DISEQUILIBRIUM IN GENDER BUDGETING: AGENDA RESISTING GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIA

Arindam Gupta*

[Gender inequality, specially in case of economic and political empowerment in the developing and underdeveloped countries, is in the background behind taking up an issue like Gender, Budgeting. The lack of access to informal and formal credit by micro and small entrepreneurs specially the women has been identified by numerous studies as a major constraint. Thus, women, microfinance and micro entrepreneurship make an attractive combination for the governments of the less developed countries for formulation of combined strategies in future towards achieving gender equality and poverty alleviation.

Keywords: *Gender inequality, Gender budgeting, Micro finance, Micro entrepreneurship.]*

Gender Budgeting: gaining prominence

The concept of 'Gender Budgeting' is a relatively new concept, principally in the areas of Public Finance and Population Studies, and also has drawn much attention of researchers and analysts in the broader disciplines of Sociology and Economics. However, it is such a concept which may be undertaken at the country level on one hand and also at the state or district levels on the other. An organization may also make such kind of budget as a special application of the same. Yet, the exercise has wider application in the domain of public expenditure and revenue, mainly under the management of the government at any level, central, state or local.

Gender Budgeting, thus has been defined as "an analysis of the Government budget to establish its gender-differential impacts and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments". Thus Gender Budgeting looks into the Government budget from a gender perspective to assess how it addresses the needs of women in the vulnerable areas like health, education, employment, etc.. In this circumstance, it should be made clear that Gender Budgeting does not seek to create a separate budget but seeks affirmative action to address specific needs of women. Thus, Gender Budget is a Gender Responsive Budgeting in which "initiatives provide a way of assessing the impact of Government revenue and expenditure on women".

***** Professor, Department of Commerce with Farm Management, Vidyasagar University,West Bengal. Email: arindam_finance@rediffmail.com

Gender inequality, specially in the developing and underdeveloped countries, is in the background behind taking up an issue like Gender Budgeting. Research studies allover the world establish this fact that initiatives resisting gender inequality may transform the underdeveloped economies into developing ones. Because, almost all the developed countries in the world exhibit much reduced inequality between the two genders, specially in case of economic and political empowerment. So, in any discussion on Gender Budgeting, gender inequality will constitute an important part.

Australia was the first country to formally incorporate gender budgeting into its budget process by developing the concept of a "women's budget" which addressed to inequalities between women and men. Government ministries and departments in Australia were required to provide an analysis of the impact of the annual budget on women and girls, focusing mainly but not exclusively on public expenditures.

Gender budgeting has gained prominence in recent years all over the world, and was given additional impetus by the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, which called for ensuring the integration of a gender perspective in budgetary policies and programmes. Gender budgeting initiatives have been supported by a number of multinational institutions, foremost among these the Commonwealth Secretariat, the European Community, the World Bank, and institutions of civil society, including many women's organizations. The Commonwealth Secretariat has taken a principal role in advancing gender budgeting. Its publications serve as a reference to many of the main issues and experiences. The Commonwealth Secretariat also sponsored some of the earliest pilot projects in gender budgeting in a number of Commonwealth countries including Barbados, Fiji, St. Kitts and Nevis, South Africa, and Sri Lanka.

Gender Budgeting: steps

A Gender Budgeting exercise may involve the following steps:

- Identification of needs and priorities of women, especially those who are poor,
- Examination of existing policies, programmes and schemes to determine whether or not they meet this priority needs,
- Corrective reprioritization of budgetary allocations so that they are adequate for meeting those needs, and
- Taking requisite follow-up actions to ensure that desired outcomes are attained (Mehta, Aasha Kapur, 2006).

Gender Budgeting in academic literature in India

The idea of introducing gender budgeting in India gathered momentum with the study done by Lahiri, Chakraborty and Bhattacharyya (2002) of National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (hereafter, referred as NIPFP study). To provide the analytical framework for gender budgeting, NIPFP study constructed an econometric model to link spending on public education and health to the Gender Development Index (GDI), showing the positive effect of such spending on this indicator of gender inequality.

This approach, however, does not refute the widely explored link between economic growth and the (gender sensitive) human development, rather emphasises that it does substantially through higher public expenditure, particularly through health care and education.

The methodology adopted by NIPFP for gender budgeting received wide attention due to its simplicity and practicability in conducting gender budgeting *within* the country and *between* the countries. The NIPFP study represents an interesting effort at focusing on the gender-differentiated effects of budgetary spending. Although the linkages of such budgetary spending to gender disparity measures and economic growth are only treated in brief, it provides a framework for such analyses to support sensible budget making. Further, in this study, a few matrices have been developed by NIPFP to categorise the financial inputs from gender perspective within the analytical framework of gender budgeting (Stotsky, 2006). These analytical matrices for categorising public expenditure through a gender lens were as follows:

- specifically targeted expenditure to women and girls,
- pro-women allocations; which are the composite expenditure schemes with a significant women's component where at least 30 percent targeted for women, and
- residual public expenditures that have gender-differential impacts where again at least 30 percent targeted for women.

Gender budgeting – possible application in the developing countries

There are serious gender issues which need to be flagged and translated into the policies, programmes and schemes of individual Ministries and Departments as successful application of gender budgeting initiatives. Thus, Gender Budgeting has a tremendous scope in all the developing countries of the world including India. Possible areas of application of gender budgeting, in line of Mehta, Aasha Kapur (2006) are listed below:

- To correct gender gaps in literacy and education,
- To correct wage differentials between men and women,
- To check violence against women,
- To check and act against trafficking of women,
- To correct bias in the female-male ratio,
- To remove lack of access to water and drinking water,
- To correct statistical invisibility of women's work, and
- To provide women's access to work.

Why does Gender budgeting focus around women?

Like inflation is commonly used in every country to denote price level change, gender budgeting also focuses around women always. Naturally, questions arise, why? While poverty and ill health affect both men and women, the problems get compounded for women for many reasons. Firstly, women's lack of access to and control over resources and decision making lead to lower levels of access to healthcare services for them. "While men have higher rates of disease morbidity for many major diseases, including TB and malaria, a larger percentage of women die due to the fact that they are often only brought in for diagnosis and treatment at severe stages of illness, when treatment is less effective" (CARE, 2006). Secondly, when any member of the family falls ill, women routinely add the task of providing care to their other tasks, thereby adding to their unrecognized work burden, which leads to their higher levels of tiredness and morbidity. Thirdly, "more than half of the female population in India suffers from anaemia due to lack of nutrition" (CARE, 2006). Since they are the last to eat in many homes, where there is inadequate availability of food, this cultural norm often leads to intra-household discrimination in access to food and nutrition (Sudarshan and Bhattacharya, 2004).

The possible reasons of focus around women in a Gender Budgeting exercise as identified in the Gender Budgeting handbook for Govt. of India and Ministries are given below:

- Nearly 2/3rd of the illiterate people around the world is women.
- In the developing countries, maternal mortality continues to be a prime cause of death for women of reproductive age.
- Women are underrepresented in decision-making in government and business sectors in the LDCs, even in households in general.
- Women also continue to do most of the unpaid work of bearing, rearing and caring for children and other citizens.

Areas of the gender inequality gap

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2010 identifies the areas of gender inequality gap as noted below:

- Economic participation and opportunity — outcomes on salaries, participation levels and access to high-skilled employment.
- Educational attainment — outcomes on access to basic and higher level education.
- Political empowerment — outcomes on representation in decision-making structures.
- Health and survival — outcomes on life expectancy and sex ratio.

The Gender inequality index (GII) vis-à-vis other indices of human development

A new measure in the name of GII has been introduced to better expose differences in the distribution of achievements between women and men in line of the Human Development Index (HDI) and the inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI). It is a composite index of women's position in labour market, empowerment and reproductive health. Gender inequality varies tremendously across countries — from 17 percent to 85 percent.

Human Development Index (HDI), a summary composite index, takes into account data on life expectancy, education and per-capita Gross National Income (as an indicator of standard of living) collected at the national level using the formula. It was first developed by the late Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq with the collaboration of the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen and other leading development thinkers for the first Human Development Report in 1990 under a UNDP. It was introduced as an alternative to conventional measures of national development, such as level of income and the rate of economic growth, to rank countries by level of “human development”.

The UNDP further in its 2010 Human Development Report published the inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI) as a measure of the average level of human development of people in a society once inequality is taken into account. It captures the HDI of the average person in society, which is less than the aggregate HDI when there is inequality in the distribution of health, education and income. Under perfect equality, the HDI and IHDI are equal; the greater the difference between the two, the greater the inequality.

Gender inequality and HDI: India vis-à-vis other selected countries

A comparative presentation has been made in Table 1 among India, other developed countries in the world, the noted economically and industrially developed countries, other countries in the BRIC group, and some neighbouring countries from the dual perspective of human development and gender equality. The comparative position of the selected countries either in terms of human development or gender equality are presented in further disaggregated respects of maternal mortality, adolescent fertility, percentage of berths being attended by skilled health personnel and contraceptive prevalence rate among the reproductive age group of women. India’s dismal position is obviously reflected in various parameters taken into consideration. Population may be identified as one key factor behind such dismal picture as possible government initiatives are not enough to recover the poor state due to the population pressure yet that must not be the sole reason. Otherwise, the other populous countries in the world also would bear the same fate. In fact, India is the lowest ranked of the BRIC economies featured in the Index. There is apparently no correlation between state of human development and gender inequality. There is more interestingly lack of contemporaneous relation between the traditional measures of economic development and gender inequality index; however some form of consistency is seen of its movement with that of human development.

Table 1: Gender inequality and HDI: India vis-à-vis other selected countries

HDI Rank	Country	Gender Inequality Index Rank 2012	Gender Inequality Index Value 2012	Maternal mortality ratio* 2010	Seats held by women in parliament (%) 2012	Women population % with at least secondary education in the age group from 25 yrs. and older 2006 - 2010	Labour force Partici-pation rate by women (%) 2011	Adolesc-ent fertility rate† 2012	Births at-tended by skilled health person-nel (in %) 2005 -09	Contrace-ptive pre-valence rate, any method (% of married women aged 15 - 49) 2005 - 09
1	Norway	5	0.065	7	39.6	95.6	61.7	7.4	-	88.0
2	Australia	17	0.115	8	28.3	92.2	58.8	12.5	100	71.0
3	United States	42	0.256	21	17.0	94.7	57.5	27.4	99	73.0
4	Netherlands	1	0.045	6	37.8	87.5	58.3	4.3	100	69.0
5	Germany	6	0.075	7	32.4	96.2	53.0	6.8	75	-
10	Japan	21	0.131	5	13.4	80.0	49.4	6.0	100	54.0
15	Denmark	3	0.057	12	39.1	99.3	59.8	5.1	-	-
55	Russian Federation	51	0.312	34	11.1	93.5	56.3	23.2	100	80.0
85	Brazil	85	0.447	56	9.6	50.5	59.6	76.0	97	81.0
92	Sri Lanka	75	0.402	35	5.8	72.6	34.7	22.1	99	68.0
101	China	35	0.213	37	21.3	54.8	67.7	9.1	99	85.0
136	India	132	0.610	200	10.9	26.6	29.0	74.7	53	54.0
146	Pakistan	123	0.567	260	21.1	18.3	22.7	28.1	39	30.0
146	Bangladesh	111	0.518	240	19.7	30.8	58.7	57.2	24	53.0

* defined as maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, † defined as the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15 – 19. *[Compiled from: Human Development Reports, 2012 & 2013, UNDP]*

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2010 reveals India's critically bad position too. Out of the 134 countries surveyed in this Report, India is among the lowest ranked countries at the 112th position, with a score of 0.6155. The index ranks 134 economies according to the size of the gaps between men and women. India (112) occupies one of the last places in the regional rankings. Although, among the countries studied, the two Asian neighbouring countries, India and Pakistan perform above average on the political empowerment of women. But, both these countries lag behind the other countries in the other three categories of economic participation, educational attainment and health. Political empowerment has been made possible in these countries due to the existing women reservation policy of different political parties in giving nominations, particularly in India. Reservation for women of constituencies in different stages of representation in the local governance in India in particular, in spite of the pending Women Reservation Bill targeting the same even at the national level, may be another contributing factor behind a brighter picture of political empowerment of women in India among other reasons. Further, if one looks into the list of most powerful political personalities in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, legendary women figures will find prominent place in all these countries either in past or at present. But, one has also to look into the evolution of these political personalities linking the same to their affiliation to the famous political families of the respective countries having much contribution in these countries' progress. Again, in case of empowerment of women in the local governments particularly as highlighted above for India, often the men in waiting help their nearest relation in the family among women to fill in the temporary vacancies of the constituencies on rotational basis. Hence, all these factors work together in not getting the real picture of political empowerment of women at mass level in these countries. In particular, in the more vulnerable issues like persistent health, education and economic participation, large gaps will be observed in India in relation to the developed countries of the world. This is how these lags become detrimental to India's growth.

Gender budgeting in India – the past and present scenario

Expenditure targeted to women in India consists mainly of four main types. These are:

- protective services,
- social services that can empower women,
- self employment, and
- regulatory-like maternity schemes.

There are also expenditures that are pro-women, though they are not specifically targeted to women. Such spending includes certain programmes related to poverty alleviation and water supply. These expenditures also constitute a relatively small portion of the total.

For the third category of mainstream expenditures, e.g., education, health, etc. a gender disaggregated public expenditure benefit incidence analysis is conducted by constructing unit costs for different public services, and looking at utilization by gender.

The gender sensitivity in allocation of resources started with the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990), which marked the initiation of monitoring 27 beneficiary oriented schemes for women. Thus, a notion of Women Component Plan (WCP) was introduced. The commitment was reaffirmed in the Eighth Plan (1992-1997) and marked a significant progress in the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) with 30% of funds earmarked in all women's related sectors. Tenth Five Year Plan (2002 - 2007) reinforces commitment to gender budgeting to establish its gender-differential impact and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) focuses on 'strict adherence to Gender Budgeting across board' for the first time.

However, the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) marked a significant progress in this regard. The notion of WCP, as it was adopted in the Ninth Plan, earmarked a clear, unconditional and minimum quantum of funds / benefits for women in the schemes run by all Ministries / Departments that were perceived to be "women-related". It thereby recognized that prioritizing financial resources for programmes / schemes for women was critical for women's empowerment.

Under WCP, both Central as well as State Governments were required to ensure that "not less than 30 per cent of the funds / benefits are earmarked for women under the various schemes of the 'women-related' ministries/departments". There is no explanation, however, on how the Planning Commission arrived at this particular figure of 30 % under the WCP, at least not in any of the government reports / documents available in the public domain.

However, the picture with regard to implementation of WCP during the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002 - 2007), as it emerges from the Planning Commission's *Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan*, is even worse. While the *Department of Education* had confirmed a flow of funds of 42.37 % of its Gross Budgetary Support to the WCP during the Tenth Plan years, the *Ministry of Labour*, which had earlier reported a flow of 33.5 % of its Gross Budgetary Support to the WCP in Ninth Plan, reported a flow of only 5 % of its Gross Budgetary Support to the WCP in the first three years of the Tenth Plan. The Ministries / Departments of *Agriculture and Cooperation*, *Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation*, *Science and Technology / Biotechnology*, *Information and Broadcasting*, *Non-Conventional Energy Sources* and *Small-scale* and *Agro-related Industries*, which had earlier reported on the WCP in their sectoral budgets, had stopped doing so during the Tenth Plan years (Das, Subrat and Mishra, Yamini, 2006).

The Gender Budget Statement was introduced levelling the Union Budget in the year 2005-06 and this practice has been sustained till date. Apart from listing those schemes where 100% provisions are meant for women in Part A, the statement in its current form also includes those schemes in which at least 30% provisions are meant for women in Part B.

A powerful impetus to the process was provided by the Ministry of Finance who in 2004, mandated setting up of Gender Budget Cells in all Ministries and Departments. The Ministry of Finance also issued a Charter on 8th March 2007 outlining the composition and functions of Gender Budget Cells.

The Approach Paper to the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) mentions "Gender Equity requires adequate provisions to be made in policies and schemes across Ministries and Departments. It also entails 'strict adherence to gender budgeting across the board' ".

During 2008-09 and 2009-10, more than 600 Central and State Government officers were oriented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) to the concepts and tools of Gender Budgeting. Many institutes of national repute like the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi and premier training institutions in the states like the State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) and the Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs) have been developed as resource institutions and they also have introduced Gender Budgeting trainings as part of their training courses.

Even a preliminary assessment of the Gross Budgetary Support over the last few years reveals that the total allocations earmarked for women as proportion of the total union government expenditure have been in the range of 5-6%, which by any standard is significantly low. After stagnating at 5.5% of the Total Expenditure over the last two years, Union Budget 2010-11 has increased the proportion of the Gross Budgetary Support to 6.1%. Further analysis of the total magnitude for the years 2008-09 to 2010-11 reveals that the increase in the per capita allocation has been rather insignificant – it has only raised from INR 900 (approx. US$ 20) in 2008-09, INR 1000 in 2009-10 to INR 1190 in 2010-11. It must be noted however that in the context of high inflation of 13.33% (Consumer Price Index, April 2010), this increase is nominal. The Union Budget (2011-12) has also fallen short in terms of allocations for women's development. The assessment of the gender budgeting statement brought out by the government shows that the total quantum of Union budget allocations earmarked for women as a proportion of the total Union budget outlay has gone up marginally from 6.1% in 2010-11 (budget estimate or BE) to 6.2% in 2011-12 (BE). This by no means can be considered adequate for women who constitute half the population. Furthermore, sectoral analysis shows that as of last year, education and health accounted for half the total resources earmarked for women.

Finance minister's announcement in the last Union Budget, 2011-12 hiking the monthly remuneration of 'anganwadi' workers (health workers chosen from the community and given training in health, nutrition and child-care) and helpers to INR 3,000 (US$ 70) and INR 1,500 (US$35), respectively, in response to the long-standing demand for minimum wages, gave many women's groups a reason to cheer but the overall allocation when viewed through the gender lens appears grim. An increase in the monthly remuneration of anganwadi workers and helpers would at least ensure minimum wages to the front-line service providers of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government's largest nutritional programme. However, there are more negatives than positives. However, the remuneration of the cooks-cum-helpers under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme of National Rural Health Mission, who are predominantly women, continue to suffer.

It is also imperative to compare the funds allocated from 2007-08 to 2011-12 with the outlay proposed in the 11th Five-Year Plan since the year 2011-12 marks the end of the Plan period. The comparison reveals that the proportion of funds allocated in the five years is less than 50% in the case of gender budgeting and conditional cash transfer for the girl child with insurance cover. This proportion is lowest for Swayamsidha (15%), which was supposed to be the main vehicle for women's empowerment in the 11th Plan.

Hence, there is still a long way to go. The challenge is that such institutional mechanisms should lead to engendering of budgetary and planning processes of the State Governments which is a slow process. Secondly, bulk of the public expenditure which is in the so-called gender-neutral sector is another area of concern. So, what is needed is one-to-one interactions with Ministries concerned to help identify issues related to their sector for engendering their schemes and programmes.

Microfinance and Microentrepreneurship : Dual weapons to resist Gender inequality in the developing countries with particular reference to India

- **Microfinance and Financial inclusion**

Women represent a key target segment for financial inclusion programme in the developing countries. The reasons behind this may be pointed out as follows:

"First, women traditionally face greater access barriers to formal banking services and thus are also credit-constrained to a greater extent than men. Second, experience has shown that repayment is higher among female borrowers, mostly resulting from more conservative investments and lower moral hazard risk. The lower moral hazard risk might stem from lower mobility and higher risk aversion. Third, women's access to financial services has a high potential to yield positive effects because women seem to focus more on children's health and education than men do." (Stein, Randhawa and Bilandzic, 2011).

Support for targeting women in microfinance programmes comes from organisations of widely differing political perspectives. There has recently been an apparent convergence of policy and terminology and common concerns with sustainability, participation and empowerment. However, underlying the current apparent consensus, it is possible to identify three contrasting 'paradigms' with different underlying aims, policy prescriptions and priorities in relation to both micro-finance and to its gender policy. These are: *Feminist Empowerment*

Paradigm, *Poverty Alleviation Paradigm* and *Financial Self-Sustainability Paradigm*. Main policy focus of the Feminist Empowerment Paradigm is microfinance as an entry point for women's economic, social and political empowerment. Main policy of the Poverty Alleviation Paradigm is microfinance as a part of an integrated programme for poverty reduction for the poorest households. On the other hand, main policy of the Financial Self-Sustainability Paradigm is financially self-sustainable microfinance programmes which increase access to micro-finance services for large numbers of poor people. The target groups under these three paradigms respectively are the poor women as alternative role models, the poorest women and the entrepreneurial poor women (Mayoux, Lindai, 2005).

The story of microcredit and women's empowerment may start with Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and its founder, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. While elaborating the genesis of microcredit as a concept, Yunus (2003) describes his conversation with Sufiya, a stoolmaker. "She had no money to buy the bamboo for her stools. Instead, she was forced to buy the raw materials and sell her stools through the same middleman. After extracting interest on the loan that Sufiya used to buy the bamboo that morning, the moneylender left her with a profit of only 2 cents for the day. Sufiya was poor not for lack of work or skills, but because she lacked the necessary credit to break free from a moneylender." With the help of a graduate student, Yunus surveyed Jobra and found 41 other women just like Sufiya. Disillusioned by the poverty around him and questioning what could be done, Yunus lent $27 dollars to these 42 women and asked that he be repaid whenever they could afford it. Thus, it became a historical decision. Through a series of trials and errors, Yunus settled on a working model and by 1983, under a special charter from the Bangladesh government, founded the Grameen Bank as a formal and independent financial institution. The Grameen Bank targets the poor, with the goal of lending primarily to women. Since its inception, the Grameen Bank has experienced high growth rates and now has more than 5.5 million members, more than 95 percent of whom are women. Group lending or the joint liability contract is the most celebrated lending innovation by the Grameen Bank. Economies of scale motivated its first use, and Yunus later found that the benefits of group lending were manifold. Under a joint liability contract, the members within the group (who are typically neighbours in the village) can help mitigate the problems that an outside lender would face. Outside lenders such as banks and government-sponsored agencies face what economists call agency costs. Focusing thus on women microfinance may empower them also in the intra-household decision process.

A study of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh finds that credit has a larger effect on the behaviour of poor households when women are borrowers (Pitt and Khandker, 1998; Khandker, 2003). The link between microfinance and women's empowerment is established in the empirical studies conducted by Ashraf, Karlan, and Yin (2006, 2008). While not all MFIs focus specifically on women, the Microcredit Summit Campaign counted that as of end 2007, 70 percent of microfinance clients worldwide were women (Daley-Harris 2009). Among those customers classified as the "poorest," the share was even higher at 83 percent (Armendàriz and Morduch, 2010).

- **Microentrepreneurship**

Since the mid-1980s women as micro and small entrepreneurs have received increased attention and assistance by governments, international donors and NGOs. Microenterprises have been seen as having particular advantages for women: e.g. their flexibility and location in or near women's homes, ease of entry and links with the local markets.

MSMEs play an important role in the non-farm sector as a means for sustainable employment. In achieving these outcomes, MSMEs benefit women both directly in terms of wages and indirectly by supplementing family incomes, reducing drudgery, and providing sustainable social capital. Against this backdrop, offering financing alone will not be sufficient to target the specific needs and constraints faced by low income women entrepreneurs. The need to support capacity building interventions was discussed and agreed as critical for the women entrepreneurs particularly those who belong to the informal sector. Establishment of a technical assistance facility would provide such capacity building to women entrepreneurs in the unorganized sector.

The issue of spreading microentre-preneurship among women has similar problem as envisaged above in the background of microfinance in respect of acceptance of women as customers to receive fund for their enterprises by the traditional and mainstream financial institutions. The provision of microfinance is only one instrument among others that will help female micro and small entrepreneurs to grow and develop. Poverty is a complex phenomenon with multiple causes — of which the lack of access to capital is only one. The lack of access to informal and formal credit by women micro and small entrepreneurs has been identified by numerous studies as *a* major, some even say, *the* major constraint. ILO studies in the Philippines (59 percent), Bangladesh (76.4 percent) and Trinidad and Tobago place the lack of capital, especially in the start-up period, as the problem most often mentioned by women micro entrepreneurs (ILO, 1998). These studies confirm that this problem is more severe for women than for men. In India too, organizations like Self- Employed Women's Association (SEWA) among others with origins and affiliations in the Indian labour and women's movements identified credit as a major constraint in their work with informal sector women workers. Thus, women, microfinance and micro entrepreneurship make an attractive combination for the governments of the less developed countries for formulation of combined strategies in future towards achieving gender equality and poverty alleviation.

References :

- Armendáriz, Beatriz, and Jonathan Morduch, (2010). *The Economics of Microfinance*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Ashraf, Nava, Karlan, Dean and Yin, Wesley, (2008). "Female Empowerment: Impact of a Commitment Savings Product in the Philippines." Yale University Working Paper. New Haven, CT.
- Asian Develoment Bank Working Paper, (2009). "India: Supporting Micro-entrepreneurship for Women's Empowerment".
- CARE, (2006). *Women's Empowerment for Better Health Outcomes*. New Delhi: CARE.
- Chakraborty, Lekha S., (2004). "Gender Responsive Budgeting and Fiscal Decentralisation in India: A Preliminary Appraisal". National Institute of Public Finance and Policy. New Delhi. India.
- Daley-Harris, Sam, (2009). *State of the Microcredit Summit Campaign Report 2009*. Washington: Microcredit Summit Campaign.
- Das, Subrat and Mishra, Yamini, (2006). "Women's Component Plan and Gender Budgeting in India: Still a Long Way to Go!" *Yojana*. Vol. 50. October. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.
- GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor), (2007). *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report on Women and Entrepreneurship.* London.
- ILO., (1998). Paper for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Annual Conference. Windhoek. Namibia. 2-11 April, *www.google.co.in*.
- Jhamb, Bhumika and Sinha, Navanita, (2010). "Millennium Development Goals & Gender Budgeting: Where does India stand?". *Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability.* New Delhi. India.
- Khandker, Shahidur R., (2003). "Microfinance and Poverty: Evidence Using Panel Data from Bangladesh." *Policy Research Working Paper 2945.* World Bank. Washington DC.
- Lahiri, Ashok K., (2002). Chakraborty, Lekha S. and Bhattacharyya, P.N. in association with Mukhopadhyay, Hiranya and Bhasin, Anuradha, "Gender Budgeting in India," *National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.* New Delhi.
- Mayoux, Lindai, (2005). "Women's Empowerment through Sustainable Micro-finance: Rethinking 'Best Practice'". Gender and micro-finance, website: *http://www.genfinance.net and http://lindaswebs.org.uk*.
- Mehta, Aasha Kapur, (2006). "Gender Budgeting" in "Alternative Economic Survey, India, 2006–07: Pampering Corporates, Pauperizing Masses". AES India, *www.international budget.org.*
- Patel, Vibhuti, (2003). "*Gender Budget - A Case Study of India*". Centre of Advanced Study in Economics. Department of Economics. University of Mumbai Working Paper.
- Pitt, M. M., and Khandker, S. R., (1998). "The Impact of Group-Based Credit Programs on Poor Households in Bangladesh: Does the Gender of Participants Matter?". *Journal of Political Economy.* 106 (5), pp 958–96.
- Sengupta, Rajdeep and Aubuchon, Craig P., (2008). "The Microfinance Revolution: An Overview". *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review.* January / February.
- Stein, Peer, Randhawa, Bikki and Bilandzic, Nina, (2011). "Toward Universal Access Addressing the Global Challenge of Financial Inclusion". International Finance Corporation Working Paper.

- Stotsky, Janet G., (2006). *"Gender Budgeting"*. IMF Working Paper.
- Sudarshan, Ratna M. and Bhattacharya, Rina, (2004). "Chronic Poverty and Gendered Patterns of Intra-Household Resource Allocation: A Case Study from East Delhi" in *"Chronic Poverty in India"*, (ed.) Aasha Kapur Mehta and Andrew Shepherd, Sage Publications, India.
- CPRC-IIPA Working Paper 12, IIPA, New Delhi.
- Yunus, Muhammad, (2003). *Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle against World Poverty*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Yunus, Muhammad, (2007). "What is Microcredit?" Grameen Bank. September, *www.grameen-info.org/bank WhatIsMicrocredit.htm*.
- Zuckerman, Elaine, (2005). "An Introduction to Gender Budget Initiatives". Paper presented to Macro-economists and Other Stakeholders Involved in Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH's) Poverty Reduction Strategy Process. September, 2005, *www.google.co.in*.