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Introduction

Gender-responsive budgeting, or Gender Budgeting, is a methodology to assist governments to integrate a gender perspective into the budget as the key national plan for public expenditure. The national budget impacts women's lives in several ways. It can, for example, directly promote women's development when funds are allocated for programmes that address women's economic, social and other needs. This can be done both through funding of mainstream programmes that are delivered in a way that is sensitive to women's situation, and through funding of women-targeted schemes. The budget can also reduce opportunities for empowerment of women if there are budgetary cuts.

The Constitution of India guarantees equality for both men and women. However the reality on the ground is different. A range of indicators confirm that women do not enjoy equality with men economically, socially or politically. In 2004 the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) recognised Gender Budgeting as an important tool for women's empowerment, and as a way of addressing the observed inequality. The MWCD adopted "Budgeting for Gender Equity" as a mission statement, and framed a Strategic Framework of Activities to implement this mission which it disseminated to all Ministries and Departments of Government of India.

The Ministry of Finance, as the agency with primary responsibility for the budget, has also recognised the potential of Gender Budgeting. The Ministry of

Finance mandated all ministries to establish Gender Budgeting Cells by January 2005, and asked 18 ministries and departments to submit a report highlighting budgetary allocations for women. The first Gender Budget Statement (GBS) appeared in the Union Budget 2005-06 and included 10 demands for grants. In 2006-07, the GBS covered 24 demands for grants under 18 ministries and departments of the Union government and five Union Territories. In 2007-08, the GBS covers 33 demands for grants under 27 ministries and departments as well as the five Union Territories. At the time of writing, gender budget cells have been established in more than 50 departments and capacity building of the cells has taken place.

One of the strong features of gender budget work globally has been the innovations introduced by practitioners in different countries and contexts to adapt the methodology to their specific situation. This willingness to innovate is one of the crucial ways of building in-country capacity, promoting local ownership, and ensuring that Gender Budgeting is useful for a given situation.

This handbook was prepared with the specific purpose of orienting officials of Government of India. Some parts of it might, however, also be useful for other audiences, such as officials of Public Sector Units. There is no single recipe or blueprint for implementing Gender Budgeting. However, those - such as officials in the gender budget cells - tasked with implementing Gender Budgeting need to

understand the fundamentals and how these have been adapted to their local context. There is still a limited number of people with the necessary skills or availability to support the growing need for gender budget work. This handbook therefore attempts to fill a specific gap and assemble in one document some of the background information that practitioners in India should have at their disposal when implementing Gender Budgeting in their respective departments.

The handbook consists of seven parts:

Chapter 2 provides background information on Gender Budgeting. It includes a definition of Gender Budgeting and related concepts, and a description of what these initiatives entail.

Chapter 3 touches upon the global experience in Gender Budgeting and thereafter describes India's specific approach to Gender Budgeting, the institutional mechanisms that have been put into place and the close relationship that has been established between the MWCD, as the focal point for Gender Budgeting in India, and the Ministry of

Finance to use Gender Budgeting as a tool to achieve women's empowerment.

Chapter 4 describes key aspects of the budget-making process in India and names the related documents. It suggests how these are relevant for Gender Budgeting.

Chapter 5 provides information on the practical strategies and tools that have been and can be used for Gender Budgeting in India.

Chapter 6 presents five case studies of Gender Budgeting across diverse departments, including some that might not immediately be associated with gender equality. Each of the case studies illustrates how a particular ministry or department has designed their programmes and projects and allocated the necessary budgets to address women's needs and be more gender-sensitive. Each of the case studies ends with a set of questions intended to stimulate further thinking.

Chapter 7 presents the answers to some frequently asked questions (FAQs) on Gender Budgeting.