

# Effectiveness of Gender Budgeting for Women Empowerment: Evidence from India

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## Abstract

In India, low level and inconsistent trends of expenditure on women specific and pro-women schemes confirm that Central Government has not integrated gender considerations into their budgeting process. The low share of spending in cluster like economic and awareness services etc. and low index value of gender empowerment measures reveals that women in India lag much behind in gaining access to resources and enjoyment of rights and freedoms, access to economic and political opportunities. Further, the study finds that budgetary (i.e., public expenditure on health, education and overall social sector) variables have more significant impact on improving the women empowerment indicators as compared to non-budgetary (i.e., per capita real income, literacy level etc.) variables. For instance, the levels of income have adverse impact on sex ratio. Therefore, there is need to increase in sector specific budgetary spending particularly on health and education services.

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## 1. Introduction

IN THE CURRENT development discourse human development, gender equality and social justice have been recognized as a powerful element of sustainable economic growth and full social development of a country. Economic growth has been amply demonstrated to be uneven and unsustainable in the long- run if it is sought to be realized in a situation where there are significant gender inequalities.<sup>1</sup> Gender equality with social justice is, therefore, considered as an integral part of human development. Mahbub-ul Haq argued that, 'Development if not engendered is endangered' and no society can be called developed if one-half of humanity remains voiceless, invisible and undervalued.<sup>2</sup> Amartya Sen's capabilities approach, a new social welfare theorem, is also highly compatible with the human development framework since it enables us to deal with gender empowerment issues in a more holistic manner (Sen, 1999; Martha, 2000). Gender equality

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