of gender discrimination in India happens in the field of political empowerment where only 8.32 per cent seats in state legislative assemblies are held by women. The earning of regular wage salaried employee females are 78 per cent of that of males and the female work force participation rate stands at low 17.5 per cent. The sex ratio in the country stands at 896 females per 1000 males and merely 13.96 per cent operational landholdings are owned by females. In terms of victims of crime, for every 1 lakh female population 58 women are subject to various types of crime and out of all crimes against children 59.97 per cent crimes are sexual crimes against girl children. One in three women experienced spousal violence in India. Given this dismal statistics the role to be played by state in improving this poor gender equality performance increases manifold. For this purpose the instrument of gender responsive budget practice becomes important. The section ahead explains about the concept of gender responsive budget or gender budgeting and its implementation in India.

Gender Budgeting: History and Definition

Gender budgeting is a newly evolved feminist approach to highlight women issues related to public expenditure. The basic reason as has been identified by the gender economists for heterogeneous growth of men and women has been differences in socially and culturally defined roles that existed in our societies ever since the history of evolution of our cultures. Recognizing the fact that the social construct inherent in our history is responsible for the gender differences, the government through its policy, planning, fiscal and monetary instruments can act as catalyst to

transform this heterogeneity into homogeneity. To evaluate government commitment towards gender equality and to bring about homogenous society, gender budgeting has been advocated. The idea of having gender sensitive budgeting is based on the notion that all government policies and spending have a differential impact on women and men. Therefore, only through the analysis and evaluation of government policies and spending and highlighting the shortcomings if any with regards to differentials in its impact on men and women, the equality and empowerment of women can be brought in the society.

Conceptually, gender budgeting does not involve separate budget for men and women, nor does this mean 50:50 allocation for both men and women, rather it is an approach which if worked out properly can be used to highlight the gap between the government commitments, policy statement to fulfil these commitments and resources actually allocated for the fulfillment of these commitments (Bellamy, 2002). Byanyima (1999) defines “gender budgeting as a method of examining a government budget to determine how it impacts on women and men, girls and boys of different social and economic groups.” Another broad definition of Gender – Responsive Budgeting (GRB) has been given by Stosky (2016), which defines it as “an approach that uses fiscal policy and public financial management instruments to promote gender equality and women’s development.” Sharp and Broomhill (2002) identified three goals that a gender budget seeks to achieve:

- Mainstream gender issues within government policies;
- Promote greater accountability for governments commitment to gender equality; and
- Change budgets and policies.

Therefore, as has been rightly by Rake (2002), the issue dealt by gender budgeting is not whether we are spending the same on women and men, but whether the spending is adequate to women and men’s needs.

The concept of gender budgeting evolved in Australia where on the initiative of Dr. O. Rhonda Sharp, with the purpose to pursue gender equality the first attempt to undertake the women’s budget exercise was undertaken (Bundlender *et al.*, 1998). Beginning with this small but unique experiment, the technique of gender budgeting gained momentum to be practiced by almost all countries of the globe. United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) played vital role in making this concept globally accepted at various levels. In some countries such as Bangladesh, gender budgeting as performed as national level project, while in some other countries such as Uganda, it has been further decentralized to local government (Akerkar, 2001). There are various ways through which the gender budgeting is being practiced globally.

In India the government of India commissioned the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy to undertake comprehensive study on gender budgeting in the year 2000. Based on the inputs given by the NIPFP and the recommendations of the expert committee on classification of budgetary transactions of the government of India, Finance Minister announced for the institutionalization of gender budgeting from 2006 – 07. For that purpose a gender Budgeting secretariat has been placed in the Ministry of Finance and gender budgeting cells are being constituted in the sectoral ministries (Lahiri, 2019). With this the concept of gender budgeting spread to many states and union territories. However, the outcome of these lopsided efforts does not yield any significant outcome as has been reported by the sustainable development goal index outcome parameters. This mismatch in the initiatives and the outcomes cannot be considered as a failure of the gender related budget rather they help government and policy makers to understand the paucity of initiatives on the part of government in making gender equality a success.

Gender Budgeting and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Given this evolution of the concept of sustainable development as explained in previous section and the target of achievement of sustainable development goals by the year 2030, it can be said that one way to achieve these goals within the stipulated time period the gender responsive budget can be an effective instrument to do so. Even United Nations Women in its report titled “Women and Sustainable Development Goals” has identified gender responsive budget as an effective instrument to highlight gender issues and to achieve the gender related targets by the end of the year 2030. The report clearly mentions stating that gender equality is the central to all the sustainable development goals. The use of gender responsive budgeting will help direct funds to programmes that benefit women as it will help reveal the funding gaps.

Each of the targets under sustainable development goal 5 that is related exclusively to gender equality and women empowerment and indicators that are to be achieved under these targets are influenced by the budgetary provisions. Be it the objective of ending all forms of discrimination, elimination of violence against women and girls in public and private sphere; eliminate the harmful practices of child, early and forced marriages all forms of eliminations that hamper women empowerment can be removed by the initiatives on the part of government. The issue of recognizing and valuation of unpaid work, ensuring effective participation and equal opportunities for women in political, economic and public life, provision of equal rights to economic resources as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritances and natural resources all are something that can be influenced with the help of public policy in these regards.

Government by way of not only making provisions to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights but also backing these provisions with financial assistances can ensure the success that will be reflected in the achievement of sustainable development goals. The adoption of gender – responsive budgeting can make the funds flow towards attainment of objectives such as improvement in the access to safe drinking water so that women have more time to earn an income, girls are more likely to attend school and family health and hygiene improve. The gender budgeting practice if adopted in strict sense can channel fund towards measures to improve easy access to safe drinking water so that women have more time left to earn an income, and girls are more likely to attend school and family and health and hygiene improves. Therefore it can be concluded that if adopted in its true spirit the gender budgeting can help India improve significantly in improving its score on gender equality and also help it attain the goals and targets of sustainable development goals which embodies five Ps of the global movement i.e. people, planet, prosperity, partnership and peace.

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