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Table of Contents:

An Analytical View of Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Pre- and Post-COVID-19 India	Mitali Nikore	Nikore Associates, India	5
	Geetika Malhotra		
	Unmuktman Singh		
	Ashmita Chowdhury		
Brazilian women: a struggle to be heard	Rafaelly Andressa Schalleberger	IFFar - Instituto Federal de Educação Ciência e Tecnologia Farroupilha, Brazil	24
Leadership In Post-Democratic South Africa - Building Support Towards The Advancement Of Women	Adéle L. Moodly	Rhodes University, South Africa	25
Literature as a mean of self-knowledge, liberation, and feminine empowerment: The legacy of Clarice Lispector	Fernanda Trein	UNIJUÍ, Brazil	38
	Taíse Neves Possani		
Women's Education and Empowerment: Evidence from a Reform in Kenya	Hang Thu Nguyen Phung	Osaka University, Japan	39
	Nahashon Nzioka Nthenya		
Women In The Limelight: Strides And Paradigm Shifts	Safiya Ibn Garba	Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative, Nigeria	40

Index of Authors:

Chowdhury, Ashmita	5
Garba, Safiya Ibn	40
Malhotra, Geetika	5
Moodly, Adéle L.	25
Nikore, Mitali	5
Nthenya, Nahashon Nzioka	39
Phung, Hang Thu Nguyen	39
Possani, Taíse Neves	38
Schalleberger, Rafaelly Andressa	24
Singh, Unmuktman	5
Trein, Fernanda	38

An Analytical View of Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Pre- and Post-COVID-19 India

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ABSTRACT

The Government of India (GOI) defines Gender Budgeting as, “a process of identifying gender specific barriers across all sectors of development.” India has been producing an annual Gender Budget Statement (GBS) as part of the Union Budget since 2005-06 and has amongst the most transparent gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) processes globally, especially amongst developing countries. Having said that, time series analysis of the GBS shows that there has been a concentration of the Gender Budget in just 5-6 ministries and 10-12 schemes over the last 17 years. Moreover, the uneven adoption of GRB at the State level has led to a need for enhancing gender-responsive initiatives post COVID-19. Moving forward, India needs to reprioritize GRB at both the Central and State levels through a phased approach focusing on five key priority areas, i.e., strengthening the process of formulating the GBS, gender disaggregated data collection of scheme beneficiaries, gender mainstreaming in program design, skill training and capacity building, and strengthening institutions responsible for GRB.

KEYWORDS: Gender-Responsive Budgeting; Gender Mainstreaming; Public Financial Management; Governance; India; COVID-19; Budget

1 INTRODUCTION

The GOI defines Gender Budgeting as, “*a process of identifying gender specific barriers across all sectors of development.*” India began producing an annual GBS as part of the Union Budget in 2005-06. The GOI’s Gender Budgeting Handbook (2015) makes mention of a sound understanding of gender equality, the involvement of each Department/Ministry, the effective utilization of GRB tools, and sex-disaggregated data as pre-requisites for efficient gender budgeting. In this context, our paper provides an analytical framework to assess India’s progress on GRB, with particular emphasis on the GBS for 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23, i.e., during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2 EVOLUTION OF GRB IN INDIA

GRB can be an effective instrument to promote gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) through fiscal policy, typically by earmarking government expenditure against targets to incentivize gender-sensitive actions in the Budget.

Gender budgeting is a public policy innovation that transforms commitments to gender equality into budgetary commitments (Chakraborty et al, 2019). The rationale behind GRB arises from recognising that the national budget impacts men and women differently through the pattern of resource allocation. It involves analysing a budget’s differing impacts on men and women and allocating funds accordingly, as well as setting targets—such as equal school enrolment for girls—and directing funds to meet them. It is essential to establish a clear picture of the gendered impact of public expenditure and allows policymakers to look through a gendered lens regarding fiscal expenditure, earmarking funds for gender-specific outcomes in the Union Budget rather than producing a separate budget. It promotes gender equality and leads to greater efficacy in economic decision making.

The concept of GRB was introduced at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 in Beijing, where the necessity of looking at national budgets through a gendered lens was acknowledged. Since the Beijing Declaration of Action was adopted, governments, NGOs, civil society organisations, and academics have advocated for GRB as a mainstream economic tool for promotion of gender equality principles in public finance (Ratho, 2020).

Australia was one of the first countries to introduce GRB, doing so in 1984, even before the Fourth World Conference on Women. Canada followed suit in 1993, and South Africa in 1995. Since then, over 80 countries have attempted to introduce variants of GRB. Publicly available data shows that countries either include GRB statements as sections within the primary budget documents (as in Uganda) or as an annexe to the main budget documents, published as a stand-alone report (as done in India, Bangladesh and Rwanda) (Ratho, 2020).

In 1995, the Commonwealth Heads of Government gave GRB a vote of support in the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development, noting that a country’s national budget was the most appropriate entry point for integrating a gendered perspective into macroeconomic policies. The Commonwealth Secretariat first launched a Gender Budget Initiative in 1995 and piloted the work in several countries, including Barbados, Fiji, South Africa and Sri Lanka (Budlender and Hewitt, 2003).

The need to ensure a definite flow of funds from the general developmental sectors to women was first highlighted by the Union Government of India in the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97). As part of India’s Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), the Planning Commission introduced the Women’s Component Plan (WCP), which required both Central and State governments to ensure that “*not less than 30 percent of the funds/benefits [were] earmarked for women under the various schemes of the ‘women-related’ ministries/departments* (UN

Women, 2012).” The Tenth Plan (2002–2007) reinforced commitments to gender budgeting by establishing gender-differential impacts and translating this into budgetary commitments: *“The Tenth Plan will initiate immediate action in tying up these two effective concepts of Women Component Plan and Gender Budgeting to play a complementary role to each other and thus ensure both preventive and post facto action in enabling women to receive their rightful share from all the women-related general development sectors (Guha & Goswami, 2006).”*

In 2000, the GOI and UN Women commissioned a research study on GRB through the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP). Their research received national and international acclaim for its comprehensive public policy analysis (Chakraborty, 2013). The NIPFP interim report resulted in the inclusion of a chapter on gender inequality in the Economic Survey 2001-02 (Chakraborty, 2014). NIPFP also produced a series of ex-post analyses on the budget through a gendered lens. These analyses quantified the gendered allocations into specifically targeted programmes for women, including public expenditure with pro-women allocations. It also examined the gendered impacts of mainstream expenditure with an illustrative sex disaggregated benefit incidence analysis. The ex-post analysis series continued until 2005-06, when India first institutionalised the GBS within expenditure budget documents. Since 2005-06, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) has co-ordinated gender budgeting ex-post statements (Chakraborty, 2013).

India, today, is amongst over 90 countries across the world practicing GRB. Typically, GRB follows one of three broad approaches for implementation:

- a) **Needs-based gender budgeting:** Specific sectors are prioritised to bridge prevailing gender gaps. For instance, Rwanda targets spending towards provision of basic sanitation facilities for improving school enrolment and retention. The United Kingdom introduced tax-free universal childcare to make it easy for new mothers to re-join work. South Korea increased funding for programs aimed at reducing the burden of domestic work on women.
- b) **Gender-assessed budgets:** Gender disaggregated impact assessment of allocations is conducted. For instance, Iceland legally mandates that the MoF ensures the Budget Bill lays out its impact on gender equality. Canada provides a gender-based impact analysis of the Budget. Uganda trains Finance Ministry officials to produce gender disaggregated data to undertake the budget’s gender-based impact assessment.
- c) **Gender-informed resource allocation:** Increasing gender equality is the metric to determine budgetary allocations across all ministries. For instance, Sweden created a framework for gender-sensitive allocations at each stage of their budget process.

Of these, the practice in India is closest to the first approach of needs-based gender budgeting, where few sectors are prioritized.

India has been releasing a GBS consistently along with the Union Budget since 2005-06, and it has been recognized one of the most streamlined and detailed GRB documents in Asia (Chakraborty, 2016). The GBS, released as Statement 13 of the Expenditure Profile, presents the portion of budgetary expenditure earmarked by Central Ministries to alleviate gender-specific barriers across schemes.

A charter issued in 2007 mandated the formation of Gender Budget Cells (GBCs) across Central Government Ministries for GRB. In 2012, the Secretary of the Planning Commission issued a statement instructing the institutionalization of a GBC in the States to decentralize and strengthen the process of GRB in the country. In 2013, the Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) laid down guidelines for the States to facilitate the creation and incorporation of gender budgets.

At present, GBCs exist across 57 Central Ministries and 16 State governments to strengthen gender mainstreaming across schemes.

The MWCD is the nodal agency for coordination of gender budgeting activities, preparing strategic frameworks of activities that are then disseminated across various ministries and departments. Though MWCD is the nodal agency for GRB implementation in India, it is the MoF in coordination with the NIPFP that carries out pioneering research of GRB to design the matrices of gender budgeting (Rudra, 2018). The MWCD developed a comprehensive Gender Budgeting Handbook in 2015 to provide guidance for operationalize GRB in India (MWCD, GOI, 2015).

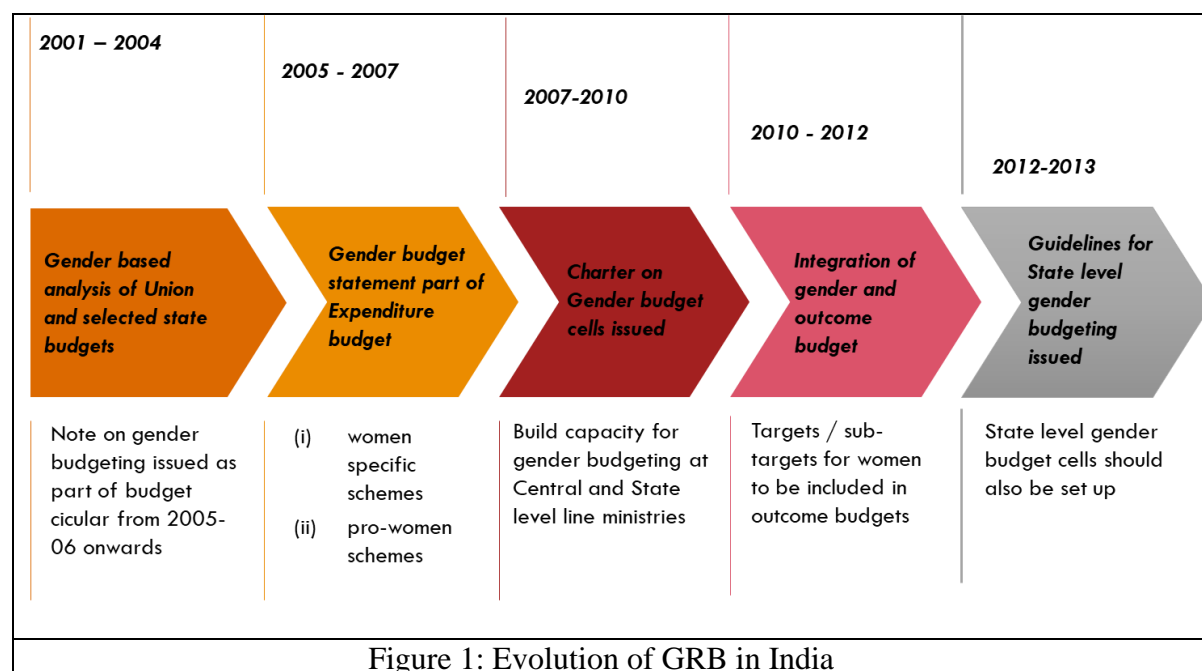


Figure 1: Evolution of GRB in India

Source: Nikore Associates

3 TIME SERIES ANALYSIS OF INDIA'S GBS

Numerous frameworks have been developed for effective GRB in developed and developing countries. The Council of Europe applies gender budgeting principles on all European Union (EU) administered funds by conducting gender-based assessments of budgets and restructuring revenues and expenditures to promote gender equality at all levels of the government, across EU member states (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017).

The Overseas Development Institute advocates for a stronger focus on gender mainstreaming on the expenditure side of the Budget as opposed to the revenue side, for developing countries in the early stages of GRB (Welham et al., 2018).

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, an international think tank, highlights five key principles for GRB: (i) sex-disaggregated data collection and gender responsive analysis; (ii) allocations as per strategic priorities/indicators; (iii) performance monitoring; (iv) civil society participation; and (v) the public disclosure of information (Bosnic, 2015).

Drawing on these key principles, we analyze India's GBS between 2005-06 to 2022-23 along four parameters, evaluating the extent to which the GBS is transparent, responsive, evidence-based, and results-oriented.

Table 1: Parameters For Analysing India’s GBS

Transparent	Evidence-Based
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear • Detailed • Accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses Sex-Disaggregated data • Uses data collected across levels – National, State, District, Block, Village levels
Responsive	Results-Oriented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive to short and medium-term gender needs of the country • Dynamic and flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows a defined output-outcome-impact framework • Robust monitoring and evaluation methodology to measure impact

3.1 Parameter 1: Transparency

Over the last 16 years, the India’s GBS has evolved into a comprehensive document, providing item-wise allocation and expenditure details in a clear, predictable format. India’s GBS has been recognized one of the most streamlined and detailed GRB documents in Asia (Chakraborty, 2016). The number of Ministries/ Departments included in the GBS has more than doubled, from 14 to 40.

However, some challenges with the GBS remain. The GBS clearly delineates allocations into two parts: Part A comprises women-specific schemes (100% allocation for women), and Part B for pro-women schemes (30%-99% allocation for women). While this system allows policymakers to capture varying levels of the gender responsiveness in their schemes, the basis of demarcation of schemes between Parts A and B has been questioned on numerous occasions by public finance experts, such as Lahiri (2019) and Mehta (2020).

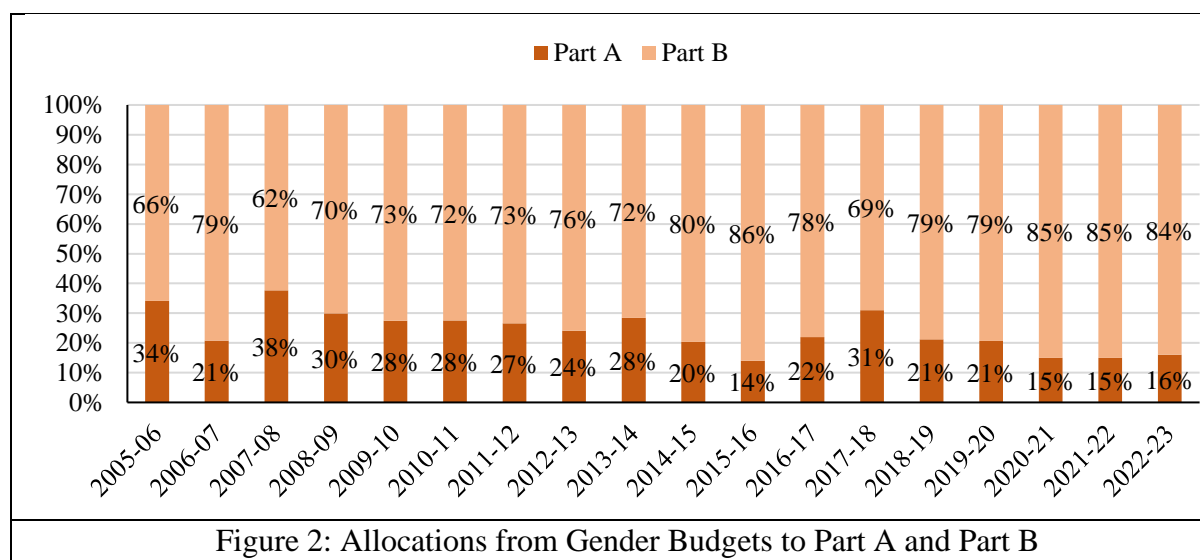


Figure 2: Allocations from Gender Budgets to Part A and Part B

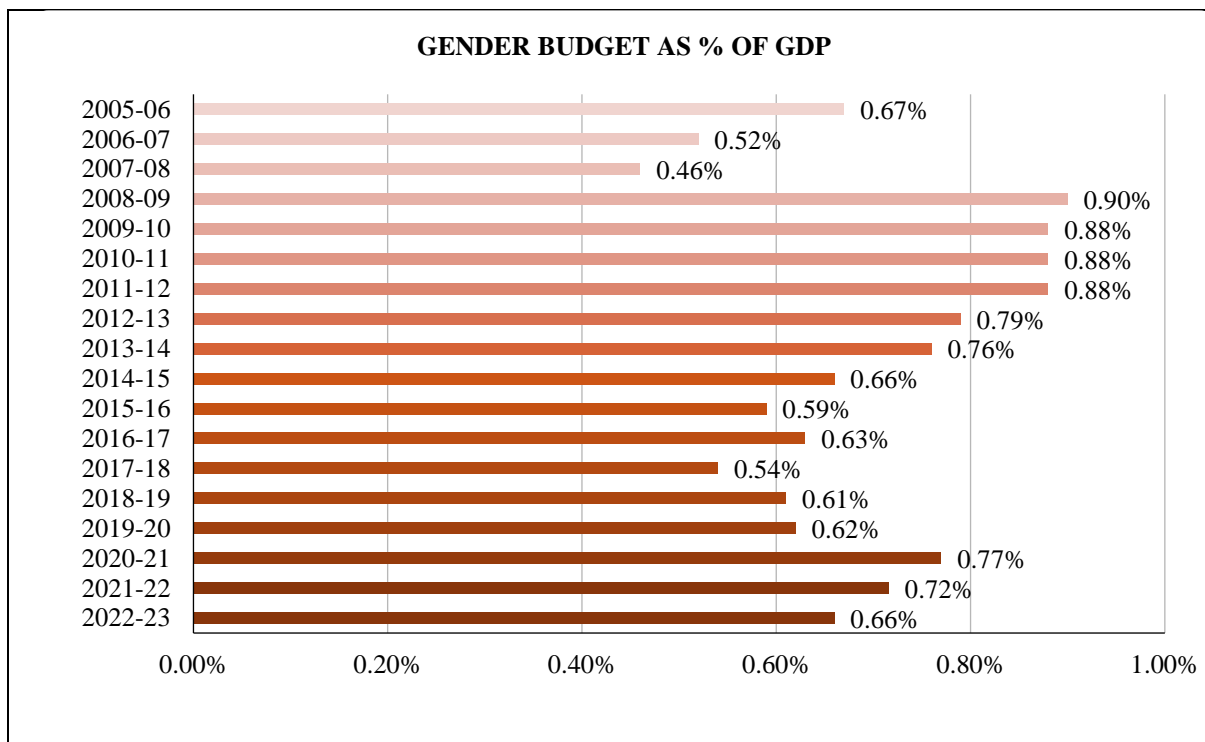
Source: Union Budget Statements, 2005-06 to 2022-23

3.2 Parameter 2: Responsiveness

Ideally, GRB should be dynamic, and evolve on an annual basis, with allocations reflecting both the short-term needs for women during the year, and a well-defined medium-term strategy for gender equality. The extent of the Indian GBS’ responsiveness can be

gauged by observing: (i) total magnitude of the gender budget; and (ii) distribution of allocations across schemes and ministries. We analyse each of these below.

First, the quantum of India's Gender Budget between 2005-06 and 2022-23 has remained in the range of 4%-6% of the total expenditure, and less than 1% of its GDP. The budgeted expenditure for 2020-21 was the only exception, when emergency spending on COVID-19 social protection schemes, like the Jan Dhan Yojana and Ujjwala Yojana drove the Gender Budget to 1.06% of GDP. However, the actual expenditure was only 0.77% of the GDP. In 2021-22 and 2022-23, despite the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women (Khan & Nikore, 2021), the Gender Budget has remained 4.41% and 4.33% of the total budgetary expenditure and 0.72% and 0.66% of GDP respectively. The paucity of the gender budget can be gauged from the example of gaps in allocations to support prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG). Oxfam (2021) estimates an annual budgetary requirement of INR 100,000 to 110,000 million for VAWG programming in India in 2018. However, budgetary allocations to support VAWG prevention stood at INR 7,970 million, in the same year.



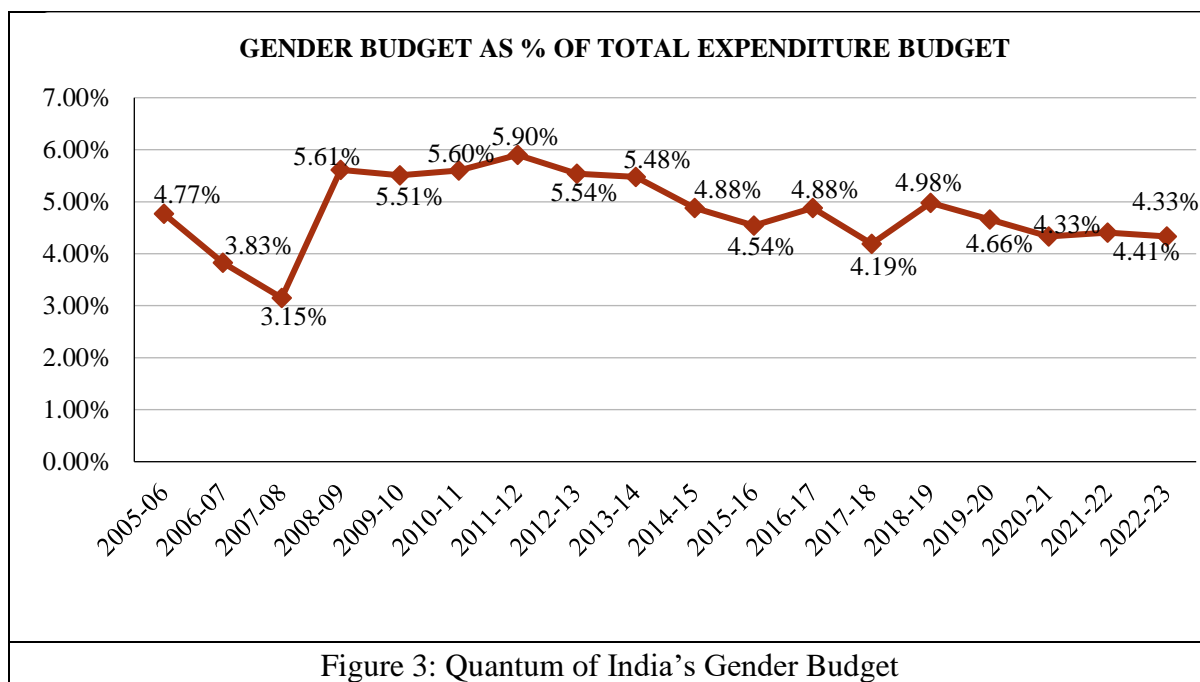


Figure 3: Quantum of India's Gender Budget

Source: Union Budget Statements, 2005-06 to 2022-23

Second, between 2005-06 and 2019-20, India's Gender Budget has been concentrated in five key Ministries and Departments: Rural Development, Women and Child Development, Agriculture, Health and Family Welfare, and Education¹. Since 2020-21, the increase in allocations for the Prime Minister Awas Yojana (Urban) resulted in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs superseding the Ministry of Agriculture in the top five ministries. This trend continued in 2022-23 with the 5 ministries forming 91.3% of the GBS. Furthermore, the top 10 schemes which constituted about 75-85% of the Gender Budget between 2018-19 and 2021-22, were allocated 79.1% of the 2022-23 GBS.

¹ The erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development was renamed Ministry of Education from 2021-22 under the New Education Policy 2020.

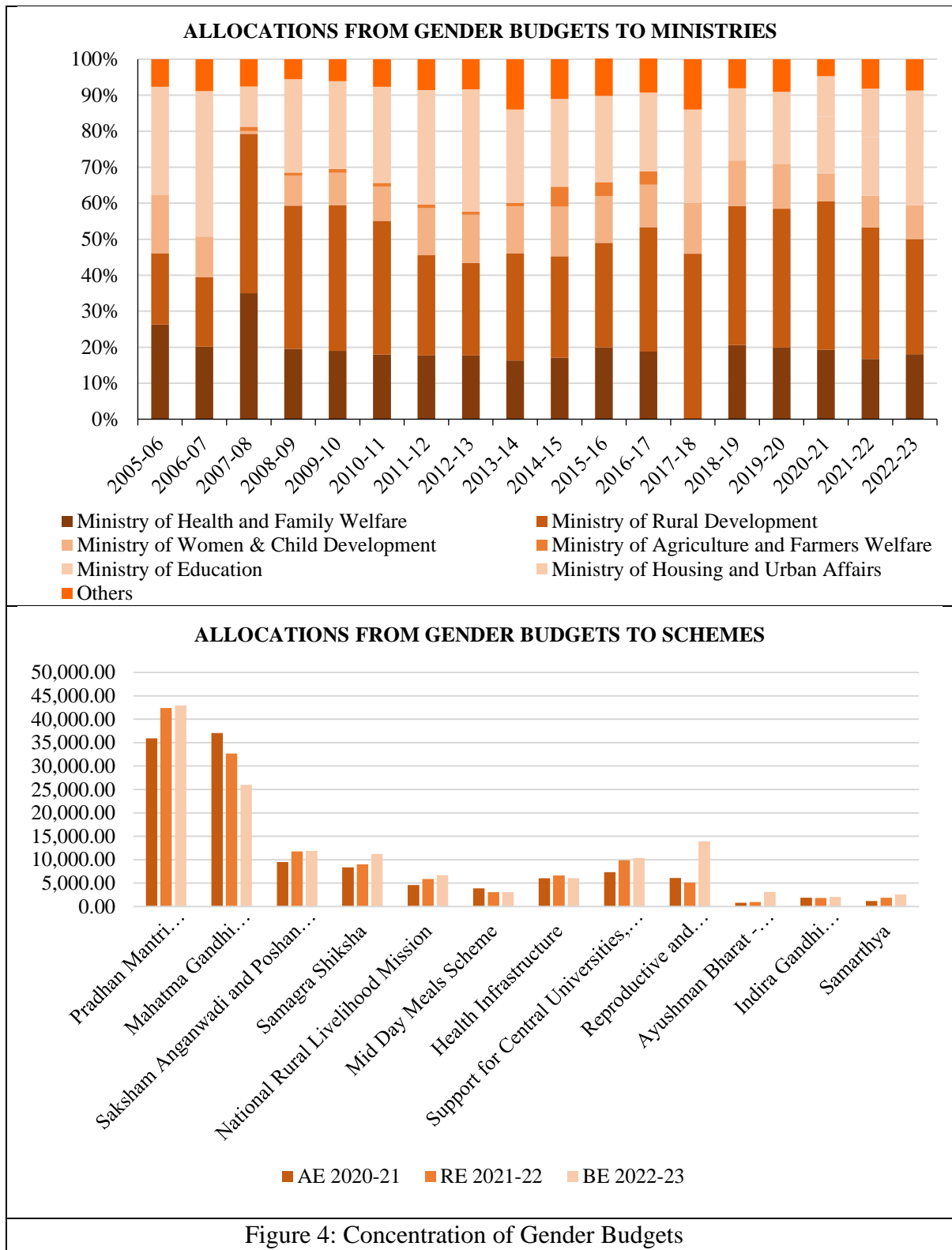


Figure 4: Concentration of Gender Budgets

Source: Union Budget Statements, 2005-06 to 2022-23

3.3 Parameter 3: Evidence-Based

GRB can be approached either through an ex-ante or ex-post lens. Under the ex-ante method, gender-gaps across sectors, geographies and social groups are identified, their demand is estimated, costs of intervention are estimated, and targets are set by undertaking a

cost-benefit analysis. Based on the set targets, budget allocations are made. On the other hand, the ex-post approach involves analysing existing schemes through a gender lens and identifying the extent to which they address gender gaps (Chakraborty, 2014). The ex-ante approach is bottom-up, requiring extensive use of sex-disaggregated data for gender gap analysis, as well as data from various levels of government – village, block, district, State and National levels to formulate targets and under cost-benefit analysis.

India's experience of GRB has primarily been to follow the ex-post approach (Mehta, 2020). While the MWCD's Gender Budgeting Handbook (2015) urges the use of ex-ante GRB approaches such as participatory planning, spatial mapping and gender-sensitive checklists, Budget Circulars issued by the MoF direct officials to identify allocations in existing schemes to be included in the GBS (Mehta, 2020). Moreover, the gaps between budgeted and actual expenditures (which began being published in GBS 2019-20), indicates under estimation owing to lack of data driven, evidence-based gender needs analyses.

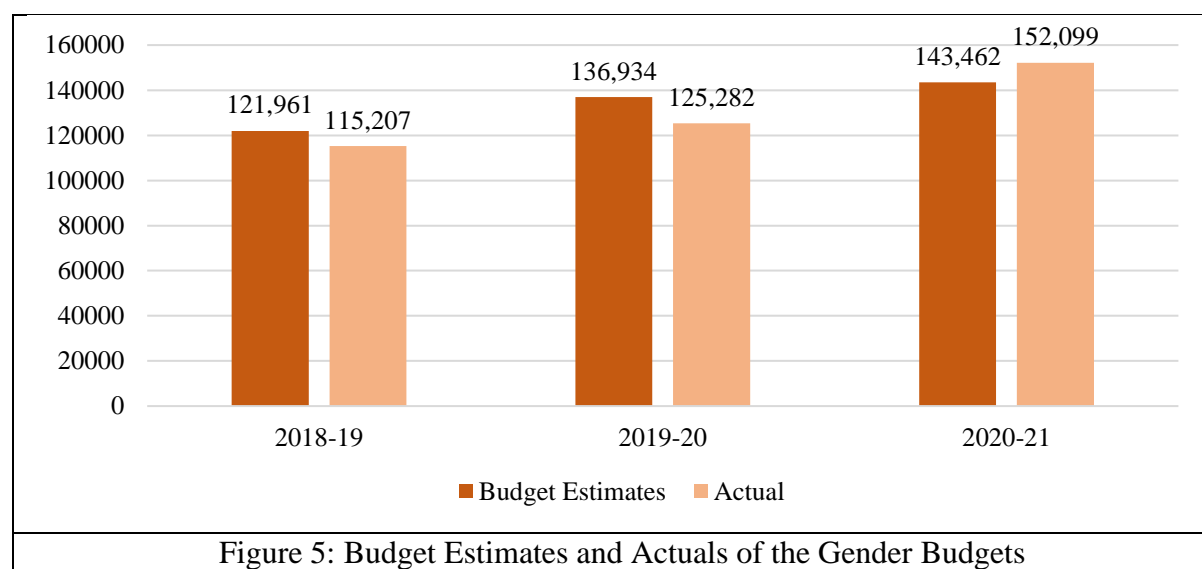


Figure 5: Budget Estimates and Actuals of the Gender Budgets

Source: Union Budget Statements, 2018-19 to 2022-23

3.4 Parameter 4: Results-Oriented

Since 2017-18, the GOI has been producing an annual Outcome Budget, outlining measurable/quantifiable outputs and outcomes, against each scheme/project allocation across Ministries. The Outcome Budget 2022-23 (MoF, GOI, 2021) provides targets for 157 Central sector schemes and Centrally-sponsored schemes. However, the GOI's Outcome Budget does not report on the achievement of the targets in this Budget Statement, which makes it difficult to monitor results of government spending.

This Outcome Budgeting approach has not yet been applied to the GBS. Moreover, the MWCD's Gender Budgeting Handbook (2015) advocates for monitoring the utilization of the funds allocated to different Ministries and schemes, however, post-budget monitoring and impact evaluation of the Gender Budget has not yet been undertaken in India.

4 EFFORTS FOR GRB IN THE INDIAN STATES

Indian states have introduced gender budgeting with varying degrees of intensity over the past 17 years, complementing central government initiatives (Stosky and Zaman, 2016).

State governments have used a range of mechanisms to implement gender budgeting. These include the identification of a nodal department for gender budgeting; creation of

GBCs; formulation of a state policy for gender; setting up committees for oversight; creating a gender data bank; making checklists; including a GBS in the State Budget; capacity building; preparation of a brochure and handbook; and conducting performance audit and linkages with the Result Framework Document (RFD). The MWCD has also conducted trainings and orientation programs on GRB for officials of departments at the State/Union Territory level as well as across the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The training helped build the capacities of officials, enabling them to implement GRB within their respective departments at the State/Union Territory level (MWCD, GOI, 2015).

By 2014-15, 16 States and two Union Territory Administrations had adopted gender budgeting in India (MWCD, GOI, 2015). In March 2021, the MWCD stated that only nine States/Union Territories, namely, Goa, Haryana, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Telangana, Chandigarh, Ladakh and Puducherry were yet to adopt gender budgeting (MWCD, GOI, 2021). Upon reviewing State government budget documents over the period 2018-19 to 2021-22, GBS were found for only 13 states. Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura and Uttarakhand are the states that have consistently produced GBS over the period 2018-19 to 2021-22.

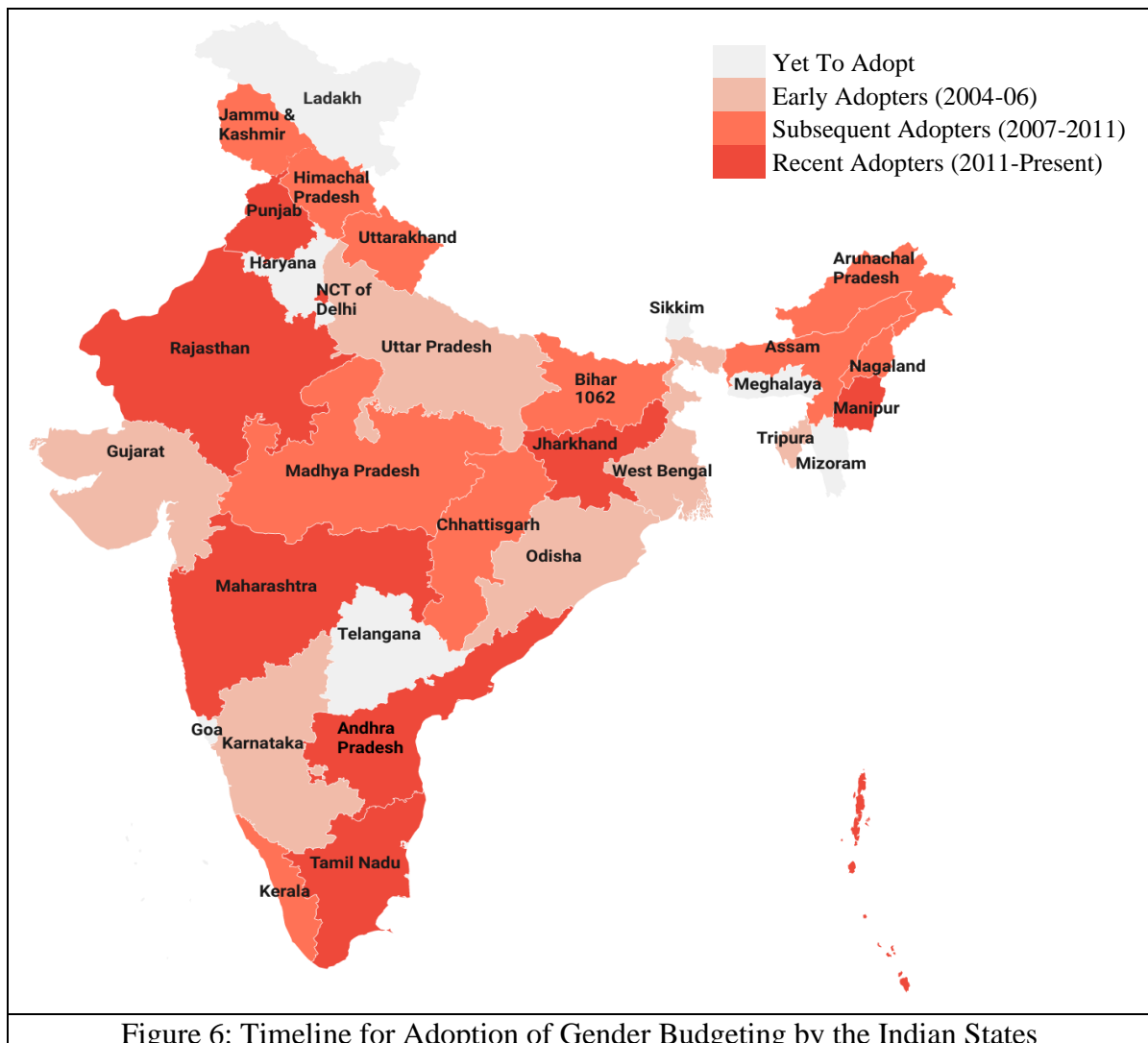


Figure 6: Timeline for Adoption of Gender Budgeting by the Indian States
 Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, 2021

Among these states, Kerala was the earliest to adopt a gendered budget process, beginning at the local level as early as 1988. Kerala also has comprehensive gender budgeting processes at the state level, making it a suitable candidate to understand the best practices that can be replicated by other States.

4.1 Case Study of Kerala

Kerala has the twelfth highest population amongst Indian states at 33.4 million with 47.97% male population and 52.03% female population (Kerala State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, 2021). Kerala is also the state with the highest female literacy rate at 91% in 2019-20. The female labour force participation rate is higher than the national average. The total fertility rate and maternal mortality rate are both lower than the national averages (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2020). As of 2019-20, the Gross State Domestic product (at current prices) of Kerala amounted to INR 8308.44 billion (MoSPI, 2021).

Table 2: Key Indicators for the Status of Women in Kerala and India

Indicators	Female Labour Force Participation Rate	Literacy Rate for Women	Total Fertility Rate	Maternal Mortality Rate
Kerala	30.6%	91.98%	1.8	1.9
India	24.5%	65.46%	2.0	8.1

Source: *Periodic Labour Force Survey Annual Report (2018-19)*, *Census of India- 2011*, *National Family Health Survey – 5 and Special Bulletin on Maternal Mortality Rate 2015-17*

The first instance of a gender-responsive allocation of funds occurred when 35-40% of funds were allocated by Kerala’s State government to Local Self Government Institutions (LSGIS) in 1997. Following this, each panchayat was mandated to prepare a separate chapter on the status of the women within their Developmental Plan Document. Under the Ninth Five Year Plan in 1997, 10% of the plan outlay was dedicated for the needs of women-specific projects (Kerala State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, 1997).

In the first phase (1996), the allocation was made only to the Kudumbashree units (the state poverty eradication mission) which eventually became a grass-roots movement for the upliftment of the women through livelihood missions. However, a lack of data and cooperation from the panchayats led to lacklustre results from the gender-responsive fund allocation. Subsequently, the State authorities initiated discussions with panchayat heads and members to understand the existing issues affecting rural women. An analysis from these panchayats was used to create the WCP. The WCP was part of the State government’s annual plan, and women benefitted directly under the schemes mentioned in it. The WCP was introduced under the Ninth Five Year Plan in 1997 with the aim of presenting the allocations of funds for women-specific projects, and was made mandatory for local bodies (Rashid, 2016). The Government of Kerala continued to release the WCP, but over the years, fund allocations have declined. As per the Kerala Economic Review 2015, in the Eleventh Five Year Plan of the State (2007-12), the WCP had 13.2% of the total fund allocation, and 12.35% of the total expenditure. Consequently, the Twelfth Five Year Plan’s (2012-17) WCP allocation reduced to 10.63% of total allocation, and 10.7% of total expenditure (Kerala State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, 2015).

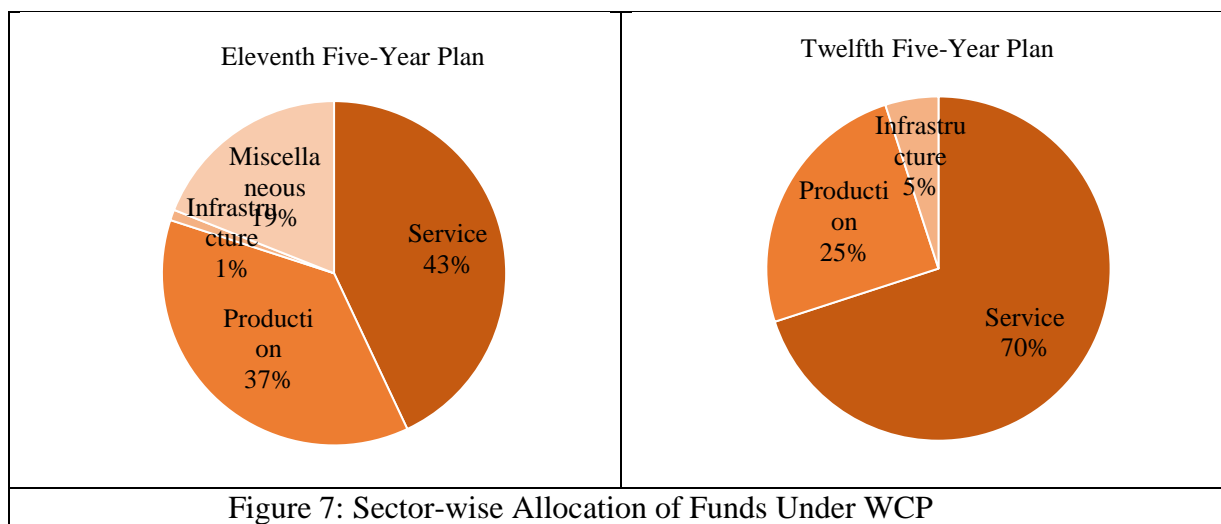


Figure 7: Sector-wise Allocation of Funds Under WCP
 Source: Kerala Economic Review 2020 Volume 2, Kerala State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, 2021

Since its adoption by the State in 2008-09, GRB in Kerala has taken a more expansive view on women’s lives, not only in terms of their potential as paid workers but more importantly through their ‘invisibilized’, unpaid work in social reproduction. It has also considered the reduced independence of women’s choices as they take into account the relational and situational contexts which shape their rights and entitlements.

GRB continues to be a core feature of Kerala’s Budget. As per the Kerala Economic Review 2020, the Gender Budget for 2020-21 stood at INR 38,098.7 million (of which INR 50 million has been dedicated to transgender individuals) which is 18.4% of the total State Plan outlay. INR 15,093.3 million (7.3%) has been provided for women specific schemes (Part A) and INR 23,005.4 million (11.1%) has been provided for composite schemes (Part B).

The Kerala government’s efforts towards GRB have been successful due to the following:

- a) Kerala contributed significant fund allocations to the Gender Budget. Even post COVID-19, while the Central government’s allocation to the Gender Budget was 4.4% of the total expenditure, Kerala allocated 19.54% of its total budget outlay in 2021-22 to the State Gender Budget (Department of Finance, Government of Kerala, 2021).
- b) Kerala has decentralised gender mainstreaming across different levels of the government through the introduction of the WCP, earmarking 10% of the State's plan outlay towards women-specific schemes. These schemes and allocations involve taking the views of women officials at the local level through participation in Gram Sabhas (Chakraborty, 2013).
- c) Kerala has also implemented general schemes through a gendered lens. Over the years, it has increased the number of programmes and schemes available for women’s empowerment (Nishanthi, 2020).

5 GRB IN INDIA DURING COVID-19

An analysis of the GBS between 2020-21 to 2022-23 reveals a lack of dynamism in responding to emerging post-COVID-19 needs of women. While expenditures on five post-COVID-19 priority areas: social protection, (including income support, food and fuel

transfers), prevention of domestic violence, skill training, public transport, and digital literacy rose to 28.4% of the Gender Budget 2020-21, they have since declined to 1.5% in 2021-22 and 1.7% in 2022-23.

In 2020-21, this COVID-19 responsive expenditure principally focused on social protection with direct benefit transfers of INR 500 for 200 million PM Jan Dhan Yojana women account holders and LPG connections through Ujjwala Yojana. However, with these schemes having been discontinued, the allocation for social protection fell to about 1% of the GBS in 2021-22.

Further, the spending on schemes for digital literacy, public transport, prevention of domestic violence and skill training remains low. A small allocation of INR 1,200 million was made for rural digital literacy under the PM Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan in 2021-22, which declined by 17% to INR 1,000 million in 2022-23. The expenditure on public transport was driven by the sole scheme for Safety of Women on Public Road Transport, whose allocation has reduced by 86%, from INR 1,393 million in 2020-21 to INR 400 million in 2022-23. On a more hopeful note, allocations for the Sambal scheme (for violence prevention) more than doubled, from INR 2,580 million in 2021-22 to INR 5,620 million in 2022-23.

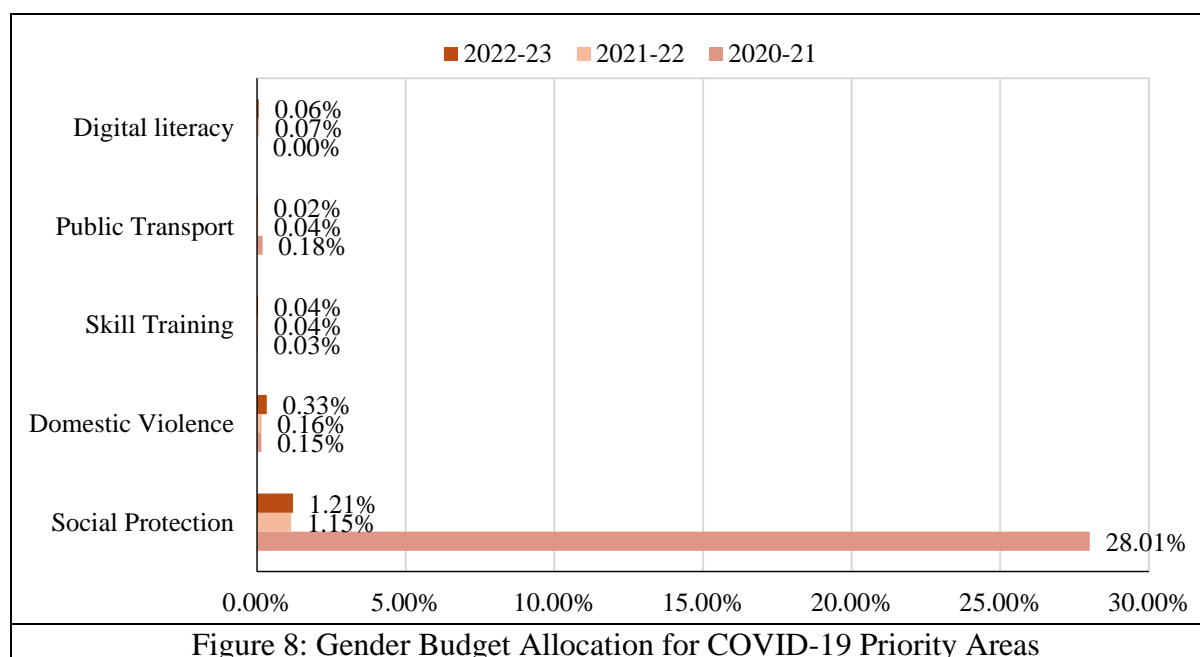


Figure 8: Gender Budget Allocation for COVID-19 Priority Areas

Source: Union Budget Statements, 2020-21 to 2022-23

Of all the COVID relief measures taken in India, 54% were reported to be gender-sensitive, compared to 21% in Asia and 32.3% globally. However, the gender-sensitive measures adopted by India only include social protection measures and measures against VAWG. There is an absence of gender-sensitive interventions in the fields of labor market support and economic and fiscal measures. This is in congruence with the pattern observed for Asia where labor market and economic and fiscal support measures collectively constitute only 4% of gender-sensitive measures. Europe and the Americas have recorded 43% and 33% of such measures respectively (UN Development Program and UN Women, 2022).

6 STRENGTHENING GRB IN INDIA: WAY FORWARD

Despite having the most transparent GRB processes globally, India needs to reprioritize GRB at both the Central and State levels through a phased approach. The following recommendations aim to provide comprehensive actions that can be undertaken to ensure that women's and girls' priorities are adequately reflected in the budgeting process.

- a) **Strengthening the process of formulating the GBS:** There is a need to ensure that the GBS produced by the GOI includes a wider range of ministries, so that actions being taken for gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) across the government are captured in the GBS. For this, the MWCD can engage with GBCs across line ministries to improve reporting and accuracy of data and ensure that the reporting is done in the right category (part A or part B). Moreover, the MWCD and line ministries can also consider widening the ambit of consultations undertaken as part of formulating the GBS to include community-based organizations (CBOs), women's groups, and social workers amongst others will be more representative and provide a holistic understanding of the needs of women and girls in the country. This will enable gender mainstreaming across sectors and, in turn, ensure that a gender lens is applied in a uniform manner.
- b) **Gender disaggregated data collection of scheme beneficiaries:** There is a need to standardize the practice and methodology for collection of gender disaggregated data across GOI schemes. The MWCD can design a standardised template based on inter-ministerial consultations and undertake a pilot implementation across select Ministries / Departments. GBCs can be tasked with implementing this data collection, and analysis. Following the pilot phase, a government circular mandating collection of gender disaggregated scheme beneficiary data according to the approved, pre-defined template must be issued. Over the years, gender disaggregated data collection, and its integration in publicly available dashboards for monitoring schemes should become a uniform practice across all sectors and departments of the GOI. The collected data should be published in the Annual Reports of respective Ministries/Departments and be available in the public domain.
- c) **Gender mainstreaming at sector level:** Integration GEWE concerns in sector-level flagship schemes, and centrally sponsored schemes is critical to ensure gender justice amongst beneficiaries, and to discontinue gender-blind scheme design. For instance, women trainers must be hired and a quota for women in skilling institutes should be introduced. Similarly, based on women's mobility patterns and behaviours, ladies' special buses along with discounted fare polices for women can be implemented.
- d) **Skill training and capacity building:** Officials in the GBCs, as well as government officials across line ministries should undergo three types of trainings on a regular basis; (i) gender sensitization training that provides an elemental understanding of gender related issues, and challenges faced by women and persons of minority genders; (ii) technical training in accounting and reporting on the GBS to prevent misreporting and errors; and on GRB planning and budgeting tools; and (iii) training on gender-responsive data collection and gender mainstreaming in scheme formulation.
- e) **Strengthening institutions responsible for GRB:** Strengthening institutional mechanisms of GRB entails three steps. First, it is imperative that all Ministries/Departments within the GOI set up GBCs in line with the charter issued by the MoF in 2007 (MWCD, 2015). Second, the existing GBCs need to be strengthened to further enhance their role and effectiveness, ideally to include gender experts, sector experts, economists, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and policy specialists. Moreover, the role of GBCs should be expanded so that they support line ministries undertake three key functions: i) allocate funds to gender components of schemes and

report gender disaggregated allocations in the GBS; ii) collection of gender-disaggregated scheme beneficiary data; and iii) gender mainstreaming across all Ministries/Departments. Third, efforts should be undertaken to increase women's representation, especially in decision making and leadership roles. Institutional capacity building should also envisage an increased number of women civil service officers, providing them greater visibility and stronger voice to be heard.

7 CONCLUSION

Although India has been producing a GBS since 2004-05 with one of the most transparent practices, especially amongst developing countries, a time-series analysis reveals that budgetary allocations have been concentrated in a few Ministries and schemes in the last 17 years. Moreover, the GBS has not been responsive to emerging priorities owing to COVID-19. Allocations for key schemes for social protection, prevention of domestic violence, skill training, public transport, and digital literacy witnessed a sharp decline in 2021-22 and 2022-23 vis-a-vis 2020-21. Thus, GOI's Gender Budget lacks responsiveness and an evidence-based and result-oriented approach in the absence of gender disaggregated data. Concerted efforts from key stakeholders involving a whole-of-government approach can enable a Gender Budget that responds to women's changing aspirations and contribute towards the country's development. The GRB mandate can be solidified by taking some necessary measures including, i) widening the scope of consultations undertaken for the GBS formulation process; ii) collecting gender disaggregated data on the basis of a uniform template; iii) integrating an active gender lens in program design; iv) providing adequate skill training and capacity building programmes for officials; and v) strengthening the institutional mechanism by establishing well-functioning GBCs and fortifying existing ones.

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APPENDIX

S. No.	States	Availability of Gender Budget			
		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1	Andhra Pradesh	X	X	X	✓
2	Arunachal Pradesh	X	X	X	✓
3	Assam	✓	✓	✓	X
4	Bihar	✓	X	✓	✓
5	Chhattisgarh	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Goa	X	X	X	X
7	Gujarat	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Haryana	X	X	X	X
9	Himachal Pradesh	X	X	X	X
10	Jharkhand	X	X	X	X
11	Karnataka	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Kerala	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Madhya Pradesh	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Maharashtra	X	X	✓	✓
15	Manipur	X	X	X	✓
16	Meghalaya	X	X	X	X
17	Mizoram	X	X	X	X
18	Nagaland	X	X	X	X
19	Odisha	X	✓	✓	✓
20	Punjab	X	X	X	X
21	Rajasthan	X	X	X	X
22	Sikkim	X	X	X	X
23	Tamil Nadu	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	Telangana	X	X	X	X
25	Tripura	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Uttar Pradesh	X	X	X	X
27	Uttarakhand	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	West Bengal	X	X	X	X

✓: Gender budget document released by the State

X: Gender budget document not released by the State/ Gender Budget document not available

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Brazilian women: a struggle to be heard

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Abstract

Outsiders may wonder what Brazilian women's lives are like here and who the women activists influencing human rights, female empowerment, and social change are. As in other countries, during the past few decades Brazilian women have revolted against patriarchy by raising their voices and creating social impact. This qualitative study, using secondary research, identifies Marielle Franco, Zilda Arns, Maria da Penha, Marta Vieira da Silva, and Dilma Rousseff as five empowered Brazilian women.

Most came from humble origins - families that were examples of charity and struggled for rights, but all obtained degrees either in higher education or in their specialization. However, their origins did not determine social action. The driving force was their suffering from discrimination, specifically because they were women and, furthermore, because they occupied places that were previously reserved for white men. Almost all were persecuted, while others also suffered discrimination because of their skin color and ethnicity. Even so, being wives and mothers, all were excellent professionals, searching for success and achieving progress in their dedicated areas by creating social changes, especially in human rights for children and women. Those who are still alive continue the battle against the entrenched patriarchy in a predominantly macho society as they continue their strife for more progress.

Finally, those committed to building an evolved, modern, inclusive, and respectful Brazilian society perceive the macho practices that prevail as inadequate and detrimental to women. As more and more women carry on in the fight for human rights, society will evolve.

Keywords: Brazilian women, human rights, discrimination, women's rights

Leadership In Post-Democratic South Africa - Building Support Towards The Advancement Of Women

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ABSTRACT

Within a continuously changing environment, leadership qualities cannot be static. The ability to adapt leadership styles pro-actively or in response to change, is an important quality. This paper reports on a survey carried out amongst a small group of women in higher education, at a women's leadership academy in South Africa. It explored whether, with the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994 and post this period, there was a difference in the view of the characteristics of leadership in higher education compared to the apartheid period (pre-1994), and what that view would be if it had changed. It also further explored whether there was a view that the characteristics of leadership was gender specific. Lastly, questions focused on whether there was a need for continued support for women towards and in leadership. Comments indicated that participants felt that more women had been included in higher education leadership post-democracy, but that leadership qualities were still gender specific, with traditionally viewed masculine characteristics still predominant. The responses also reflected a continued need for support and development for women in and towards higher education leadership, with various suggestions on the forms this should take. Responses resonated with the scholarly literature arguments for adaptability in leadership, considering organisational and environmental sustainability and ever-increasing complexities of these milieus. The paper reports on the findings of the survey using a qualitative approach, although numerical data is minimally presented at times. The focus is on the comments to the survey questions, with a qualitative analysis and presentation of findings, linking these to the literature on leadership qualities and support for women towards and in leadership.

KEYWORDS: leadership characteristics, gender, South African higher education, leadership support for women

1 INTRODUCTION

Globally [1, 2, 3,4], as well as in South Africa [5,6], the dearth of women in positions of leadership has been recognised as a huge area of concern. Not only does this speak to inequalities within our societies, but also impacts socio-economic and organisational sustainability [1,2,3,4,5]. The absence or severe lack of women in leadership also extends to the higher education (HE) sector, both internationally, and within the South African context[2,5]. Within the South African context, during the apartheid era (pre-1994), all South African public universities had men as vice-chancellors, with a predominance of white men. Post the dawn of democracy in 1994, South Africa introduced legislation and policy to address gender inequality, aspiring towards gender parity in all spheres of society, including higher education[6,7]. The former president, Nelson Mandela, aspired to gender parity within ministerial appointments within cabinet in 1994, with at least 50% women as ministers. Though this was not achieved, it set the scene for equitable representation of women and men in positions of leadership.

1.1 Gender parity and leadership for sustainability

Researchers have recognised and globally acknowledged that, for socio-economic and organisational/institutional sustainability, it is critical that both women and men form part of the leadership in all spheres of society (political, economic, social, religious, health, etcetera) [3,4]. The simple fact that women form the majority of most, if not all countries' populations, should be an argument in itself for gender parity in leadership towards sustainability. Researchers also recognise that diversity in leadership in leadership enhances profitability and efficiencies within organisations [4,6,9].

1.2 Leadership and positional power

Often absent from the conversation on leadership, is the aspect of positional power. Those who hold leadership positions are effectively in positions of power, influencing the direction (or lack thereof) of policy and decision-making at various levels of an institution/organisation or beyond. Not only do men hold positional power and influence decision-making – but do so “disproportionately” [10]. Hence the argument that men have shared responsibility to transform our university spaces, using such positional power. There is not only a wage/remuneration gap, as men earn more than women, but there is also a power gap in favour of men [11].

2 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analytical framework is seated within the context of Rawls' theory of social justice [6,12]. The study is further contextualised, as part of a broader research project within the social justice framework of Rawls (1971). As cited in Moodly [6], this is an “ethical framework, allowing equal access and fair opportunities to all under conditions which facilitated “equality of fair opportunity”. Moodly also cites Neier (2015, 47) who states that

“social justice may be defined primarily as distributive justice”. In this, Moodly [6] states, social just also considers “social and economic rights” to the extent that it benefits society. Considering sustainability in leadership, the social justice framework affirms “a compelling argument ... for the consideration of, at the very least, equal representation of women and men in leadership”[6]. Moodly [6], argues that this is especially important, considering the South African context, where the population is majority female, “within an oppressive and continual patriarchal system”.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 The South African higher education context

As previously indicated, South African women form the majority of the South African population. This is also the situation in HEIs. This is not reflected in the number of women in HE leadership, even post democracy. As indicated, the position of vice-chancellor in public South African HEIs was one hundred percent male.

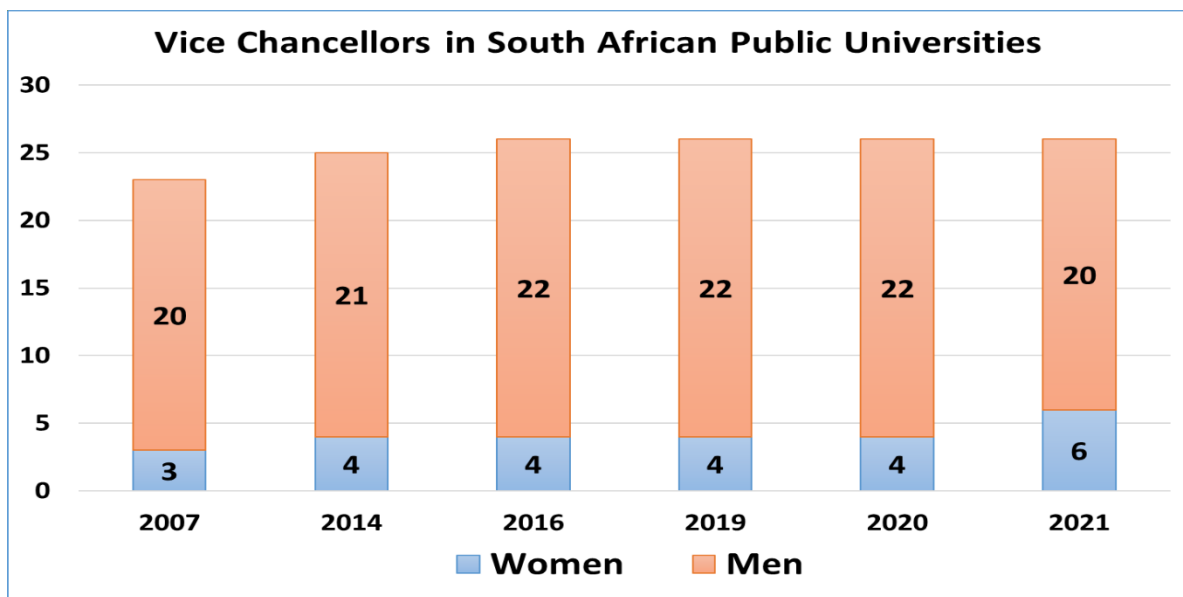


Figure One: Number Of Women As Vice-Chancellors In South African Universities In 2021 [6]

As indicated by Moodly [6], Figure one represents the number of women as vice-chancellors over the period 2007 to 2021. Six of twenty-six vice-chancellors were women, a total percentage of 23,07%. Moodly further stated that in comparison to 2015, the number of women in the traditional positions of Deputy Vice- Chancellors (DVC) Research and DVCs Academic (also known as Teaching and Learning), as well as the number of women as registrars had increased. This was also reflected in the number of women in the position of DVC Research, with ten (10) in 2019 (in twenty-six public HEIs). For the DVC Academic positions, the number of women had increased from six (6) in 2013/14 (in twenty-three public HEIs) to eleven (11) (in twenty-six public HEIs) in 2019. In the position of registrar, which was also traditionally a male-occupied space, the number of women was nine (9) or 35% in

2019 (in twenty-six public HEIs), in comparison to four (4) in 2013/2014 (in twenty-three HEIs). Moodly argued that more than twenty years had passed and within the context of South Africa HEIs, the 50% mark, as aspired to by the former President, Nelson Mandela, in all positions as highlighted, has yet to be met.

3.2 Challenges for women and leadership within the higher education context

Research identified various institutional challenges that impede the progress of women towards and in leadership. These include but are not limited to cultural and structural challenges [6,13,14, 15,16,17,18,19, 20]. Various aspects of these broad areas of challenges have been identified, and manifest as gendered cultures, family-work balance, lack of support structures, and lack of policy implementation and practices. Discourse of these challenges has also been extended to the role of men in supporting and advancing women leadership. These areas are briefly discussed below.

3.2.1 Gendered cultures and a patriarchal system

In the global context, there has been a consistent reflection in the literature of the gendered culture within HEIs [6,9,20]. Not only is the pathway to leadership different for men and women, both chronologically and lineally, but the responsibilities expected of women in terms of these, are of a more challenging nature. Literature continues to reflect, and sadly so, that the responsibilities for family is likely to remain primarily that of the woman [21,22,23,24]. These traditional roles and responsibilities spill over into the institutional area, in which women are viewed with the same lenses, and are expected to take on similar roles and behaviours, as those in the family space. These include a caring, compassionate and understanding nature, non-assertive and using “gentle persuasion” in their leadership style [6,9]. Any deviation from these behaviours is negatively viewed, and should women assert themselves, or act in ways normally associated with men’s leadership styles, they are considered bullies and as acting in ways considered masculine [2,6,].

Networks within institutions, known as the “old boys networks” usually favouring men, are also informal spaces, such as sport and male social gatherings. These spaces in which men build “trust and rapport”, often exclude women. It is within these spaces that at times, important decisions are made, to be concluded in the formal workplace[6,14,15].

3.2.2 Family-work balance

Closely related with the barriers of gendered cultures and patriarchy, is the challenge for women to balance work and family life. This greatly impedes their opportunity to consider positions of leadership. As a result, the likelihood of women to achieve leadership, is limited by expectancies around gender norms [1,6,21,22,23,24].

3.2.3 Lack of support structures and implementation of policies and practices

Throughout literature the emphasis on support structures for women has been reiterated [1,3,6,23,24]. Support in the form of mentorships, leadership academies, and networking, amongst others cannot be downplayed in the advancement of women. Together with such structures, is the critical role of implementing policies and practices that advance women in leadership. Too often, literature reflects that though policies are in place, implementation thereof, and change in practices is sorely absent within institutions [6].

3.2.4 Men exercising their agency in the advancement of women in and towards leadership

Literature reflects the critical role of men, especially those in leadership, exercising their agency and positional power in supporting the advancement of women [6,10,25]. As Moody [6] argued, there is a need to reflect on the roles and responsibilities of both men and women in leadership, “in addressing gender inequalities and the disproportionate power relations within our societies”. Without the support of men in positions of influence and power, there is always the danger of complacency in accepting the status quo.

Given the introduction and literature review, a survey was carried out, which explored whether there was a difference in views on characteristics for higher education leadership pre-and post South African democracy, whether the view of leadership characteristics as gender specific was still predominant, and whether there was still a need for support, and the form thereof, for women in and towards higher education leadership.

4 METHODOLOGY

A survey comprising seven questions was distributed to approximately seventy women delegates who had been registered to participate in a workshop on Higher Education leadership organised by a Chapter of a non-profit organisation (NPO) [26]. The focus of the chapter was the “advancement and leadership development of women ... empowering women leaders in higher education” [26]. The survey link had been sent to the delegates via the NPO, to ensure confidentiality of information in relation to the Protect of Personal Information Act (POPI) [27] and voluntary participation and consent. As delegates registered, the link was sent to them by the Chapter hence the approximation of delegates who were sent the survey, as relayed to the researcher/author by the NPO. Thirty-eight responses were received, which translated into approximately a fifty-four percent (54%) response rate.

The seven questions posed are listed below and it was assumed that all delegates would interpret it in a South African context.

Using the 1994 period as a benchmark, would you say:

1. There is a difference in the view of the characteristics of leadership in the higher education sector pre-and-post this period? (Y/N)
2. What is the view of characteristics of leadership in (1) above, in your opinion? How has it remained the same or how has it differed pre- and- post this period?
3. Is there a view of leadership characteristics as gender specific? (Y/N)
4. What is the basis of your response in 3 above?
5. Is there still a need to have support workshops/seminars/structures to develop and support women towards and in leadership? (Y/N)
6. What is the basis of your response in 5?

7. If your response in 5 was YES, how should such support workshops/seminars/structures be structured?

4.1 Brief description of participants

According to a description of the delegates provided by the NPO, all were women within the South African higher education sector, with the majority within public higher education institutions (universities). Delegates included women in academic leadership positions up to the level of deputy dean. Others held academic positions (lecturers and senior lecturers), while others held administrative positions with their institutions.

4.2 Analysis and discussions of findings

A qualitative approach was adopted, and the findings were analysed using a deductive approach to analysis [28], as well as a thematic approach, coding the findings according to themes. According to Pearse [28], research findings contribute to “the body of knowledge” and “theory development”. Pearse cites numerous authors, stating that in a deductive approach, “theoretical propositions are derived from a review of the literature”. These propositions are then “used to guide the collection and analysis of data”. Coding assists in within this approach, identifying patterns that can be identified in the analysis of the finding and grouping these into themes [29].

5 LIMITATIONS

It is acknowledged that the survey was limited to a group of women delegates at a leadership in higher education workshop and cannot be generalised to the broader higher education sector. The responses though, contributes to the body of knowledge on women and higher education leadership, and more broadly to women and leadership studies and development of theory. Gender is acknowledged as non-binary, whereas the researcher has not explored leadership in this context in the research.

6 FINDINGS

In the following sections the findings are discussed as per the questions.

6.1 Responses to questions 1 and 2: Differences in the view of the characteristics of leadership in the higher education sector pre-and-post 1994

Four (4) of the delegates (10.5%) indicated that there was no difference in the view of the leadership in the higher education sector pre-and post 1994, with thirty -four (89.5%) indicating that there had been a change in view.

Reasons provided by the four delegates, included that change was slow and that patriarchy was still dominant. One delegate indicated that male leaders did not provide equal opportunities for both men and women. Responses of all four delegates reflected that traditionally, mostly men held positions in higher education leadership Though there had been a shift, this had not been a significant one.

For the thirty-four delegates who indicated that there had been a change in the view of leadership characteristics post-1994, the majority indicated that the space of higher education

leadership was opening to women, albeit that the pace was slow. They also observed that attention was being given to diversity, inclusive of gender and race. Women were more involved in the policy development and decision-making, with their voices slowly penetrating the 'corridors of power'. One delegate responded that pre-1994 (in the apartheid era), previous leadership characteristics favoured 'strong white males with extrovert qualities'. More recently, she indicated, there has been an increasing recognition of diversity in leadership towards successful organisations. Efforts into women and leadership positions, had increased towards the development and promotion of women and persons of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Another delegate noted that there was a more 'participatory style', moving from autocratic pre-1994, to a democratic leadership style post-1994. One delegate stated that there was a change in expectation of leadership to a more inclusive and humanising character, noting that she had observed differences in leadership styles in men and women, as well as in the evaluations of these styles. A delegate also noted the constant evolving context, call for agility in leadership. Though there had been a change towards diversity and more inclusivity in leadership, it was still not equitable, according to many of the delegates. Men still held most leadership positions.

6.2 Responses to questions 3 and 4: The view of leadership characteristics as gender specific

Five (5) of the delegates (1.2%) did not agree that there was a view that leadership characteristics were gender specific, with thirty-three (33) of the delegates (86.8%) indicating that there was such a view.

Reasons provided by the five delegates who did not agree that there was a view that leadership characteristics were gender specific, included that leadership required 'an appropriate mentality' and 'knowledge and skills', and this applied across gender (stated by four of the delegates). Another delegate stated that each has the ability to lead, and that leadership skills could be acquired through 'education, training and engaging in relevant platforms.

Responses by the thirty-three delegates who indicated that leadership characteristics were still viewed as gender specific, included that more men than women continued to occupy most leadership positions (most delegates), that women were 'underestimated' (one delegate) and granted fewer opportunities for growth and development than men. Delegates also cited their own experiences for their responses in question 3. A delegate indicated that she had observed differences in leadership styles, with women leaders being more 'accommodating' when staff experienced 'personal challenges'. Another delegate stated that women who were 'strong-minded' were often 'characterised negatively' while those who had 'quieter, introverted personalities' were 'overlooked or not considered tough enough to be good leaders'. A delegate stated that men and women 'lead differently' and that there was a prevalence of certain characteristics (though not exclusively so), in one gender. She cited compassionate leadership as a trait more prevalent in women. Inclusivity of leadership, with a 'focus on building relationships', and development of subordinates, 'humility' and 'empathy', were some of the leadership characteristics of women, as described by a delegate. She contrasted these qualities with those of men, describing theirs as 'autocratic, results-focused and 'power driven'. For another delegate women were more 'respectful in communication', whereas men were 'dictators'. In another delegate's view, 'patriarchy' was 'real and rife'. Much still had to be done in recognizing the strength of women in leadership. For another delegate, 'societal bias' influenced the views of the 'suitability' of women in leadership, due to the traditional role that women 'fulfill in society'. Though 'gender should not matter' in the contribution persons

make in leadership, the 'de facto situation' did not reflect this, was the view of a delegate. One delegate stated that 'characteristics praised in leadership' were 'predominantly male traits', though the view was changing towards 'empathy and communication'. There was also an observation that women in leadership were not supportive of each other. Another view was that men with 'lower qualifications' were considered for leadership positions over 'more qualified women'.

6.3 Responses to questions 5, 6 and 7: The need for support for women towards and in leadership

In response to question 5, whether there was still a need to support women towards and in leadership, one delegate responded 'no'. This could have been an errata, as in her response to questions 6 and 7, she motivated for mentoring, expressing that women lacked confidence at times. She suggested 'mentorship programmes, support groups' and workshops on leadership skills. Considering this, all delegates (100 %) agreed that there was need for continued support for women towards and in leadership.

Below follows, in bullet points, reasons provided for responses to question 5 and suggested forms of support. The bullet points are not necessarily associated with an individual delegate's response(s) but summarise comments of various delegates.

Reasons for agreeing that women needed to be supported:

- To improve women's competency and confidence to lead, and foster career advancement.
- To support women to 'deal with their fears' and to be more pro-active leaders.
- Women need to learn and unlearn many issues, as the 'status quo has affected our mindsets'.
- Women are afraid to be labelled as 'bullies, aggressive and bossy', and avoid being assertive. They needed confidence.
- There was a lack of women mentors to support young women.
- The glass-ceiling still existed, and women needed to work twice as hard as men to 'prove themselves'.
- More women were required in leadership positions.
- Women think that they need to 'exhibit male characteristics to become leaders'.
- Women need to learn to use their own strengths, and their 'unique characteristics'.
- Women need to learn 'how to deal with traditional leadership personalities'.
- As gender inequalities and bias still existed, women need to 'be prepared to navigate the space'.
- Women are still vulnerable to gender-based violence in the workplace.
- Women's home responsibilities have not changed. There is a need for skills development on work-home life balance.
- With the evolution of technology, training on use of technology, more so during the COVID-19 pandemic, was required.

Support mechanisms suggested included:

- Leadership awareness raising and coaching.
- Colloquia
- Mentorship programmes which could extend across universities.

- Communities of practice on leadership.
- Conversations with male leaders on gender parity.
- Career-pathing.
- Women's strengths and how to apply these in positions of leadership.
- Conversations with women in leadership, engaging on their transition into leadership and how they navigated their challenges, learning from 'real life experiences'.
- Support that is structured to address 'individual needs'.
- Workshops structured in a manner that challenge delegates to 'understand themselves'; 'develop empowerment, assertiveness and confidence'. These workshops should also cover the 'technical aspects of leadership', and 'women as change agents'.
- Including men in leadership seminars.
- Participation in research where women are not 'subjects'. In explaining this, a reference was made to an article by Zuber-Skerritt, O. 2007. Leadership development in South African higher education: the heart of the matter.)
- Encouraging women to apply for leadership positions.
- Network opportunities and advice by persons in positions in leadership.
- Employer/ organizational support.

7 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND THEME IDENTIFICATION

As previously indicated, a deductive approach was adopted in the analysis of findings, considering the literature, and identifying themes that resonate throughout the responses. The analysis and discussion are clustered under the themes as identified.

7.1 Patriarchy in the higher education sector and society

As reflected in the literature review section, the responses expressed that despite the shift to a democracy post- 1994, the view was that most positions of leadership in higher education are still occupied by men. Though women were making in-roads, the pace was slow. In areas where women occupied positions of leadership, there was still a view that the expectation of leadership characteristics were still those traditionally associated with men. These included, assertiveness, authoritarian and results-focused (as contrasted with a compassionate focus). Though these characteristics were lauded when visible in men, both literature and delegates' responses reflect that women were ostracised, or negatively viewed when they asserted themselves. They were sometimes viewed as bullies when asserting themselves or when 'stong-minded'. The gendered/ stereotypical expectations of the roles of women within the home as primary caregiver to children and caretaker of the home, amongst others, as foregrounded in literature, are also reflected in the appeals by delegates for engagements around these views of women and their responsibilities.

7.2 Gendered nature of leadership

The literature review section reflected that prior to 1994, there were hardly any women in executive leadership in any public university in South Africa. Vice-chancellors in these institutions were all men. The gendered nature of leadership was thus male-dominated, with admiration and affirmation for authoritarian and assertive leadership qualities. Delegates comments reiterate as reflected in literature, that the status quo remains for women. Those who display assertiveness, continue to be viewed negatively. Though there is an increasing recognition and appreciation for diversity in leadership, with characteristics such as care, compassion and participatory leadership being promoted, these continue to be viewed along gendered lines, and associated with women. The situation lends itself to a form of conundrum, as these qualities are recognised as contributing towards diverse and sustainable leadership, yet women continue to be the minority in these positions.

7.3 An argument for leadership characteristics as non-binary

Delegates have also stated that leadership characteristics should not be gender-biased, rather than be recognised as qualities that all leaders should embody. Despite this view, it has not influenced people's mindsets or behaviours as reflected in literature. The patriarchal nature of society, and universities which are microcosms of these, continue to influence the view of leadership as gendered, with qualities of leadership divided along gendered lines and associated with either men or women. A digression from these lines and associated characteristics by any gender, is viewed negatively. Universities and society at large, has much work to do in promoting leadership qualities as non-binary.

7.4 Forms of support for women towards and in leadership

The responses of delegates continue to affirm the need for support for women towards and in leadership. The literature has reflected this over various eras. It is a concern that there is still a lack of equity, and that continued support is critical for the advancement of women. This aspect for women's progress cannot be neglected or ignored. We ignore it at our peril, backsliding many centuries, lest we remain vigilant. Women continue to call for support in various forms, as outlined in section 5.3, with theory reflecting that men's voices are a critical component in the transformation of leadership.

8 CONCLUSION

The themes as outlined confirm that the issues raised in relation to women, leadership, patriarchy, the gendered nature of leadership, and the need for support toward the advancement of women in and towards leadership, are still the reality of a post-democratic South Africa and the higher education sector. Despite advancements of women and the increased number of women who occupy leadership roles, support of women cannot be relaxed. The views as expressed by delegates, through either their own observations or experiences, or perceptions, reflect what is expressed in the body of literature on the subject. The theory cannot be ignored, that transformation in the advancement of women is a slow

and challenging process. Support programmes, together with men's support and agency, need to continue, to push at the barriers.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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LITERATURE AS A MEAN OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE, LIBERATION, AND FEMININE EMPOWERMENT: THE LEGACY OF CLARICE LISPECTOR

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Abstract:

Access to books and literature is, above all, a human right. The acts of reading, creating, and fictionalizing are in themselves, acts of power. Accordingly, literature is a well-respected necessity in society; therefore, a universal human need. Thus, denying women the right to literature is also a form of violation. In this presentation, the author aims to reflect not only on literature by female authors but also its importance in the process of constructing women's subjectivity and identity, whether in reading fiction or in its production. To reflect on women's right to read and write literature, as well as their way of expressing their perception, anxieties, and ways of understanding the world, this presentation proposes a literary analysis of texts by the Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector. Her works evidence the potential of bringing light to the processes of self-knowledge and freedom. These processes can be ignited because these texts can trigger the process of self-awareness and can then generate female empowerment. By reading Clarice Lispector's writing, it remains clear that she reveals human dramas specific to the female universe, as she opens up possibilities for readers to know themselves as women and to project themselves as producers of literature. It would seem that these realities are founded worlds and realities apart from those that dominated male perceptions during the 1950s to 1970s when she was writing; however, many of those predominant male perceptions prevail in today's contemporary society.

Keywords: Women's Writing; Reception; Self knowledge; Clarice Lispector; Empowerment.

Women's Education and Empowerment: Evidence from a Reform in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the causal effects of education on women empowerment, focusing on women born between 1950 and 1980 in six waves of Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS) data, who were likely exposed to 1985 education policy change in Kenya. The study employs this new structuring educational system as an instrument and reported the results using reduced-form due to high repetition rate and late enrolment at that time. The findings indicate that being exposed to the new education system yields positive impact on women empowerment. Specifically, being exposed to the 8-4-4 regime, women delayed their age at first birth by approximately 0.564 years, the female genital mutilation (FGM) practice on their eldest daughters declined by 3.51%, sexual domestic violence reduced by 6.47% and their decision-making index was enhanced by 0.067 point. We also conduct some robustness checks and placebo test, and the findings are robust. We provide some potential mechanisms that experiencing the new 8-4-4 system empowers women: 1) exposure to information, 2) husbands/partners' characteristics, and 3) labour market outcome.

KEYWORDS: KDHS, education, women empowerment, Kenya, gender

Women In The Limelight: Strides And Paradigm Shifts

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ABSTRACT

What has been influencing the recognition of recent strides by women? Could it be a redefinition of success formerly dictated by social norms and narratives? Or could it be that women are being given “permission” and space to realise their potential? Aside from the regression from recent progress in recent years made due to the novel pandemic, it is time to reflect on the paradigm shift taking place and why it is happening. Why suddenly does it seem women are making the headlines?

A 2021 study by the Centre for Economic Policy Research and the World Economic Forum, surfaces that “countries led by women had systematically and significantly better Covid-19 outcomes, on average than those led by men. It further suggests that the difference may be explained by the proactive and coordinated policy responses adopted by female leaders.” A relevant place to start our reflections.

Let’s look both inward and outward to determine and promote the factors that are bringing us closer to achieving sustainable development and achievement goals for women around the world.

This paper will help us better examine the factors driving these notable shifts, so we craft an ongoing working knowledge base that promotes continuous innovation, illumination, and integration of women multi-sectorally and globally.

KEYWORDS: paradigm, women, recognition

1 INTRODUCTION

What has been influencing recent visible strides by women? This begs even more questions. One of which is whether only now women have been making strides or have they simply never been visible enough for the world to see?

Coleman 2020, highlights that since 1969, women's achievements include space travel, musical exploits, and significant impact on political and judicial systems. [1]

Well before that, in many cultures, female heroes, warriors and disrupters have governed empires and made lasting impact on their societies. These include Queen Amina of Zazzau (Nigeria), Queen Boudicca of Iceni (Ancient Britain), Joan of Arc (France), Susan B. Anthony (United States), Rosa Parks (United States) and Harriet Tubman (United States) to mention a few. [2]

Aside from individual women who have stood out in the past, a number of matriarchical societies have existed, some of which are still thriving today. For example, in China, the Mosuo women are the last surviving matriarchy in the country; the indigenous BriBri tribe of Costa Rica where women are so revered, they are the only ones who can prepare the sacred cacao drink for their religious rituals; the Umoja tribe of Kenya founded in 1990, hosts only women within its physical borders and was formed to accommodate survivors of sexual or gender-based violence.

More examples include the Minangkabau people of Indonesia who are a part of the largest surviving matriarchal society; in Ghana within the Akan Matrilineal, men also hold leadership positions; and in the Khasi tribe of India of approximately one million strong in 2011, the women's surnames are passed down instead that of their husbands. [3]

Want to explore a few more recent examples?

Kamala Harris was sworn in as the First Female Vice President of the United States of America in 2021; Amanda Gorman became the youngest inaugural poet in the United States in 2021 and the nation's first Youth Poet Laureate. American Gitanjali Rao, a 15-year-old scientist and inventor was named TIME's first Kid of the Year in December 2020. For the first time in the history of the Golden Globe Awards, three women were nominated in the Best Director category: Chloé Zhao, Emerald Fennell and Regina King with 28-year-old Chloe becoming the first Asian woman to win the accolade.

“NASA astronaut Christina Koch, returned to Earth on Feb. 6, 2020, after spending 328 days aboard the International Space Station. Her trip surpassed the previous record held by Peggy Whitson for the longest single spaceflight by a woman.”

What about governance? Jacinda Ardern is the youngest female prime minister of New Zealand since 1856 and has gracefully and decisively handled a number of significant incidents in her country including the New Zealand Mosque bombings in Christchurch in 2019 and strict COVID-19 measures to contain the novel pandemic. We can certainly speak of more exemplary women leaders who have and are making women proud through their exceptional leadership. [4]

So again, why is there a paradigm shift suddenly that seeks to highlight the achievements of women? Could it be a redefinition of success formerly dictated by social norms and narratives that were only attributed to men? Could it be because their achievements can no longer be “hidden” or seen as unusual? Or could it be that more women are being given “permission” and space to realise their potential? I dislike the term “permission” in this context, but could this be a valid contributing factor?

Questions, questions.

We have now seen from history that it is safe to say that women have been making giant strides for centuries and in our modern world, thanks to technology, it is much easier to see and hear of these achievements. Therefore, the co-called paradigm shift may be influenced by a number of factors which we will attempt to look a little closer at in the following section.

2 DIGGING DEEPER – THE PARADIGM SHIFT

Lombrozo (2016) defines a paradigm as “an important change that happens when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way.” [5]

I dare to define the paradigm shift here as people are now beginning to recognise the capacity and agency of women, as opposed to the previous way of thinking that when women achieved anything, it was exceptional or out of the ordinary. This speaks a lot about how women are perceived and has led to several real and limiting concepts including the “glass ceiling” and the “imposter syndrome.” These concepts have been in operation such that women are either deliberately blocked from opportunities for growth and leadership or make women feel guilty and undeserving about the things they have achieved from their own hard work and grit.

Why do we now “think women are capable?”

Alice Eagly, a social psychologist at Northwestern University in Illinois led a study that that examined Americans’ perceptions of women over the past 70 years.

Eagly and her co-authors analysed 16 public opinion polls spanning from 1946 to 2018 to see how gender stereotypes have evolved over time. They looked at three clusters of personality traits: competence, communion and agency and competence traits of being organised, intelligent and capable amongst other variables. The study’s most interesting finding was Americans now think women are just as smart and just as competent as men. Take note of the word “now.”

Reasons for this shift in perception included the fact that as more women joined the workforce in the last 20th century, Americans were better able to see them in roles that require organisation, intelligence and ability. Women now earn more bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees than men; and in 2018, 75% of respondents thought women had better people skills and were more compassionate and kinder than men, a significant shift from the 50% of respondents in the 1940s. [6]

Interesting findings. It seems positive stereotypes have played a role in the above-mentioned study. Let’s look at some more.

“In the 27 member countries of the EU, in April 2013 women accounted for only 16.6% of board members of large publicly listed companies. This went up by 5% since October 2010, when the European Commission announced that it was considering “targeted initiatives to get more women into decision-making positions.” [7]

Aha! targeted initiatives, we are getting somewhere.

The Harvard Business Review asked this question: Why women remain so dramatically underrepresented in the workforce and particularly in leadership? An unfortunate but inevitable “truth”—that goes something like this was the answer of some respondents: “High-level jobs require extremely long hours, women’s devotion to family makes it impossible for them to put in those hours, and their careers suffer as a result.” They call this explanation the work/family narrative. In a 2012 survey of more than 6,500 Harvard Business School alumni

from many different industries, 73% of men and 85% of women invoked it to explain women's stalled advancement. Believing this explanation doesn't mean it's true, however, and their research called it seriously into question. [8]

The research actually unearthed the gender dimensions of the work/family narrative and actually showed that men were also being negatively affected and did not feel fulfilment or balance in their work/family life. It showed that while for women, the stereotypes and gender norms of them being on the frontline of parenting does affect their ability to invest more effort into work and professional growth, in addition the narrative does affect both women and men. So here we have interesting observations about how the work/family narrative also affects men.

The UN Women and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs extremely informative and creative: Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2021 shares insights on gender equality across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

It paints a grim picture of the effect of the novel pandemic which is an overall regression on areas of significant progress before COVID-19. The report is full of disappointing statistics showing just how extensively damaging the pandemic has been to the cause of women's rights around the world.

On SDG one on no poverty, "progress in eliminating extreme poverty has reversed while holes in the social protection floor leave women even more vulnerable."

SDG two on zero hunger, "the global gender gap in food security has risen dramatically during the pandemic, with more women and girls going hungry."

SDG three on good health and wellbeing, "disruptions in essential health services due to COVID-19 are taking a tragic toll on women and girls."

SDG four on quality education, "school closures spell lost opportunities for girls and an increased risk of violence, exploitation and early marriage."

And SDG on gender equality, "Women, on the front lines of the pandemic response, have been given a back seat in shaping the recovery."

The report also highlights "where women have been in leadership positions, the response to the pandemic has often been faster and more attuned to social needs, but at all levels and across sectors, women do not have the same space in decision-making as men. Globally, women comprise over 75 per cent of the health workforce, making them indispensable to the COVID-19 response. Yet they make up only 28 per cent of health executives. While women's organisations are at the forefront of community responses to COVID-19 in many countries, they struggle with diminishing funding and shrinking civic space." [9]

The report makes for a fascinating read. But more than that, it might seem to be countering the argument of this paper; on the contrary, it shows that there is much more awareness and importance given to the subject - which in my view is again indicative of the shift. Ask yourself, 100 years ago, who cared about all these and invested resources of all kinds into such work? Your answer will be informative.

It is in our faces now, where it should be.

There are so many reasons we can postulate have been of a great contribution to the paradigm shift. This includes change of mindsets of girls and women themselves, technology, representation and deliberate “positive discrimination” otherwise known as affirmative action intended to create spaces and places for marginalised groups.

3 CONCLUSION

So, what does this paper advance?

It proposes from the deep dive and tonnes of literature and research available; the paradigm shift has been influenced by several factors including:

- The rise and dynamism of technology that has made for information to be more easily accessible to consumers around the globe.
- The era of globalisation has enabled more international co-operation and visibility, thereby bringing to light stories and creating opportunities for collaborations that would have seemed impossible years back.
- Targeted initiatives and affirmative action deliberately meant to create spaces for girls and women who would ordinarily not have such opportunities, giving them a chance to shine.
- Representation matters. The shifting of mindsets of girls and women themselves who can now see role models like them; and emulate them.
- The change of perceptions of societies about the agency and competence of women thereby providing opportunities for them to be entrusted with positions of authority that have proven to be of extreme benefit to entities and nation states.
- The multiple resources being invested into the education of girls and women thereby equipping them with skills to enter and conquer various sectors.
- The shattering of the glass ceiling and walls by progressive women and men who recognise that no one can show their potential if they are not given the opportunity to do so.
- The role of mentoring by both women and men in positions of leadership and influence which directly contributes to the confidence and competence of their mentees.

The above list is not exhaustive by any means and what we like to see is not only for the positive paradigm shift(s) to remain, but for the eventual desired outcome of the cause for women’s rights: recognition, and equality for all.

Finally, by normalising women's achievements, we contribute greatly to future generation's way of thinking We have the opportunity to do things right and now is the time to support the shift and make in permanent.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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