Gender Budget and Women Empowerment

**Gender Needs**

Women and men usually have different needs and priorities. While planning development interventions, women’s needs are often not highlighted.

**Practical Gender Needs (PGN):**
- PGNs are practical in nature and often concern inadequacies in living conditions such as health care.
- PGN are a response to immediate and persistent needs, but are not directly linked with women empowerment.

**Strategic gender needs (SGN):**
- SGN are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position in society.
- SGN assist to achieve greater equality and change existing roles.

**Mainstreaming of Gender Equality**

**HOW?**
Move concerns of gender equality from the backwaters and side streams into the mainstream.

**WHY?**
To achieve social justice and democracy and equitable and sustainable development.

**History of Gender Budgeting**

- Australia was the first country to introduce a gender-sensitive budget analysis in 1984.
- On the Asian continent, the gender budgeting initiatives are the most developed in India, Bangladesh and in the Philippines.
- Gender sensitive budgeting was mentioned for the first time in the European Commission in October 2001.

**Why does gender budgeting focus on women?**

- Two thirds of the illiterate people are women.
- Maternal mortality.
- Under-represented in decision making.
- Engaged in less formal work.
- Do most of unpaid work.

**Gender Budgeting**

- Gender budgeting transforms government’s gender commitment into budgetary commitments.
- Gender budgeting ensures that gender perspectives are taken into account and attention is given to the goal of gender equality (gender mainstreaming).
- Implies spending adequate amount on women’s and men’s needs rather than equal expenditures.
- Aims to provide policy support to empower women.
- More than 60 countries around the world do it.

**Issues need to be considered**

- Women should benefit equally from public expenditure dedicated for employment.
- Women should have equal access to government social security schemes, pensions as men.
- Women and men have different time-use patterns. Women work longer hours per week than men. Budget allocations may increase or decrease the workload of either gender.
- Women-specific policies should be implemented and sufficient funds should be allocated to them.
Data needs for gender budgeting

Good gender budgeting relies on data. Gender related data consists of two types:

- **Sex-disaggregated data**
  - Given separately for male and female

- **Data on gender issues**
  - Affect only one sex e.g. data on maternal mortality, or violence against women.

Gender budgeting history of Bangladesh

- In August 2003, Ministry of Finance undertook an exercise to develop Recurrent, Capital, Gender and Poverty (RCGP) database.
- In FY2009-10, for the first time, an analysis on gender budgeting titled ‘Women’s Advancements and Rights’ was placed before the parliament along with the annual budget.
- The origins of GRB in Bangladesh can be traced to 2001, supported by the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Royal Norwegian Embassy.
- Government of Bangladesh engaged with gender responsive budgeting in 2003 under the Medium Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF).

Gender budget in percentage of National Budget and GDP of Bangladesh

![Graph showing the percentage of gender budget in relation to GDP over time.](image)

Gender Budget 2014-15

- In the Gender Budget Report 2014-15, forty ministries have been divided into three sections.
  - Empowering Women and Enhancing their Social Dignity
  - Improving Women’s Productivity and Participation in Labor Market
  - Widening Women’s Effective Access to General Public Sector Services and Income Generating Activities

- The activities of 7 gender-focused ministries have been analyzed.
- 24 ministries in relation have been reflected.
- 9 ministries which have comparatively less focus have been analyzed.

- Allocation for gender budget in FY 2015 is Tk. 66,739 crore which is 4.98% of GDP and 27.64% of total budget.
- FY 2015’s gender budget allocation is 11.68% higher than FY 2014.
- Tax free income for women has been raised from Tk. 2.5 lacs in FY 2014 to Tk. 2.75 lacs in FY 2015.
- Special allocation of Tk. 100 crore is allocated for development of women.