

And where are the Women in the Union Budget 2008-09?

Highlights

- Total allocations for women show a very marginal increase from 3.3 to 3.6% of the total government expenditure (as per the Gender Budgeting Statement), a mere 0.3% increase. The number of Ministries and departments reporting in the Gender Budgeting Statement remains constant (with 33 Demand for Grants), which is a disappointment.
- Significant increase in the allocations for Ministry of Minority Affairs from Rs. 362.83 crore to Rs. 1013.83 crore but no schemes to address the specific vulnerabilities of Muslim women.
- Women specific allocations in agriculture as a percentage of total allocations in agriculture has increased from 2.52% (2007-08 RE) to 3.66% (2008-09 BE). In higher education, however, priority for women has gone down from 19.27% (2007-08 RE) to 17.13 % (2008-09 BE) in higher education.
- Allocations for RCH have gone up from Rs. 1629.17 crore last year to Rs. 2504.75 crores. This is welcome. However, allocations for women when compared to the total allocations in health remains stagnant at 53 %.
- Allocations for women under the Ministry of Panchayati Raj have gone down from even the revised estimates of last year-- from Rs. 43.92 crore to Rs. 34 crore.
- Considering the fact that one-third of women are engaged in the unorganized sector, it is disappointing to note that in the Union Budget 2008-09, apart from the Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana, the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, and Indira Gandhi Old Age Pension Scheme (which anyways targets only BPL men and women), which have been allocated resources, the multifarious issues which social security entails have been largely neglected.

Section I. Introduction and Overview

The *Statement on Gender Budgeting* presented along with the Union Budget is welcome. However, it is a rather limited approach if one wants to understand what the Union Budget has to offer to women. Quite apart from numbers not matching and the patriarchal and misleading assumptions, it is the narrowness of the approach that fails to give a comprehensive picture of the gendered dimension of the budget. It is equally important to take the analysis further and to critically assess whether: (a) these women-specific schemes indeed reach women the way they intend to (i.e., moving from ex-ante analysis to ex-post analysis); and (b) even if they reach women, are they in any way transforming gender roles and constructs or are they simply reinforcing gender stereotypes by just adding to women's unpaid and reproductive work.

Moreover, since women's labour has become the backbone of the country's economy—whether in agriculture, or in the informal sector, or as construction workers, or as migrant workers, etc., — it becomes imperative that each of these respective ministries have specific policies and schemes to address women's specific concerns and vulnerabilities

rather than the predominantly MWCD-centred focus within which again the self-help groups seem to be the only vehicle that the GoI has to offer for transforming women's lives.

The Union Budget 2008-09, being probably the last full budget of this UPA government, had much to deliver for the women of India. The NCMP promise of *ensuring equality for women in every sphere* will most certainly not be achieved unless concomitant funds are made available to make the necessary changes. The proposals for women Union Budget 2008-09 in this regard seem a bit too little.

The *Statement on Gender Budgeting* now presented along with the Union Budget for the fourth consecutive year has the following highlights:

- a. Although the FM in his budget speech pointed out that four more ministries/departments have set up gender budgeting cells taking the total number to 54, the number of ministries that are reporting women specific allocations remains the same (at 33 demand for grants).

The total magnitude of Gender Budget has gone up only marginally from 3.3% to 3.6% of total expenditure, a mere 0.3% increase over previous year.

Table 4.1. Summary of the allocations on women as presented in the Gender Budgeting Statements (in Crore Rupees)

	No. of Demands*	Total Allocations under Part A of the statement**	Total Allocations under Part B of the statement***	Total magnitude of Gender Budget
2005-06	10	Rs. 8,273.88 (RE)	Rs. 15,966.63 (RE)	Rs. 24,240.51 (RE) (4.77%****)
2006-07	24	Rs. 4,618.95 (RE)	Rs. 17,632.46 (RE)	Rs. 22,251.41 (RE) (3.8%)
2007-08	33	Rs. 8,428.66 (RE)	Rs. 13,919.43 (RE)	Rs. 22,348.09 (RE) (3.3%)
2008-09	33	Rs. 11,459.61 (BE)	Rs. 16,202.06 (BE)	Rs. 27,661.67 (BE) (3.6%)

* In Union Budget covered under the Gender Budgeting Statement.

** Part A presents women specific provisions where 100% provisions are for women.

***Part B presents women specific provisions under schemes with at least 30% provisions for women.

**** Proportion of total Union Government Expenditure, shown in brackets.

Source: Gender Budgeting Statement, Expenditure Budget Vol. I, Union Budget - various years

Section II: Allocations for Women in the Union Budget 2008-09

For ease of presentation and tracking government commitments, we present allocations in the Union Budget 2008-09 in the categories used in the Eleventh Five Year Plan (Chapter 6, 'Towards Women's Agency and Child Rights), i.e., (a) Ensuring Economic Empowerment, (b) Engineering Social Empowerment, (c) Enabling Political Environment, (d) Effective Implementation of Women Related Legislations, and (e)

Creating Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Mainstreaming and Strengthening Delivery Mechanisms. We now assess budgetary outlays for each of these categories.

2.1: Ensuring Economic Empowerment

A. Agriculture

The criticality of Agriculture in our economy, the agrarian crisis and the growing feminization of agriculture calls for specific and targeted interventions to address the specific vulnerabilities of women in agriculture. This has been identified as a critical area of concern even in the Eleventh Five Year Plan document.

While women have always played a key role in agricultural production, their importance both as workers and as managers of farms has been growing, as an increasing number of men move to non-farm jobs. Today 53% of all male workers but 75% of all female workers, and 85% of all *rural* female workers, are in agriculture. Women constitute 40% of the agricultural work force and this percentage is rising (Report of the Gender and Agriculture Subgroup created by the Planning Commission).

Recognising the gendered dimension of the changing demographics in agriculture, the Eleventh Five Year Plan committed itself to the following:

The challenge in the Eleventh Plan is to improve the availability of agricultural inputs, credit, marketing facilities, technology and skill training for the increasing number of women farmers. Resources pooling and group investment, financial and infrastructural support will be provided. Women in Agriculture will be on the top of the Eleventh Plan agenda and a two-pronged strategy will be adopted: a) Ensuring effective and independent land rights for women and b) strengthening women's agricultural capacities. (Chapter 6, 'Towards Women's Agency and Child Rights', Eleventh Five Year Plan)

Moreover, a specific scheme to address women's vulnerabilities was also to be devised by the MWCD to identify and help women in States where agrarian crisis has ravaged families. However, the allocations in Union Budget 2008-09 to address women's specific vulnerabilities, seem grossly inadequate to meet these commitments.

Table 4.2. Women Specific Allocations under Allocations for Agriculture

	2006-07 RE	2007-08 RE	2008-09 BE
Total Allocations	9454.06	11018.94	14476.88
Women-specific Allocation*	4.99	277.46	530.19
% Share	0.05	2.52	3.66

*As per the Gender Budgeting Statement, various years

Source: Compiled from Expenditure Budget Vol. I&II, Union Budget - various years

B. Food Supply and PDS

In the context of the growing agrarian crisis and the declining per capita food grain availability (as pointed out by Utsa Patnaik), the eroding public distribution system has grave consequences. NFHS-III data shows that the proportion of underweight children among all children under the age of 3 years in the country was as high as 46% in 2005-06. Moreover, this proportion has remained practically stagnant over the last decade. The

National Commission on Farmers has calculated that the cost of reaching food to around 80 per cent of our population, which is either malnourished or at risk of malnutrition, (i.e. is food insecure) will be Rs. 35,876 crore at current prices. The total subsidy needed for the universal public distribution system is as little as 1 per cent of the GDP.

Furthermore, food security is a deeply gendered issue. Most certainly if food security is hit, the consequence will be felt most by the women and the household and the women in the household will be the first to get lesser food. Yet, there was no measure for expansion of PDS in the recent years and this year's budget does not offer anything significant in this regard. In fact as a percentage of total expenditure allocations on food subsidy have actually gone down.

Table 4.3. Allocations for Food Subsidy (in Rs. Crore)

	2005-06 RE	2006-07 RE	2007-08 RE	2008-09 BE
Allocations for Food Subsidy	23,200.00	24,203.92	31,545.59	32,666.59
% Share of Total Expenditure	4.56	4.16	4.68	4.35

Source: Compiled from Expenditure Budget Vol. I&II, Union Budget - various years

C. Skill Development and SHGs

Recognising the need for providing women with vocational training, credit support, marketing support and technological support the Eleventh Five Year Plan, through such support services seeks to strengthen women's entrepreneurial activities. The table below gives a broad sense of the allocations on some of the major schemes for this.

Table 4.4. Schemes that are important for SHGs (in Rs. Crore)

Schemes	2005-06 RE	2006-07 RE	2007-08 RE	2008-09 BE
Grants through NABARD for Strengthening Cooperatives Credit Structure (Min.of Finance)	413.63	1505.44	2046.28	3542.91
Allocations for Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY) (Ministry of Rural Development)*	899.84	1080.00	1620	1933
Allocations for Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) (MWCD)	13.5	13.5	18	33.3
Allocations for Rashtriya Mahila Kosh* (MWCD)	0.01	10	12	31
Allocations for Swayamsidha	18.50	27	22.41	180

Note: The Union Budget allocations for the schemes given above do not include the lump sum provisions for North Eastern areas and Sikkim.

Source: Expenditure Budget Vol. II (Notes on Demands for Grants), Union Budget - various years.

Although increases in allocations for these schemes are indeed welcome, one has to be cognizant of the limitations of a predominantly SHG-centred approach to women's empowerment.

2.2. Engineering Social Empowerment

Recognising the neglect of women in almost every sphere, engineering social empowerment has been identified as one of the core strategies in the XIth Plan to address the challenges of gender equity. Some stark indicators are summarized in the table below:

Stark Indicators	Monitorable Targets in the XIth Plan
Overall Sex Ratio: 933 Child Sex Ratio: 927 (Census, 2001)	Raise the child sex ratio to 935 by 2011-12 and to 950 by 2016-17
Maternal Mortality Ratio 301 (SRS 2001-2003)	Reduce MMR to 100 per 100,000 live births by 2011-12
Incidence of Anemia in: Pregnant women: 57.9% Ever-married women: 56.2% Among children: 79.2% (NFHS-3)	Reduce anemia among women and girls by 50% by the end of XIth Plan
Drop-out rate: Primary level: 29% Elementary level: 50.8%	Reduce drop-out rate for primary and secondary schooling by 10% for girls and boys.

A. Health

Health has been a critical area of concern from women's perspective. The indicators in the table above underscore the point. Furthermore, the Eleventh Five Year Plan focuses on these dimensions:

Focus areas in the XIth Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practice of gender budgeting in Health will be made mandatory in all programmes of the Centre and the States; ▪ Provide financial support for capacity building, awareness generation and effective implementation of PC & PNDT Act along with undertaking public awareness measures; ▪ Move beyond the traditional focus on family planning and reproductive health; ▪ A National Research and Resource Centre in health for women under NRHM; ▪ Commit resources for a multi-sectoral, decentralized, community based health service of which HIV/AIDS is an integral part; ▪ Screening of all women during pregnancy and appropriate referral to pre-designated institutions for management and safe delivery; ▪ Provide skilled birth attendance to Dais.

However, in respect of allocations to meet these commitments and targets, the following picture emerges:

Table 4.5. Women Specific Allocations in Health

	2006-07 RE	2007-08 RE	2008-09 BE
Total Allocation for Dept. of Health and Family	11366	14500	16968.25

Welfare			
Women-specific Allocation*	3362.16	7817.61	9088.55
% Share	29.58	53.91	53.56

* As per the Gender Budgeting Statement, various years

Source: Compiled from Expenditure Budget Vol. I&II, Union Budget - various years

Table 4.6. Allocations for RCH

	2005-06 RE	2006-07 BE	2006-07 RE	2007-08 BE	2007-08 RE	2008-09 BE
Allocation for Reproductive and Child Health	1814.27	1765.83	1338.22	1672.2	1629.17	2504.75

Note: The Union Budget allocations for the scheme given above do not include the lump sum provisions for North Eastern areas and Sikkim.

Source: Expenditure Budget Vol. II (Notes on Demands for Grants), Union Budget - various years.

The significant (almost to the tune of 53%) increase in allocations for RCH is indeed welcome.

B. Education

Bridging gender concerns in education remains an important challenge even after 60 years independence. Some of the policy prescriptions that the Eleventh Five Year Plan has to offer in this regard are summarized below:

Initiatives in the XIth Plan	
Merging of Schemes:	
▪	The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) will be subsumed within SSA;
▪	Mahila Samakhya will be gradually expanded to all 3479 Educationally Backward Blocks of the country;
▪	The scheme 'Strengthening of Boarding and Hostel Facilities for Girl Students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools (Access and Equity)' will be merged and restructured under the new umbrella scheme of 'SUCCESS'.
New Scheme	
▪	A Girl Child Incentive Scheme will be launched on a pilot basis in the selected EBBs

However, the priority women get in Union Budgets is reflected in the tables given below:

B.1. School Education

Table 4.7. Women Specific Allocations in School Education (in Rs. Crore)

	2006-07 RE	2007-08 RE	2008-09 BE
Total Allocation for Department of School Education and Literacy	19101.04	23191.35	27850
Women-specific Allocation*	8106.3	1259	2089.05
% Share	42.43	---	---

* As per the Gender Budgeting Statement, various years

Source: Compiled from Expenditure Budget Vol. I&II, Union Budget - various years

Comparison of percentage allocation for women for the last two years becomes meaningless since major schemes in elementary education like SSA and MDM have not reported women-specific allocations in this year's Gender Budgeting exercise. This raises a serious concern. Higher education, as shown in the table below also shows a declining priority for women.

B.2. Higher Education

Table 4.8. Women Specific Allocations in Higher Education (in Rs. Crore)

	2006-07 RE	2007-08 RE	2008-09 BE
Total Allocation for Dept. of Higher Education	5147.96	6397.36	10852.87
Women-specific Allocation*	896.07	1232.97	1859.2
% Share	17.41	19.27	17.13

* As per the Gender Budgeting Statement, various years

Source: Compiled from Expenditure Budget Vol. I&II, Union Budget - various years

C. Reaching Marginalised and Vulnerable Women:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development and some other ministries (like the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) have a few schemes for special interventions for working women and women in distress. A quick snapshot on what the government has allocated for some of these schemes is in the table below.

Table 4.9. Allocations for some of the important schemes under MWCD(in Rs.Crore)

Schemes	2005-06 RE	2006-07 RE	2007-08 RE	2008-09 BE
Allocations for Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers (under MWCD)	41.40	93.80	100	96.10
Allocations for Hostels for Working Women (under MWCD)	4.50	4.50	5	20
Allocations for Short Stay Homes (under MWCD)	15	15.72	15.9	15.9
Allocations for Schemes for Rescue of Victims of Trafficking (under MWCD)	0.25	0.45	4.50	9
Allocations for Machinery for Implementation of PCR Act 1955 & Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 (under MSJE)	36.91	36.91	39.40	39
Allocations for Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (under MSJE)	74.00	72.00	69	60.50

Allocations for Implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act including scheme with Disabilities (under MSJE)	--	9.00	13.10	15.50
Allocations for Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for Old Age Homes (under MSJE)	19	16.50	18.00	31.70

Note: The Union Budget allocations for the schemes given above do not include the lump sum provisions for North Eastern areas and Sikkim.

Source: Expenditure Budget Vol. II (Notes on Demands for Grants), Union Budget - various years.

D. Minority Women

It is common knowledge today that some religious minorities, especially the Muslims bear the brunt of discrimination and non-inclusion. The Sachar Committee Report has highlighted a dismal picture of the social, educational and economic conditions of Muslims in India. Using the framework of intersectionality of discrimination, Muslim women face double discrimination and are more vulnerable. Thus, targeted interventions for Muslim women is essential. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Minority Affairs, as of now, has no schemes targeted specifically towards women. It is therefore imperative that the Government formulate a sub-plan for minorities, and earmark specific allocations for women.

Table 4.10. Total allocations to the Ministry of Minority Affairs (in Rs. Crore)

	2005-06 RE	2006-07 RE	2007-08 RE	2008-09 BE
Allocations for Ministry of Minority Affairs	...	143.52	362.83	1013.83

Source: Notes on Demands for Grants, Ministry of Minority Affairs - various years.

The significant leap in the allocations for Ministry of Minority Affairs is a positive step. Disappointingly though, all the allocations/schemes under this ministry last year and this year were gender neutral and there is not even a singly scheme/allocation targeted at minority women. The gender blindness of the Sachar Committee report is also reflecting in the allocations for this Ministry.

The ability to recognize and address specific deprivations has been identified as the real test of the agenda set for the XIth Plan.

Target Areas identified by the XIth Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make education accessible for Muslim girls ▪ Link Muslim girls to employment ▪ Link Muslim women to credit, markets, technical training, leadership training, skill development especially for home based female entrepreneurs and workers ▪ A pilot scheme for 'Minority Women' will be launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development

2.3. Enabling Political Environment

Allocations for women under the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (as reported in the Gender Budgeting Statement) has gone down from even the revised estimates of last year-- from 43.92 crore to 34 crore.

2.4. Effective Implementation of Women Related Legislations

Many women's groups would be disappointed yet again to note that there is no allocations even in this years budget towards the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act (i.e., Protection from Domestic Violence Act, 2005), despite the passing of this Act as well as the finalization of the Rules and Regulations of the Act. The passing of this act has been a historic achievement for women of this country and the result of a long struggle. The lack of any allocation for this act puts a question mark on the government's commitment to ensure that this Act becomes a reality for women and does not remain confined to the law books.

2.5. Creating Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Mainstreaming and Strengthening Delivery Mechanisms

The table below captures allocations for two such institutional mechanisms important for women.

Table 4.11. Allocations to strengthen institutional mechanisms (under MWCD) (in Rs. Crore)

Schemes	2005-06 RE	2006-07 RE	2007-08 RE	2008-09 BE
Allocations for National Commission for Women	5.77	6.45	6.20	7.25
Allocations for Gender Budgeting	--	--	1.00	3.00

Note: The Union Budget allocations for the schemes given above do not include the lump sum provisions for North Eastern areas and Sikkim.

Source: Expenditure Budget Vol. II (Notes on Demands for Grants), Union Budget - various years

Making resources available for women is critical if one wants to address the structural disadvantages faced by women. Equally critical is to take our analysis beyond outlays to look at outcomes for women. In India, quality of expenditure is also a serious concern.

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