**11. WOMEN**

**Highlights**

* The allocations to Ministry of Women and Child Development have increased from Rs.17,408 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 22,095 crore in 2017-18 (BE)
* Total magnitude of the Gender Budget Statement is Rs. 1, 13,327 crore in 2017-18 (BE) as compared to Rs.90, 770 crore in 2016-17 (BE).
* An allocation of Rs. 2, 700 crore in 2017-18 (BE) to Maternity Benefit Programme (formerly known as *Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahayog Yojana*).
* *Mahila Shakti Kendras* with an allocation of Rs. 500 crore to be set up at village level in 14 lakh ICDS *Anganwadi* Centres. This will provide one stop convergent support services for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition.
* An action plan to reduce Infant Mortality Rate from 39 in 2014 to 28 by 2019 and Maternal Mortality Rate from 167 in 2011-13 to 100 by 2018-2020 has been announced, though details are still awaited.
* Under *Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana*, it is proposed to double the lending target of 2015-16 and set it at Rs. 2.44 lakh crore. Priority will be given to women, besides *Dalits*, *Adivasis*, backward classes and minorities.

The persistence of gender inequality reflected in socio- economic indicators and the increasing incidence of violence against women in the country underscores the need for substantive measures to be implemented by the government. Women experience distinct disadvantages and budgets are an important policy instrument to address these. The following sections analyses the gender responsiveness of Union Budget 2017-18; this is undertaken through an analysis of the allocations of major schemes of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) and the Gender Budget Statement (GBS).

**Budgetary Outlays for Ministry of Women and Child Development**

MWCD is the nodal ministry to formulate and implement **plans, policies and programmes for the empowerment of women. Table 11.1 presents the budgetary outlays for some of MWCD’s key programmes for women.**

**Table 11.1: Outlays for Ministry of Women and Child Development (Rs. crore)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2012-13**  **A** | **2013-14**  **A** | **2014-15**  **A** | **2015-16**  **A** | **2016-17**  **BE** | **2016-17**  **RE** | **2017-18**  **BE** |
| **Total allocations to Ministry of Women and Child Development** | 17,036 | 18,037 | 18,540 | 17,249 | 17,408 | 17,640.4 | 22,094. 7 |
| **Allocations to Ministry of Women and Child Development as a proportion of Union Budget** | 1.20 | 1.16 | 1.11 | 0.96 | 0.88 | 0.88 | 1.03 |
| **Allocations to some key schemes of MWCD** | | | | | | | |
| Core ICDS/*Anganwadi* Services | 15,767.5 | 16,400.8 | 16,683.6 | 15,489.3 | 14,862.9 | 14735.6 | 16745.2 |
| Maternity Benefit Programme (*Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana*) | 82.1 | 231.9 | 343.1 | 233.3 | 400.0 | 634.0 | 2700.0 |
| Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls-*SABLA* | 503.6 | 602.4 | 622.4 | 475.2 | 460.0 | 460.0 | 460.0 |
| Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers | 106.0 | 100.0 | 97.7 | 133.0 | 150.0 | 150.0 | 200.0 |
| *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* # | … | … | 34.9 | 59.4 | 100.0 | 43.0 | 200.0 |
| One Stop Centre\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10.4 | 75.0 | 75.0 | 90.0 |
| Women’s Helpline\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15.1 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 10.0 |
| Other Schemes\*\* |  |  |  |  | 400.0 | 585.0 | 400.0 |
| *Swadhar Greh* | 52.2 | 53.8 | 29.0 | 48.1 | 100.0 | 90.0 | 100.0 |

*Notes:* # Scheme was introduced in 2014-15.

\*\*Met from *Nirbhaya* Fund.

*Source:* Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget Documents, various years

* The budgetary outlays to MWCD have increased from Rs. 17,408 in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 22,095 crore in 2017-18 (BE). However, the bulk of MWCD’s allocations are for the ICDS programme, which itself requires higher allocations as observed by the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, 2016 (Report No.278) which stated “… Ministry should put in efforts to make sure that the shortage of funds does not become a hindrance in implementing the scheme and also in enhancing the outreach of the scheme so as to include maximum number of beneficiaries”.
* There has been a notable increase in the allocations to the Maternity Benefit Programme (formerly known as *Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahayog Yojana*) from Rs. 400 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 2,700 crore in 2017-18 (BE). This allocation is close to GOI's estimate of a requirement of Rs. 7,348 crore for the scheme for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 to be borne by the Union Government.[[1]](#footnote-1)

However, as per the estimates of Standing Committee on Food ,Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (2012-13), the total scheme expenditure towards maternity benefits to 2.25 crore pregnant and  lactating women works out to be Rs. 14,512 crore per annum (to be borne by Centre and states). Going by this estimate, this allocation seems to fall short of the required funds to universalise the scheme.

* Other schemes, such as those for addressing the needs of women in distress such as *Swadhar Greh*, and One Stop Centres have witnessed marginal increases, which are inadequate to ensure both adequate coverage and quality of services. Given the criticality of the issue, it is imperative that the Union Government continues to supplement the efforts of states in this domain.
* The Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls-SABLA, launched in 2010 continues to be implemented in pilot phase.

**What does the Gender Budget Statement 2017-18 reflect?**

The GBS, first presented in Union Budget 2005-06, aims to capture budgetary resources earmarked for women and girls by Union ministries and departments. The Statement is presented in two parts: Part A enlists schemes and programmes meant entirely for the benefit of women and girls; while Part B reports schemes in which at least 30 percent of the funds benefit women and girls.

The overall magnitude of the GBS in 2017-18 (BE) is Rs. 1,13,327 crore, an increase from Rs. 90,770 crore in 2016-17 (BE). A total of 26 ministries and departments and 5 Union Territories have reported their interventions in the GBS this year. The Department of Telecommunications, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, and Ministry of Panchayati Raj have not reported their programmes in the GBS this year, while the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has initiated reporting in the GBS.

The total allocations in Part A of the GBS are Rs. 31,390.8 crore in 2017-18 (BE), which as a proportion of the Union Budget, shows an increase from the previous years, as reflected in figure 11.1.

**Figure 11.1 Outlays in Part A of the GBS**

*Notes*: Part A of the GBS presents allocations to schemes exclusively for women. The allocations in Part B of the GBS are Rs.59,233.6 crore.in 2012-13 (RE), Rs.61,210.3 crore in 2013-14 (RE), Rs.64,556.7 crore in 2014-15(RE), Rs69,860.7 Crore in 2015-16 (RE) Rs.75,152.7 crore in 2016-17 (RE) and 81,935.9 crore in 2017-18 (BE). However, due to methodological flaws in the reporting by some Ministries in Part B of the GBS, the graph above only presents allocations in Part A as a proportion of the Union Budget.

*Source:* Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget documents, various years.

The increase in allocations in Part A of the GBS this year is primarily on account of increased allocations reported by MWCD, Department of Rural Development (for Rural *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana*) and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (for LPG connections to poor households). It may, however, be noted that *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana* is not a scheme meant only for women, hence its inclusion in Part A of the GBS is questionable. The scheme for LPG connections to poor households, is a welcome intervention as it serves to reduce women’s drudgery and addresses health concerns associated with the use of *chulhas*; however, its reporting as a scheme benefiting women exclusively also inadvertently endorses the gender stereotype that domestic duties like cooking are primarily the responsibility of women.

Allocations in Part B of the GBS have increased from Rs. 73,2012 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 81,395 crore in 2017-18 (BE). However, there do not seem to be any significant improvements in the reporting by ministries/departments in Part B of the GBS. Most departments/ministries continue to report a flat 30 percent or 50 percent of the total allocations in the GBS retrospectively, rather than identifying the gender based disadvantages in their respective sectors of concern and the budgetary resources earmarked to address these specific challenges. Some changes in reporting of select schemes under certain ministries such as Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmer’s Welfare have been observed. However, the rationale underlying these changes is not clear as the GBS does not provide any justification/rationale for reporting of schemes by departments/ministries in the statement.

Analysis of GBS also highlights that important ministries continue to be outside the ambit of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). For instance, the lack of safe sanitation facilities is recognised to be closely linked to the incidence of violence against women. However, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation is yet to adopt GRB. Likewise, other important ministries such as Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Law and Justice and Ministry of Tourism have not yet adopted GRB.

**Operationalisation of *Nirbhaya* Fund**

The *Nirbhaya* Fund, introduced in Union Budget 2013-14 is a key Union Government intervention that aims to enhance the safety and security of women in the country. The total magnitude of the corpus is Rs. 3,000 crore. As of January 2017, sixteen proposals amounting to Rs. 2,187 crore have been appraised and recommended by the Empowered Committee of Officers, an inter-ministerial committee that appraises and recommends various proposals/projects proposed by different Ministries/Departments/States under the Fund.[[2]](#footnote-2)

From the information provided in the Union Budget documents, it could be interpreted that the amounts utilised under the *Nirbhaya* Fund are as follows:

**Table 11.2 Allocation and Utilisation of *Nirbhaya* Fund (Rs. Crore)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Department/ Ministry** | **2016-17 (BE)** | **2016-17 (RE)** | **2017-18 (BE)** |
| Home Affairs  (National Emergency Response System and Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children) | 150 | 250 | 313.3 |
| Railways |  | 200 | - |
| Women and Child Development | 400 | 585 | 400 |

*Source:* Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget documents.

However, there is a need for greater clarity on *Nirbhaya* Fund. The government must make information on the allocations and utilisation of interventions under the Fund available in the public domain. Also, important proposals[[3]](#footnote-3), such as the Central Victim Compensation Fund, proposed under the *Nirbhaya* Fund, do not seem to have been introduced in Union Budget 2017-18.

The hurdles in the operationalisation of *Nirbhaya* Fund have affected its effective utilisation. The low utilisation of the Fund indicates the lack of priority towards the issue of women’s safety and security.Tthe implementation of this Fund presented an opportunity to institute a comprehensive set of measures by appropriate departments and ministries. Given government’s stated commitment towards enhancing women’s safety in the country, it is imperative to undertake steps to ensure optimal utilisation of the Fund.

1. Government of India (2017), Pan-India expansion of Maternity Benefit Programme (MBP) to benefit pregnant and lactating mothers across the country dated 3 January 2017, New Delhi: Press Information Bureau. Available at:<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=156094> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Government of India (2017), Clarification regarding Utilisation of Nirbhaya Fund dated 27 January 2017, New Delhi: Press Information Bureau. Available at: http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=157727 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No 2931 To Be Answered On 11.08.2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)