

Shrijna Dixon and Yamini Mishra

# A roadmap for closing gender gaps in Bihar

## Gender Responsive Budgeting



- In brief:**
- Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is a globally recognised framework to mainstream gender in public planning and budgeting processes and mechanisms. In doing so, GRB paves the way for equitable and inclusive development and has been adopted in one form or the other in over 100 countries.
  - India has led efforts on GRB in Asia, being one of the most relevant countries in the region to have made significant policy interventions and set up institutional mechanisms on GRB. 27 out of 36 Indian States/Union Territories have undertaken diverse efforts on GRB.
  - Bihar is one of the early starters on GRB, with the first known GRB initiative in 2008-09. Bihar's budgets allocated for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) are about 3 percent of the state's GDP and 14 percent of the state's budget in 2019-20.
  - While Government of Bihar's policy commitments on GRB are a step in the right direction, they do not seem to be enough to demonstrate output and outcome level results in GEWE, which must be recorded and monitored to address generational gender inequality, discrimination and marginalisation.
  - The state's policy commitments on GEWE must be realised through a robust operational GRB architecture where key institutional actors identify their roles and responsibilities.

*This project was funded by IGC India.*

## Overview of the research

With the first documented GRB intervention in the 1980s, GRB today is recognised globally as a promising framework for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). By mainstreaming gender in public planning and budgeting processes and mechanisms, GRB paves the way for equitable and inclusive development. With India having introduced GRB efforts at the union level in the 2000s, the Indian states/union territories have followed sooner or later.

This study documents and scrutinises GRB processes and mechanisms in Bihar – a state that has recorded a steady and high growth in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the past decade and has narrowed gaps in some gender development indicators, while lagging behind in others. In so doing, it attempts to address two main research questions:

- What are the key GRB processes and mechanisms (which we collectively call a 'GRB architecture') institutionalised by Bihar?
- To what extent can Bihar's current GRB architecture be located within the State's overall planning and budgeting cycle?

In addressing the second question, it also attempts to interrogate whether the state's GRB architecture is mainstreamed within the Government's overall planning and budgeting cycle, which is critical for achieving GEWE.

In answering the above questions, the study analyses the state's key policy level commitments on GRB and examines what the existing GRB processes are, and mechanisms to achieve these commitments. It assesses the priority accorded to gender in the state's budgets, draws linear correlations between gender budgets and major fiscal attributes, and presents illustrative gender outputs against gender budgets. Based on the scrutiny of what exists currently, the study proposes an illustrative GRB architecture to be made operational through a roadmap with key milestones for the state to effectively pursue and achieve its GRB policy commitments in the future.

## Findings and future implications

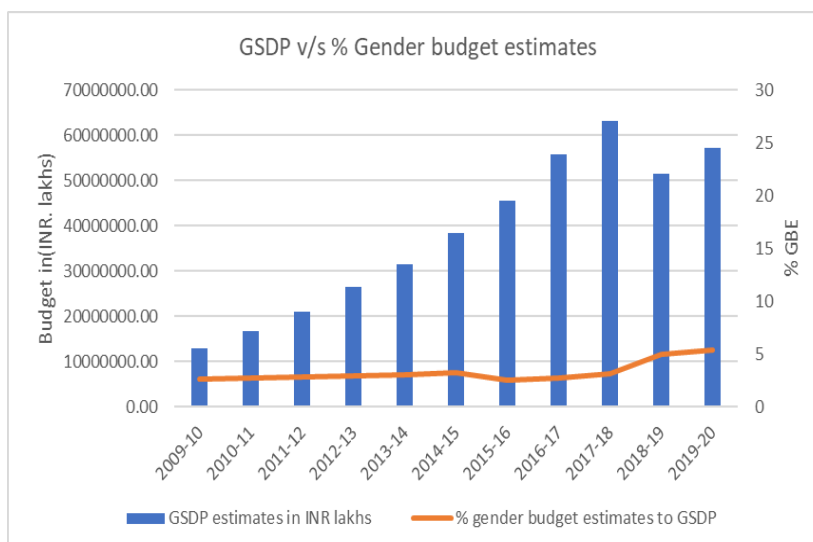
Bihar registered a [double-digit growth](#) averaging higher than 10 percent over the past three years. The state is one of the early starters on GRB in India, having published its first GBS in 2008-09. The total budgetary outlay for GEWE, as reflected in the GBS from 2012-13 to 2017-18 shows an increase by 163 percent, comprising about 11 percent of the state's overall budget. The budget outlays in GBS are estimated at about three percent of the state's GDP<sup>1</sup>. In the state's Women Empowerment Policy and Sustainable Development Goals Vision Document, GRB has been highlighted as a key intervention agenda.

Figure 1 shows that budgets for GEWE ranged between two to five percent of the Bihar's GDP from 2009-10 to 2019-20. Moreover, while the overall state budget estimates increased over a range of three to 27 percent during this period, gender budgets appear to have increased only marginally. Out of 20 departments that report in the GBS, the largest proportion of gender budgets have been consistently allocated by Rural Development, Education, Social Welfare and Health departments. Overall gender budgets from these four departments contribute 80 percent of the total gender budget estimates. About half of the departments reporting in GBS contribute less than one percent each to overall GBS.

---

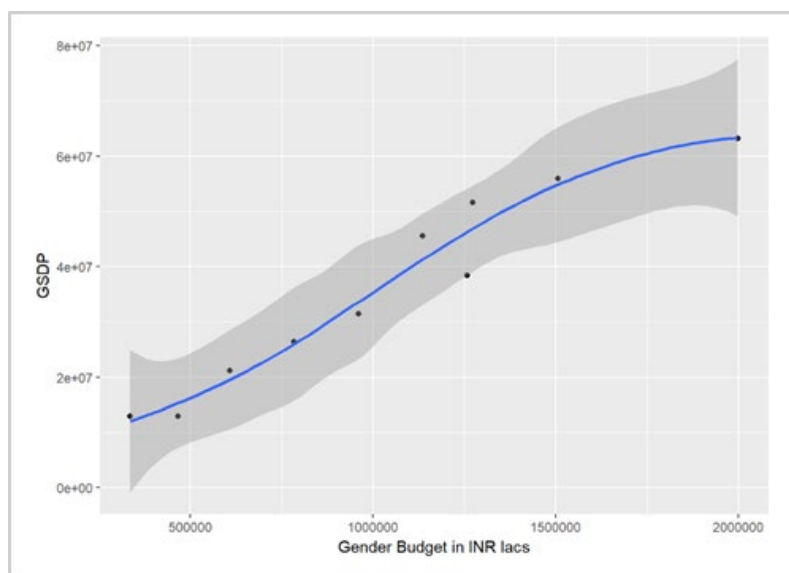
<sup>1</sup> <http://finance.bih.nic.in/Reports/Economic-Survey-2019-EN.pdf>

**Figure 1: % gender budget allocations to Bihar's GSDP in INR lacs**



The growing trend of gender budget percentage to overall state’s GDP is established with a strongly positive linear correlation (of 0.967) between GSDP and GEWE Budgets, as shown in Figure 2. Although not surprising, the correlation conveys a strongly positive relationship between gender budgets and the state’s fiscal attribute. We use this statistic to provide further credence to the [work](#) of feminist economists that locates gender within the larger macroeconomic and fiscal space.

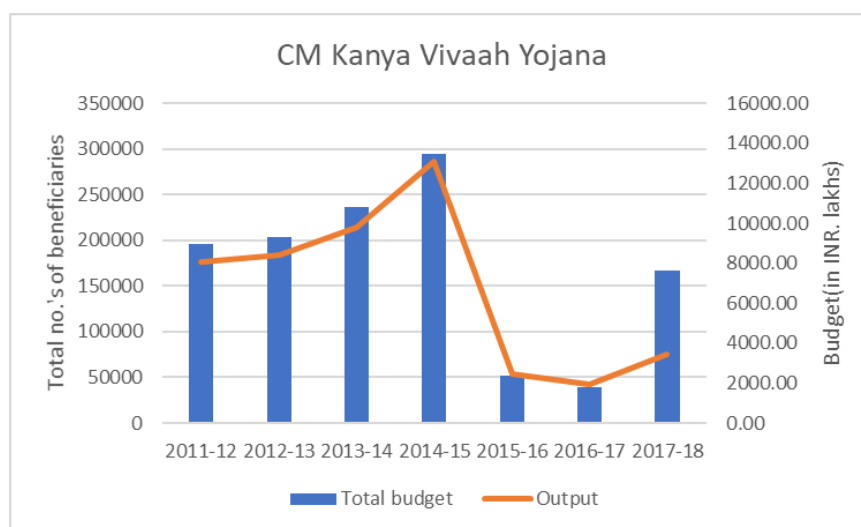
**Figure 2: Linear correlation between GSDP and gender budget allocations**



Since the GBS does not report corresponding output results against gender budget allocations, it is nearly impossible to map what is actually being spent against what is budgeted. Non-availability of gender statistics, like sex disaggregated data, further constraints tracking what actually reaches women and girls. To take an example, we undertook an exercise of extrapolating gender outputs for select public welfare schemes, merely illustrative in nature, to reason that the number of female beneficiaries to total beneficiaries may be underrepresented based on the actual beneficiary population.

- One of the flagship schemes of the State Government is the Chief Minister's Marriage Scheme for Girls<sup>2</sup> where Below Poverty Line (BPL) as well as those households with an annual income of up to INR 60,000 are given a one-time amount of INR 5,000 during the time of marriage of an adult daughter (at least 18 years or over) in the family. The amount is deposited by direct benefit transfer in the name of marriageable daughter. Output data for the scheme is not disaggregated by intersectional axes of caste, religion, urban/rural geography and disability. Although the scheme is targeted at declining the prevalence of child marriage and increasing the number of registered marriages, since the cash transfer is made in the girl's name, the scheme might perpetuate dowry system by upholding patriarchal social and cultural norms. Figure 3 shows that the scheme's budget was the largest in 2014-15 and smallest in 2016-17, with the corresponding number of beneficiaries declining sharply (by 85 percent) from 2,87,063 to 42,739.

**Figure 3: Gender budgets and gender outputs for Kanya Vivaah Yojana (2011-12 to 2017-18)**



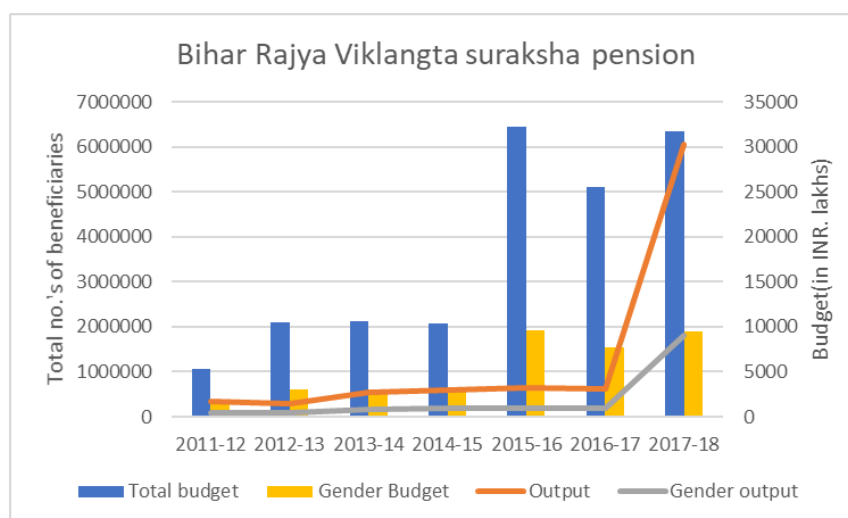
- Under the fully State sponsored Pension Scheme<sup>3</sup> for persons with disabilities, any person with at least 40 percent disability is eligible for a monthly pension of INR 400. The scheme covers only those persons with disabilities who are not covered under the National Pension Scheme.<sup>4</sup> Bihar has one of the three largest populations of disabled persons in India (8.69 percent). According to the Census of India (2011), about 42 percent of the disabled in Bihar are females. However, annual budgets for the State Pension Scheme for persons with disabilities has earmarked only about 30 percent of total budgets (refer to Box 23) for women with disabilities. Figure 4 shows that about 30 percent of total actual budgets under the scheme have been reported in the GBS. Extrapolating this statistic to the number of beneficiaries shows that an increase in the overall budget for the scheme over successive years has not been commensurate with a proportionate increase in gender budgets and consequently to an increase in the number of female beneficiaries with disability.

<sup>2</sup> Mukhya Mantri Kanyya Vivaah Yojana

<sup>3</sup> Bihar Rajya Viklaangta Suraksha Pension

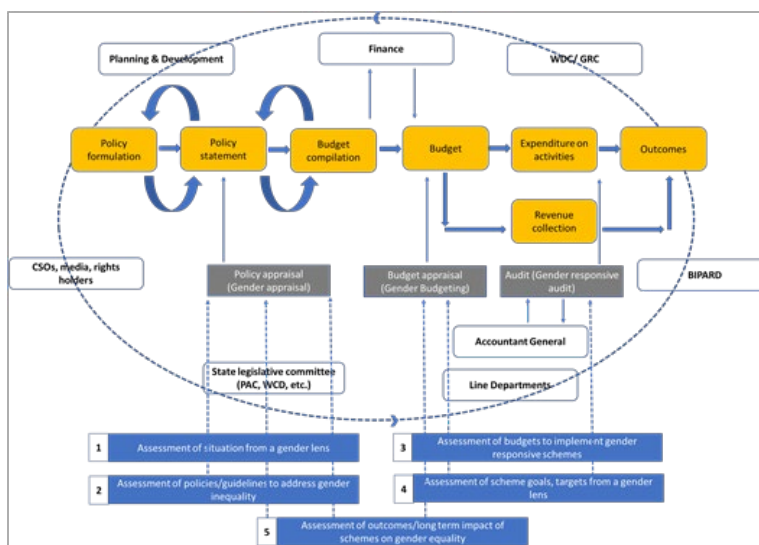
<sup>4</sup> Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme

**Figure 4: Gender budgets and illustrative gender outputs for Rajya Viklangta Suraksha Pension (2011-12 to 2017-18)**



The study proposes an illustrative GRB architecture (Figure 5) to align the state commitments on GRB with existing GRB architecture and proposes institutional arrangements for strengthening this architecture. It maps the key processes for a given stage of the planning and budgeting cycle in this architecture with the [Five Steps Framework](#) – one of GRB’s widely applied tools.

**Figure 5: An illustrative GRB architecture with roles of key actors**



## Policy recommendations

Drawing from the illustrative GRB architecture, we identify key milestones as part of a GRB roadmap to operationalise the proposed GRB architecture. Figure 6 presents information on the four planning and budgeting stages mapped along the five-steps framework, key institutional actors and key milestones of the GRB roadmap for Bihar.

**Figure 6: Planning and budgeting stages with five-steps framework, key GRB mechanisms**

| Planning & budgeting phases | Five-Steps Framework  | Key/potential institutional actors   | Key milestones -GRB roadmap  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Formulation</b>          | Assessment of situation from a gender lens; assessment of policies/guidelines to address gender inequality.   | Finance Department, WDC/GRC, line departments, legislative assembly committees, Planning and Development BIPARD, rights holders. | GRB Policy frameworks aligned with institutional mechanisms; Institutional mechanisms beyond budgets; Engaging rights holders in the GRB architecture  |
| <b>Legislation</b>          | Assessment of budgets to implement gender responsive schemes.   | Legislative assembly committees, rights holders.   | GRB Policy frameworks aligned with institutional mechanisms; engaging rights holders in the GRB architecture   |
| <b>Implementation</b>       | Assessment of policies/guidelines to address gender inequality; assessment of budgets to implement gender responsive schemes; assessment of schemes, goals, targets from a gender lens. | GRC, line departments, legislative assembly committees, Planning and Development BIPARD, rights holders.                         | GRB Policy frameworks aligned with institutional mechanisms; delineate roles of key GRB actors; GRB mainstreamed along the state planning and budgeting cycle; Mainstreaming GRB trainings in state administrative trainings; monitoring GRB processes and mechanisms; Engaging rights holders in the GRB architecture |
| <b>Audit</b>                | Assessment of outcomes/ long term impact of schemes on gender equality.   | Auditor General of Bihar; Audit/administrative training institutions; rights holders.  | Mainstreaming GRB trainings in state administrative/audit trainings; monitoring GRB processes and mechanisms; engaging rights holders in the GRB architecture.   |

The study makes some of the following propositions for the GRB actors to help operationalise the illustrative GRB architecture in Bihar:

- In an attempt to streamline GRB architecture, we propose that GRB be mainstreamed within PAC's accountability actions, recommendations, and observations on public accounts; and be taken up by WCD committee as well. Any scope for convergence between PAC and the Auditor's General, Bihar in scrutinising the Gender Budget Statement may also be considered.
- While the state line departments compile the GBS based on directions in the budget call circular, the Finance Department can take the lead in developing a set of approach and methods (in the form of a directive) to be used by all departments in compiling the GBS. For example, this could include principles and directives for apportioning budgets for schemes and linking them to actual budgets and outputs that are sex-disaggregated.
- With designating select line departments as lead departments for SDGs, the Planning and Development can take the lead in guiding line departments to develop gender responsive indicators/targets aligned to the schemes, budgets and outcomes for GEWE.
- Working with the Planning and Development and designate line departments, Social Welfare can take the lead in identifying key GEWE targets to map with budgets, outputs and outcomes in line with SDG GEWE targets/indicators for Bihar.
- WCD along with Finance and Planning and Development can play the lead in operationalising the State Women Empowerment Policy by aligning it to the state's schemes, budgets and outcomes on GEWE in line with SDG targets/indicators for Bihar.

- Given its mandate, GRC can strengthen its convening role by identifying specific mandates for other GRB key actors. For example, with its technical role, it can support line departments during the budget formulation and compilation stage, as well as in strengthening monitoring systems. If GRC is to provide a knowledge hub for GRB, its roles and responsibilities should be institutionalised and resources to strengthen its technical infrastructure should be planned accordingly.
- The AG can engage with the Planning and Development and specific departments to review GEWE targets/indicators that can be incorporated into the outcome audit. Learning from one sector, the outcome audit guidelines can be targeted to other sectors in line with the state's GEWE policy commitments.
- Working with Finance, Planning and Development and Social Welfare Department and WDC/GRC, state line departments can review and streamline their approach to applying GRB.
- Since GRB should target GEWE across diverse sectors, it is critical that a large number of line departments institutionalise a GRB architecture in their respective departments. Working with Finance, Planning and Development and Social Welfare Department and WDC/GRC, state line departments can review and streamline their approach to applying GRB.