



Mains Practice Question

Q. Gender budgeting is an important tool for women's empowerment. Analyze its effectiveness in addressing gender disparities in India's development policies. **(250 words)**

04 Feb, 2025 GS Paper 2 Social Justice

Approach

- Introduce the answer by defining Gender Budgeting
- Give Effectiveness of Gender Budgeting in Addressing Gender Disparities
- Positive Impacts
- Challenges
- Suggest Measures to Enhance Effectiveness of Gender Budgeting
- Conclude with a forward looking approach.

Introduction

Gender budgeting is a fiscal innovation aimed at integrating gender perspectives into budgetary allocations to promote women's empowerment and address gender disparities. Introduced in India in **2005-06**, it ensures targeted spending on schemes benefiting women and girls.

Body

Effectiveness of Gender Budgeting in Addressing Gender Disparities:

- **Advantages of Gender Budgeting:**
 - **Enhanced Educational Access:** Schemes like **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** and **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyaya** have increased girls' enrollment, reducing the gender gap in literacy.
 - Female literacy rate improved from **65.5% (2011 Census)** to **72% (NFHS-5, 2019-21)**.
 - **Improvement in Health Outcomes:** Gender-focused programs like **Janani Suraksha Yojana** and **Poshan Abhiyan** have reduced maternal and infant mortality.
 - **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** declined from **130 (2014-16)** to **97 (2018-20)** per 100,000 live births.
 - **Women's Economic Empowerment:** As on June, 2022, about **8.39 crore rural poor women** have been mobilized into more than **76.94 lakh SHGs**.
 - **MGNREGA** mandates at least **one-third of its workforce to be women**, increasing their financial independence.
 - **Improved Safety and Legal Support:** Initiatives like **One Stop Centers, SEWA,** and **Nirbhaya Fund** address violence against women and provide institutional support.
 - Strengthening laws like the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005** and Vishakha Guidelines has enhanced legal protections.
 - **Gender-Responsive Infrastructure Development:** **Swachh Bharat Mission** promoted sanitation facilities for women, improving hygiene and school retention rates for girls.
 - **PM Awas Yojana** prioritizes house **ownership for women**, ensuring financial

security.

▪ **Challenges in Implementation:**

- **Gaps in Fund Utilization:** CAG report highlights underutilization of women's budget allocation due to **lack of Gender Budget Cells in key departments.**
- **State-Level Variations:** Only a few states like **Karnataka, Kerala, and Maharashtra** have robust gender budgeting frameworks, while others lag in implementation.
- **Weak Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms:** **Absence of impact assessment mechanisms** leads to inefficiencies in fund allocation and policy execution.
- **Lack of Gender-Disaggregated Data:** Insufficient data on women's economic participation and access to public resources hinders evidence-based policymaking.

Measures to Enhance Effectiveness of Gender Budgeting:

- **Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms:** Empowering the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** to coordinate and monitor gender-responsive budgeting at all levels.
- **Improved Fund Allocation and Utilization:** Ensure **need-based** rather than **population-based allocation**, particularly in rural and marginalized areas.
- **Expanding Gender Budgeting Beyond Social Sectors:** Integrate gender perspectives into **infrastructure, energy, digital economy, and skill development policies.**
- **Capacity Building for Government Officials:** Training policymakers and bureaucrats on gender-sensitive budgeting for effective implementation.
- **Enhancing Public Accountability and Transparency:** Establish independent monitoring bodies and conduct gender audits to assess the impact of policies.

Conclusion

Gender budgeting has played a crucial role in advancing women's empowerment. By aligning these initiatives with **SDG 5**, India can further promote **gender equality and inclusive development**, in accordance with the principles outlined in the **United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).**

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