

Summary
**Impact of Agricultural Policies and Programmes on Women of
Small and Marginal and Agriculture Labour Households:
Gujarat**

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This study is an exercise in Gender Budget Analysis, which carries out Gender Aware Policy Appraisal in Gujarat State. The state has been in the forefront of economic growth, maintaining higher economic growth rates than the national average in most decades since its formation in 1960. The state has maintained a rank of fourth in per capita income among large 15 states in India for now two decades. The state's social development indicators have been better than all India average. In women's development as well, the state has maintained above national average performance till very recently, when the state has started slipping down on critical aspects of women's development and status, the literacy rate and juvenile sex ratio. Also, the state has not done well in human development as the state's rank in HDI (of Planning Commission 2002) and HDM (of Hirway and Mahadevia 2003) is not commensurate with the state's per capita income rank. The state is at 6th position in 2001 with regards to both these indices. Same is the case with gender development index. Further, Gujarat Human Development Report (GHDR) finds that the state has not devoted adequate financial resources to the cause of human and gender development, as the four ratios used by the UNDP (UNDP 1991) in monitoring government commitment to human development, are falling quite short of the norms. This has been the case in the past and also in the recent years.

This gets reflected on the allocations and actual expenditures made on women's development programmes. Just, 0.35 per cent of the total expenditure made through budget was on women-specific schemes in 2001-02, when the budgeted expenditure share was 0.79 per cent (once again a meagre share). In annual plan allocations, the proportion would be still higher. But, women's development and gender equity not being priority areas, the funds do not get allocated and then spent on these programmes. In any case the shares are quite meagre. If pro-women schemes are included, that is entire allocations on health and education sector, that are likely to benefit women also, then in 2001-02, 6.57 per cent of the expenditures through budget were on women-specific and pro-women schemes together, when in budgetary allocation, this figure was 12.10 per cent. This is way behind the central government directive of 30 per cent of departmental funds to be reaching women under women component plan. Further, instead of the government making budgetary provisions for the purpose, the state government is seeking external assistance for small programmes for women's development, the TWA assessed in this study is a case in point.

The overall budget analysis of GoG shows that the approach to women's development and gender equity is too fragmented. There are large number of schemes and programmes, all getting meagre funds. Thus, each of the programmes have very meagre coverage. A few women here and a few women there benefit. There is no reflection of the achievements of any of the programmes on the overall development of women and improvement of their status. The TWA programme assessed in this study is one such programme. Impact is also not observed at taluka level, though in few individual villages, some positive impacts of some programmes are observed. This too thin spread of too less resources is not a new observation on the government programmes.

Adequate budgetary allocations for women's development and gender equity and their appropriate utilisation can take place in a policy environment that is congenial, that is one which is human/women-centric. Gujarat state's policy environment has always been giving primacy to industrial development and economic growth. In the decade of 1980s, the policy environment reached a situation of economic growth at any cost. Serious damages on environmental front started taking place. This led to stagnancy in agriculture growth and decline in per capita incomes in agriculture, which still continues to have half the working population. It also led to water scarcities and firewood and fodder scarcities. Women's work increased. In the dry region, one was confronted with the reverses in literacy levels. To top it, the allocations to rural development and agriculture sector has not been much. Thus, overall policy environment has not been favourable to the cause of women's development and gender equity.

The decade of economic reforms further brings in skewed development perspective, of promoting economic growth at any cost. And these costs can be seen and felt, through various agitations on ground, the latest one being that of the farmers against the electricity rate hike, which is part of the package of economic reforms. The further addition to the adverse macro environment is the regression in the social discourse due to rise of 'Hindutva ideology'. The state has been embroiled in increased political violence since the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) has come to power on its own with a large majority each time, since 1995. The 'Gujarat Violence 2002' is the climax of increasing violence in the state. The political discourse in the state has moved away from development issues to non-issues. Inviting investments and maintaining high growth rate are what are considered as two pet themes of the government put forward as 'development agenda'. This indicates that the vision of the state government is only a desperate attempt at economic growth, once again at any cost.

Amidst such hostile policy environment and decreasing government commitment to human development and gender equity, the state government has framed 'Gender Equity' Policy. The policy was framed with a very wide participation process, with the participation of academics, NGOs and women's organisations. The policy is still in draft form. The policy has been framed with the support coming from the UNFPA. When the policy will be accepted and action plan proposed inside would be implemented is still to be observed. There is also a concern, that whether the policy be adopted as it is. Even if so, would budgetary allocations for Gender Equity be increased, would macro policy

environment be made more humanistic and pro-women are some of the unanswered questions. Whether Gender Equity Policy or not, first most important correction required in the state is a change in overall environment of public discourse and policies. These corrections are also necessary for improvement in the impacts of various women-specific and pro-women programmes/schemes that would be implemented and would be implemented in the future.

From the macro level, we come to the micro level conclusions. Two programmes, Watershed development programme and Training for Women in Agriculture (TWA) were selected for detailed analysis of their impacts on women. The study at the micro level is carried out in five agro-climatic regions in the state, by selecting a district and then a taluka within it that typically represents the cropping pattern of the region and then two or three villages in each taluka to capture different cropping patterns and watershed development programme. Impact of TWA was observed separately by drawing a separate sample from that discussed above.

The watershed programme is a pro-women scheme, where women are expected to benefit more than men. These are either land conservation and water conservation and recharging programmes (that is dealing with ecological dimensions) or are also dealing with socio-economic aspects. The latter are called watershed plus programmes. The latter are supposed to increase women's participation and therefore empowerment and status in the watershed villages. Large number of micro watershed programmes have been implemented in Gujarat. Our assessment of three watershed programmes in this study shows that one was not properly implemented. In watershed programme, in Groundnut belt in Saurashtra, women were not involved with the programme. The watershed succeeded because of the NGO. But, that did not lead to improvement in women's status. The other watershed, in the Tribal belt, had components of watershed plus. But, it was very limited in ecological sense. The women participated actively in watershed programme. One sees a higher level of women's empowerment in the watershed programme in Tribal belt. Whether that is because of more egalitarian gender relations in tribal belt or because of the programme is not know. Our understanding is that higher level of empowerment is because of both.

The TWA programme, which is women-specific, that is which is directly targeted to women, has shown higher results. Just that the funds for these were very limited. At the moment the success of TWA is also because literate women were selected and women from slightly higher income families were selected than low-income families. Also, TWA has been successful in areas where the NGOs have been working, who helped in identifying appropriate women for training and who also motivated women in opting for training. Which means, that NGOs would be cross-subsidizing such programmes. However, in any of our own analysis of budgets, we are not bringing in the non-government funds that go into the success of government funds.

Also, a precondition for the success of this programme is women's literacy. Further, for the success of TWA, higher social sector allocations are also required. And for such

programmes to have visible macro level impacts, much more funds and higher coverage of women is required.

Lastly, the two programmes analysed here fail to meet the expectations from the perspective of gender framework we have selected. These are highly inadequate to reverse gender hierarchies and lead to holistic empowerment of women. But, if these programmes are implemented in congenial macro environment and active women's movement, could yield better results.

Recommendations for Budgets

This holistic assessment of Gender Policies and two programmes of the Government of Gujarat indicates two things: (i) need for macro level changes in the development path with bringing in of human-centred, more specifically gender sensitive human-centred development paradigm, at the centre of development path chosen. This is essential for reversing the gender hierarchies. (ii) immediate or short term measures for improving the access of women to budgetary resources and effectively implementing programmes for women's development and empowerment.

We would not discuss here the long term recommendations for the improvement in macro development path so that the short term and micro level efforts bear results.

The recommendations for the immediate action are discussed below:

- i) The gender concern in the policies, if at all brought in, is as appendage to the macro policies of economic growth – which in case would be with the proposed 'Gender Equity Policy' of the state government. To come out from this framework of women's development as an after thought, state government should think of setting up 'Gender equity department' and not women and child development department. In fact, the later department was established in Gujarat only in 2002 and till then only the Commissionerate under Social justice and empowerment department.
- ii) The new department should be given financial support to act as a watch dog on various sectoral policies and their impact on Gender equity. It should also carry out advocacy with different departments of the government to mainstream gender issues in the sectoral policies.
- iii) The department should continue to support efforts to take up desk top exercises of reviewing state budgets on a continuous basis and take up exercises of gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessments and gender-disaggregated public expenditure incidence analysis on regular basis. This would help in improving delivery of public services.
- iv) It goes without saying that the Gender Equity Department must be provided adequate budgetary support. The trend of the last few years has been that the Commissionerate and then the department of women and child development was getting decreasing financial support from the state government.
- v) Since the state government is structurally adjusting and in the process of reducing budgetary deficits and also is in a situation of financial crises, wherein the state's

- debt-services have increased, the department of Gender equity should also support studies to analyse the impact of revenue models of the state on women.
- vi) Gujarat state has very poor ratios of social sector expenditures. At the outset, budgetary allocations to social sectors must be enhanced to reach, at the least, the social sector ratios proposed by the UNDP (1991). These ratios have been looked at in the Gujarat Human Development Report, 1993 over a long period of time. This is most essential even in conditions of high debt services condition in the state.
 - vii) Education is the pre-condition for the success of most programmes and schemes. Hence, improvement in girls' enrolment and retention in the schools is very important. For this, not only funding to education has to increase, as mentioned in the previous point, but, also incentive schemes have to be introduced for encouraging families to put their daughters in the schools and ensuring the continuance of girls in the school till atleast they complete elementary education.
 - viii) Programmes such as TWA, as we have seen in this study, although having limited benefits, should be expanded and continued. Wherever possible, the selection of women for training must be carried out in consultation with local women's group, whether an NGO or of women's movement. But, such institutional set up may not exist in all the parts of the state. Then, beneficiaries should be selected in consultation with women members of the *Panchayati raj* institutions.
 - ix) There should be continuation of programmes and schemes for long term. The state government should be willing to provide long term financial support them. Additional funds can be brought from national and international funding agencies. Programmes/schemes should not be started on ad hoc basis when the funds are available and discontinued when the funds stop. This is not just a phenomenon in Gujarat but an all India phenomenon. Lot of efforts go in keeping track of when the programmes/schemes have been initiated and then discontinued.
 - x) Desk top review of budgets also showed that there are too many programmes and schemes, many with similar focus. Convergence of programmes and schemes is necessary.
 - xi) Funds allocated are very few for most essential programmes and schemes, as we have seen in the case with the TWA. Then, the funds are spread too thin over a large area, bearing no results in any place. Only where the NGOs have been working that such thinly spread funds give results. The idea of Gender Budget analysis is not to pass on the responsibility of development to the NGO sector but to make government interventions more effective. Hence, besides long term commitment, financial allocations should also increase.
 - xii) Even for the watershed programmes, funding is not much, though we have not discussed the funding pattern of watershed programmes here. Fixed amount is given for a watershed, irrespective of the ecological state of the watershed and of that some 10 per cent are for entry point activities such as setting up of users' committees. The whole programme has to be completed within 5 years, of which one year is for entry point activity. Like ecological conditions, social conditions also in different watersheds are different. In some watersheds it is easy to organise users' committees and in some not. But, the watershed programme funding has rigid conditions, partly a result of highly inadequate funds for the watershed

programme. Hence, watershed programmes have scope for success only where NGOs are working. Such rigid conditions and thin spread of funds leads to waste of funds allocated as the funds are utilised and no impacts are observed, as we saw with respect to one GLDC funded watershed in our study. If watershed plus programmes are supported for long term, with adequate funds, it is possible to bring in gender equity issues at the village level.

The other and the last important policy issues for effective gender-budgeting are data for gender auditing. The major characteristics of the required data are: (a) availability at regular intervals, (b) reasonable level of reliability, (c) gender desegregation, (d) availability at the district level, and (e) availability in the required format. It is possible to do so if small steps such as, additional analysis of the available data, timely analysis of the already collected data, expansion of the sample size of the ongoing surveys, and better supervision for ensuring accuracy are taken. The state government has set up Gender Resource Centre, which has the task of improving gender data systems. It is hoped that the centre would look into the aspect of appropriate gender data at disaggregated level.

Reflections on Gender Budget Analysis for Rural Sector

This budget analysis exercise for the rural women was very challenging. This was for various reasons. One that the rural sector is in serious crises, as amply discussed in this article and also discussed by numerous academic and government reports. Would situation with regards to women's development and empowerment been different if the agriculture sector was not neglected in the state for so long period of time? In other words, would sectoral analysis be as important from gender-budget analysis perspective as gender-disaggregated budget analysis? We decided that the both are important and hence, we have attempted both, leading to a detailed analysis of macro paradigm, sectoral budgetary allocations and specific allocations for women within the sector. Even then, the question what impact gender sensitive programmes would have made if massive efforts to improve well being in the rural sector were made, does not get answered by this analysis.

The agriculture sector is in crises and gender empowerment and equity are still a distant dream in the state also because of the dominant development ideology in the state. Ideology would determine budgetary allocations. But, ideology would also determine how effective budgetary allocations would reach the targeted groups.

To carry out a Gender Budget analysis for rural sector in such a state with agriculture sector diversities is difficult. The state has advanced and most commercialised agricultural practices as well as subsistence agricultural practices. Different types of programmes are required for women in different agricultural systems. State level programmes for women therefore have different impacts in different regions. It is therefore required to analyse which type of programmes are required in which region before evaluating the budgetary allocations. We have tried to address this issue by dividing the state into five agro-climatic regions, each of which has different agricultural systems. But, even each of the agro-climatic regions depending on local conditions.

There is a missing aspect of meso level budget analysis in this study. We wanted to capture the situation of the whole state represented by agro-climatic regions in the state. We could not go into meso level analysis of fund flow. The meso level budget analysis could have included analysis of district and taluka level fund allocations and utilisation in general and for two specific programmes in particular.

Further, benefits of programmes reaching women depends on socio-cultural and class factors. We have tried to capture this by looking at the caste break-up of the households surveyed. The class dimension of women's empowerment is controlled by taking up only women from landless and small and marginal farmer households. Still, religious-based segmentation of rural population has not been looked at, as that would also be an important aspect of analysis given the communalisation of state polity.

The success of policies and programmes, as observed in this study, is also influenced by the presence of NGOs. Gujarat state has a long standing presence of NGOs, starting from 1930s as a part of Gandhian influence. Local presence of NGOs is felt and women's participation and awareness increases where the NGOs are present. But, the whole state does not have even presence of NGOs. Hence, the variations in programme impacts across different regions are also because of presence or absence of NGOs. State policies cannot be based on assuming presence of NGOs. Efficiency of budgetary allocations therefore has to be ensured with better and efficient administrative system. Budget analysis should also be looking into external funds that come to the programmes and projects through NGOs, as these funds too need to be accounted in the total budget. We did not get into this aspect.

Lastly, the funds allocated for programmes targeted for women and for even pro-women are so low that evaluation of their impacts becomes almost a non-exercise. A programme/scheme that has very large allocations should be taken up as a first step for gender budget analysis.

However, this exercise was useful from the point that it revealed that miniscule proportion of funds were allocated for women-specific schemes and very low proportion of funds were allocated for pro-women schemes. If benefit incident analysis were carried out, due to socio-cultural and economic complexities the actual funds reaching would be very low. This finding itself is very shocking. Exercises of desk-top reviews should continue to bring home this point and build up advocacy to ensure noticeable increase in the budgetary allocations to women-specific and pro-women schemes and programmes.

It was also shocking to observe that any programmes are no where near the goal of gender equity or empowerment and simultaneous actions on many fronts is required. This exercise was also useful to bring forth the point that along with increasing budgetary allocations for women a correction in macro path of development is necessary for state such as Gujarat.

A gender budget analysis for the agriculture sector should include the following aspects:

- i) Macro level analysis of state's development paradigm

- ii) Selected sectoral analysis, policies, problems, gender issues within the sector and then budgetary allocations that should include analysis of outlays, budgetary allocations and actual expenditures
- iii) Overall budget analysis in details from gender perspective, with analysis of outlays, budgetary allocations and actual expenditures
- iv) Meso level analysis of development fund flow, in which funds flowing for Tribal Sub-plan can be included
- v) Appropriate stratification of state to capture regional dimensions, more diversified the state's rural economy is more careful one has to be in stratification.

This study was meant to be a state level study. We could have gone into analysing a specific region or area based analysis. In that case, the emphasis and methodology would have been different. The study methodology would therefore be determined at what scale the assessment is to be carried out. With these insight, we would like to suggest that the gender budget tool kits need to be detailed out based on the scale issues discussed in this section.

If the budget analysis for the rural women were to continue, we would like to suggest that it is necessary to evaluate how much benefits are reaching women from the allocations and policies for education and health. It is very essential that these programmes succeed if other development interventions have to succeed in the state.