

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING FOR DALIT WOMEN

Are budgets responsive to Dalit women's need?

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Gender Responsive Budgeting emerged as a very critical tool for incorporating a gender perspective in the overall planning and budgeting of the country. Almost two decades after its adoption gender responsive budgeting still has not reached the most marginalized women in particular and monitored their progress. It has not been able to bring any significant improvements in the budgetary allocation for Dalit women. This document puts forth a brief analysis of the allocation for Dalit women for 3 major sectors namely health, education, and livelihood for the last 4 financial years from 2019-2023. Through the recommendations, the document shares what possible changes in the GRB of the union government can make it more inclusive for Dalit women.

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Background

Women and girls from caste-affected communities are the worst affected since they are triply alienated owing to their caste, gender and economic status.

Caste discrimination is one of the oldest and the most rigid forms of social hierarchy existing in the country over all these years. Discrimination, exclusion, inequality and the system of untouchability based on caste continue in the country. This hierarchical setup has alienated a certain section of society from mainstream society and has assigned them a lower position based on their caste location. Women and girls from caste-affected communities are the worst affected since they are triply alienated owing to their caste, gender and economic status. The compounded gender and caste-based vulnerability have negative implications for the Scheduled Caste (SC) women in their access to health services, wage employment, assets, education, social mobility and political participation, making them more socially vulnerable. Assertion of rights has often attracted backlash violence against women of the SC community

by dominant caste groups. Additionally, Dalit girls also make up the majority of the country's bonded and child labour and are often involved in menial forms of work. SC women are prodigiously underrepresented in skilled work and formal sector works, largely due to caste-based discrimination and also because young women often drop out of schools and colleges due to extreme levels of discrimination and exclusion faced by them and poor conditions in schools and hostels, forcing them to engage in a low paid job or the traditional degrading forms of works often associated with the caste status.

As per the census 2011 SC form 16.68% percentage out of which women constitute 8% of the total Dalit population. Dalit women constitute 9.79crore out of the total female population of 58.7crore in India. To understand the status of Dalit women in India, it is important to trace the educational indicators



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of young Dalit girls from the perspective of the lack of access and discrimination faced by them in educational institutions. As per the 2011 census data, only 56.5% of Dalit women are literate. In the secondary and higher secondary level, the enrolment ratio of Dalit girls is only 72.6% as compared to the other dominant groups with 95%. Similarly, in higher education, the enrolment ratio is 15.5% which is much lower than the dominant caste groups. Alarming rates are also visible in the dropout rates among the SC girls, especially in the secondary level with 18.32% leading to lesser enrolment in senior secondary and higher education. Lack of financial resources along with other issues like lack of accessibility, and high incidence of discrimination are some of the significant barriers leading to the high dropout rate among Dalit girls. Dalit

families have a harder time paying for fee-based education than their dominant caste counterparts, who have a relatively higher income. Accessibility is another issue, especially for the girls as Dalit homes are situated on the fringes of a village. There are also obvious indicators of discrimination like segregation in the classroom and the provision of midday meals. All these factors have a bearing on how Dalit students, especially girls, attend school. Additionally, caste-based discrimination is also very high in the employment sector. The recent Oxfam Report “India Discrimination Report 2022” mentions that discrimination against SC and ST workers is very high both in the public and private sector in the regular urban and rural labour market in India. This pattern of discrimination can be seen in terms of earnings, nature of work,

social security and other employment-related benefits. As per the Oxfam Report for the year 2019-20, the mean income for SC/ST persons is INR15,312 against INR20,346 for persons belonging to the general category among the regular/salaried employed. Gender here plays a very significant role here, women tend to get more discriminated against than others.

Covid 19 has put women in an even more vulnerable situation as they are burdened with unpaid care, and domestic work and are without any social and economic security. With the outbreak of Covid 19 in India the strategy enforced by the government is that of 'social distancing', self-quarantine, personal hygiene, and lockdowns without even emphasising its impact on the most marginalised. The oppressive societal structures based on caste, class and patriarchy make a certain section enormously vulnerable with very less ability to overcome the distress caused by the pandemic. The nature of the pandemic has increased the vulnerability of Dalits and has impacted them disproportionately, especially the women from this community. The marginalized women who are engaged in manual scavenging, sanitation work and domestic work face a higher risk of covid 19 transmission impacting their livelihood and greater risk of violence. As many as 95% of manual scavengers are women and face multiple challenges in almost all spheres. During the pandemic, their work and the risk they faced were overlooked by both state and non-state actors. There are many challenges for this particular group of women like job loss, fewer savings, low pay, and lack of social protection like health care and insurance. Most of these women work in the informal sector where these kinds of social and economic protections are mostly absent. The Covid 19

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Gender-responsive budgeting makes sure that the opinions of diverse groups are represented in all the stages of governance. Tracking the specific needs of men and women differently and thereafter allocating accordingly also enhances the accountability and transparency of the budgeting process.



pandemic has aggravated their existing vulnerabilities, making their working conditions even more challenging and difficult. Ideally, the country's budget should be used as a tool to address these vulnerabilities.

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) ideally should have been a critical tool to measure these vulnerabilities and work towards gender mainstreaming by incorporating the perspective of all women especially the marginalised in the planning and budgeting process of the country. The sections below will talk about if the government through its budgetary allocation across the years has been able to address the specific needs of SC women for their protection, participation and development across different sectors and Ministries and also put forwards the recommendations for various social sectors like education, health, livelihood from the perspective of Dalit women, especially of those engaged in manual scavenging.

Gender Responsive Budgeting and its Purpose

Gender equality refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for both men and women. It implies that the needs and priorities of both these groups are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of each group they belong to. Gender-responsive budgeting enables the achievement of this gender equity. There have been a number of policies and programmes to attain this equity, however wide gaps exist between the goals and the situational reality of the women on the ground. The way, in which national budgets in most countries are formulated, ignores the different, socially determined roles, responsibilities and capabilities of men and women.

In India, the evolution of gender-responsive budgeting can be traced back to the publication of the report of the Committee on the status of women in 1974. Over the years several measures have been taken toward

gender-responsive budgeting. However, as one of the mechanisms, the Ministry of Finance introduced Gender Budget Statement (GBS) in the Union Budget in 2005-06. A gender Budget statement, as an initiative is able to estimate how much the government's total budget is flowing for women and allows a clear delineation of funds across central ministries and departments towards mitigating gender-based discrimination. While the GBS is purely quantitative, however, it gives a clear estimate of how much the government is spending on women under different departments and ministries. This methodology has improved significantly since its inception, especially in terms of its coverage of not just conventionally perceived 'women-related sectors' but has opened its scope to cover other sectors as well. Moreover, the coverage of the Gender budget statement has 9 departments/ministries in 2005-06 to 34 in the last financial year. Apart from the union budget, this methodology has been adopted in various state budgets as well. The union budget in its budget statement puts forward the Gender Budget statement (GBS) which is divided into two parts wherein part A consists of the schemes with 100% allocation for women and part B consist of the schemes where the allocations for women constitute at least 30% of the provision. The analysis below looks specifically into the allocation for Dalit women in the Gender Budget Statement (Statement 13) and Scheduled Caste Component (Statement 10A).

Looking at the budget from a critical gender lens is significant and carries numerous advantages. It is an important mechanism for ensuring greater consistency between the economic goals and the government's social commitment to achieving gender equality. Preferences, interests and needs of men and women from different groups may vary and

so the way they benefit from different policies and budget allocation also varies. This in turn makes it necessary to integrate equity between men and women in all spheres of decision-making through gender-responsive budgeting. Moreover, the achievement of gender equality has huge socio-economic consequences which will positively affect the country's economy. Securing equal participation will help in achieving the country's agenda of achieving good governance. Gender-responsive budgeting makes sure that the opinions of diverse groups are represented in all the stages of governance. Tracking the specific needs of men and women differently and thereafter allocating accordingly also enhances the accountability and transparency of the budgeting process.

Gender Responsive Budgeting for Dalit Women

For Gender Responsive Budgeting in India, Gender Budget Statement (GBS) is the only tool which is institutionalised by the government. The initiative of releasing the gender budget statement is an important stepping stone to assessing the flow of the budget for women out of the total expenditure of the country and also promotes the government's commitment toward gender equality. However, women here are taken as a homogenous category and there is very little consideration of the intersectionalities across other categories of discrimination like caste, sexual identity and so on. The impact of budget on women from the marginalised communities is very different as compared to the dominant caste women. They face double disadvantages based on their caste, economic status and gender identity and lag behind almost on all social indicators. Without considering these intersections of women the budget will reflect only a partial image.



Stories From The Ground

“I am Shakuntala and used to work as a manual scavenger. I have 8 children; I worked as a labourer and raised them with hardships. My husband is ailing and I don’t have money to buy medicines for him. Where should I go? Tell me what should I do? That’s why I am upset. The thatched ceiling of my house is leaking. With the outbreak of Corona, things have worsened for us. We are dying of hunger. The local villagers are good. They provide us flour and lentils on which we are surviving. I even cannot take my ailing husband to the hospital. His health is deteriorating. He is struggling to breathe and is bedridden. I don’t even have money to take him to the hospital. We are surviving on a single meal a day. The government is also not doing anything for us. It’s been 6 months since we haven’t received any ration despite having a ration card. Whom should I share my problems with? How will people like us get help, when the government is not listening?”

This is an ordeal narrated by one of the Dalit woman manual scavengers working in Chamari, UP during the outbreak of Covid 19. There are plenty of such cases of Dalit women who are unable to access government policies and programs owing to their caste, class, and gender status. There is an immediate need to understand the budget from an intersectional approach to address the discrimination and exclusion faced by women from the most marginalized communities.

Data Source and Methodology

This note is prepared based on the data collected from the union government’s Detailed Demand for Grants, particularly Statement 10A referred to as Statement on allocation for Welfare of SC in the Expenditure Profile of Union Budget 2019-23 published by the Ministry of Finance used for allocating funds for SCs along with Statement 13 (GBS) referred to the fund allocation towards women. This document analyses the GBS of the Central government that features schemes funded by the central government. We have compiled, tabularized and analysed the data pertaining

to allocations towards Dalit women particularly pertaining to health, education and livelihood, especially for the women engaged in manual scavenging from the above-noted sources comparing the scheme allocation both from statements 10A and 13 and calculating the allocation for Dalit women based on their population percentage. The time period of the analysis is from 2019-20 to 2022-23 i.e., a period of 4 years which includes the latest union budget data. The analysis has considered the period of 2019-20 as a pre-pandemic year while the subsequent years are the pandemic years.



An Analysis of the GBS

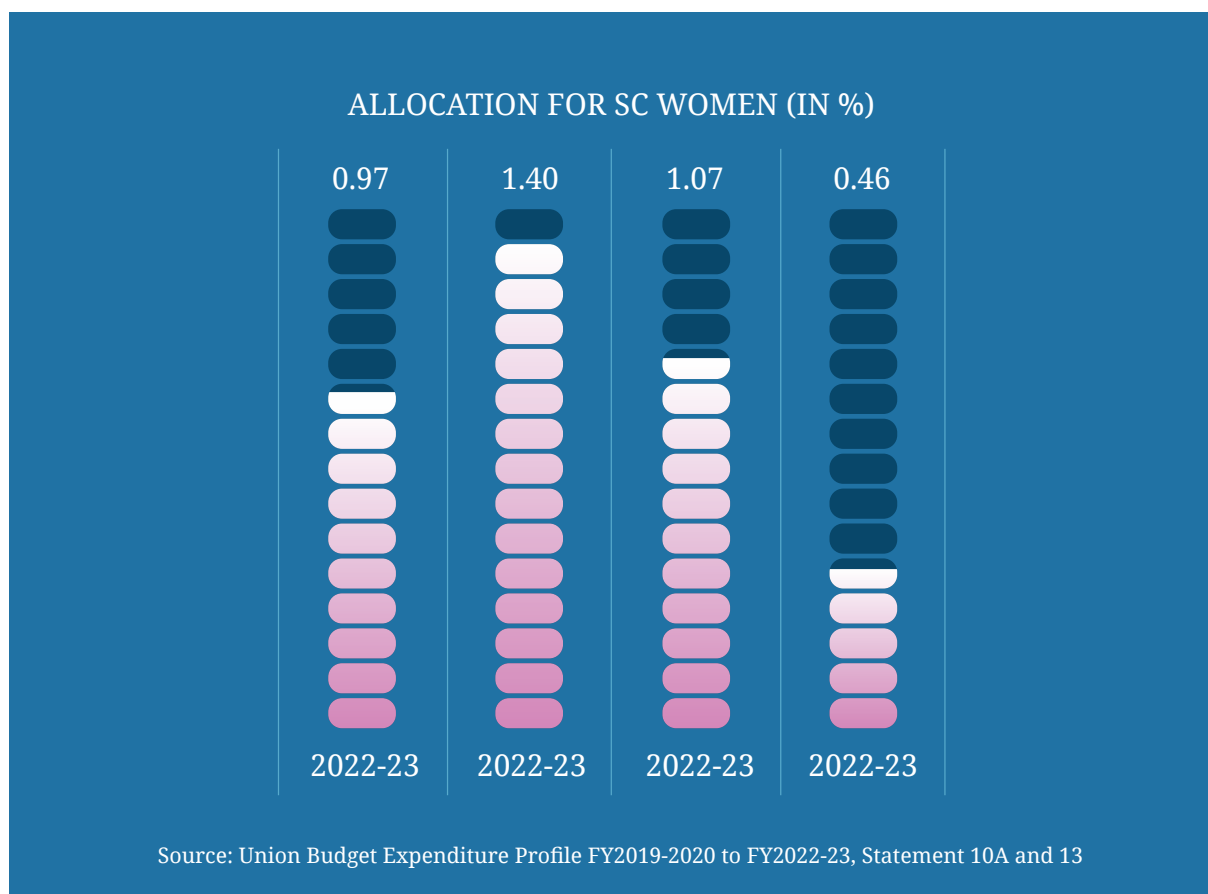
Women and girls from caste-affected communities are the worst affected since they are triply alienated owing to their caste, gender and economic status.

The central government every year publishes the gender budget statement (GBS) along with the regular budget. Since its initiation the allocations under Part B have been more than the allocations in Part A, it accounts for almost two-thirds of the total Gender Budget Statement. Over the last 4 years, the Gender Budget allocation has increased from Rs.136934Cr in FY 2019-20 to Rs.171006Cr in FY 2022-23 in absolute terms. However, the gender budget allocation has been less than 5 per cent of the total budget in the last 4 years. Even the post-pandemic allocation has not been sufficient to address the impact of Covid on women, the allocation has fallen from 4.7% in FY 2020-21 to 4.3% in FY 2022-23. This trend of allocation especially in the post-pandemic year is very concerning considering the vulnerabilities faced by the women during this period those related to increased job losses, especially in the informal

sector, increased dropout rates of the girls from schools and colleges, increased cases of domestic abuses, and disruption to the reproductive and maternal health services. This situation has been quite grave for women from marginalised communities, especially Dalits. Dalit women faced increased violence and discrimination from the dominant caste groups. A number of such cases have been reported in the media almost on a daily basis. The recent NCRB data released in 2022 for the crime-related statistics in 2021 states that the atrocities against Dalits have increased by 1.2% in 2021 as compared to 2020. Violence against Dalit women has also risen. Cases of rape against Dalit women account for 7.64% of the total cases reported. The pandemic has added another layer of oppression and discrimination for Dalit women further exacerbating inequalities.

The allocation for Dalit women across all these years has been abysmally low comparing it to the allocation for the women from other dominant groups. The GBS clearly mentions the allocation under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), which particularly caters to the development needs of marginalised groups like Dalits. The allocation under MSJE in the GBS for the Dalits goes towards the women from this community only. Unfortunately, even under MSJE maximum allocation for Dalit women is under Part B and there are hardly any schemes under Part A. In the last 3 financial years, there is not even a single scheme in the MSJE of which 100 per cent benefit goes to the Dalit women. In the FY 2019-20 there was only an allocation of Rs.92.76Cr for 'Girls Hostel for SCs', however, from the next financial year onwards there was no allocation for even this scheme under GBS Part A.

Furthermore, our analysis also looked into other departments and ministries under the GBS to understand the allocations for Dalit women by comparing them with the allocations under Statement 10A of the Union Budget particularly meant for Scheduled Caste. The analysis reveals that there are very few departments and ministries allocating schemes for Dalit women under Part A of the GBS like the Department of School Education and literacy, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Textiles, and Department of Rural Development to name a few. A maximum number of allocations is under Part B with around 21 ministries/departments allocating funds for Dalit women across the last 4 financial years. The figure below reflects the allocation for Dalit women in the last four financial years.





The allocation for Dalit women across all these years has been abysmally low comparing it to the allocation for the women from other dominant groups.

Financial Year	SC women Allocation (in Rs. Crs)
2022-23	11958.95
2021-22	15116.20
2020-21	9619.08
2019-20	4333.44

Source: Union Budget Expenditure Profile FY2019-2020 to FY2022-23, Statement 10A and 13

While comparing the allocation for Dalit women from both GBS (Statement 13) and Statement on allocation for Welfare of SC (Statement 10A) our analysis reveals that in the year 2019-20 the allocation towards Dalit women was Rs.4333.44 Cr which constitutes 0.46% respectively from the total eligible centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (CS). Similarly, across the years there has been a marginal

increase in allocation in absolute terms. In the current financial year, the allocation was Rs.11958.95Cr for SC women which constitutes only 0.97% of allocation for SC women. Comparing the last three financial years, the allocation for Dalit women has declined substantially from 1.07% in FY2020-21 to 0.97% in FY 2022-23. The table below reflects the allocation in Cr for Dalit women for the last 4 financial years.



Access to Health Care Services

As per the National Family Health Survey 4, maternal nutrition outcomes such as anaemia among women from marginalised communities, like SC and ST groups show much higher levels at 55.9% and 59.9%, respectively, compared to all groups at 53.1%.

Poor housing conditions, unsafe drinking water, lack of proper food, and lack of medical services, often increases the risk of numerous health issues for the marginalised communities. Caste is a major indicator of health outcomes and mandates the need for urgent intervention in this arena. As per the NFHS data the average age of death for Dalit women is 39.5 while for the women from the dominant caste community is 54.1¹. While much has been talked about the social discrimination faced by the Dalits, however not much has been discussed about the discrimination faced in accessing health services by the Dalits especially women. Caste determines an individual's access to crucial health and nutrition services, especially in terms of accessing government services. Several studies have indicated differential practises in accessing the public health system especially

in accessing maternal health care provisions. There are separate health centres for different social groups based on their caste location with Dalits having very poor facilities. Discrimination in access and utilization of health facilities at the health centre in both urban and rural locations is likely to be practised during diagnosis, dispensing of the medicine, laboratory tests; counselling, and even in paying the fees. Several such incidences of discrimination have been reported widely. As per the National Family Health Survey 4, maternal nutrition outcomes such as anaemia among women from marginalised communities, like SC and ST groups show much higher levels at 55.9% and 59.9%, respectively, compared to all groups at 53.1%. It is not surprising to know that the maternal health indicators are much poorer for SC women as compared to other women. As per the NFHS data, there has been a continuous lower utilisation

¹ <https://asiatimes.com/2018/06/indias-dalit-women-lack-access-to-healthcare-and-die-young/>

of health services such as antenatal care by Dalit women.

Covid 19 pandemic has reproduced similar discrimination related to caste in terms of inequalities in health and access to health care. The private health care system has mostly remained inaccessible to the poor especially those from the marginalised communities considering that it has not been cost-effective. The poor and vulnerable mostly

budgetary allocation for Dalit women should reflect these vulnerabilities and address the challenges faced by them pre and post-pandemic period.

The figure below reflects the allocation for Dalit women in the last four financial years for the programmes related to health care under statements 13 and 10A.

The allocations for Dalit women are

Financial Year	SC women Allocation for health-related schemes (in Rs. Crs)	Targeted Allocation (in Rs. Crs)	Non-Targeted Allocation (in Rs. Crs)	General Allocation (in Rs. Crs)
2022-23	565.75	0	565.75	0
2021-22	451.51	0	325.41	126.10
2020-21	172.60	0	0	172.60
2019-20	70.77	0	0	70.77

Source: Union Budget Expenditure Profile FY2019-2020 to FY2022-23, Statement 10A and 13

depended on the public health care system, however inadequate and overburdened facilities have added to their vulnerabilities without being able to access them. Additionally, it has impacted the lives of women especially those engaged in sanitation work and manual scavenging appallingly. It is usually the Dalits who are engaged in these occupations which are considered to be 'essential' services by the government. Throughout the pandemic period, they have been exposed to a greater risk of disease, working without adequate equipment or protective gear or even any kind of social security. A study carried out by Water Aid mentions that 23% of the sanitation workers interviewed in India had to work for long hours during the pandemic, an additional of 2-6hours per day. In hospitals, sanitation workers were asked to work up to 30 hours without payment². The

mainly seen in the Department of Health and Family Welfare. In the year 2019-20 the allocation for Dalit women for health was Rs.70.77Cr from the total eligible centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (CS). This year there were only 3 schemes addressing the health needs of the women from marginalised communities. In the current financial year, the allocation was Rs.565.75Cr for SC women, mainly for 2 schemes namely 'Infrastructure Maintenance' and 'Flexible Pool for RCH and Health System Strengthening, National Health Programme and National Urban Health Mission'. In all the other years as well there has been a very limited number of schemes addressing the health care needs of the Dalit women, in FY 2020-21 there were only 4 schemes while in FY 2021-22 there were only 5 schemes. In the last 4 financial years, there has been only a

² Water Aid: "Sanitation Workers- The forgotten frontline workers

during the Covid 19 pandemic"; https://www.wateraid.org/tz/sites/g/files/jkxooof361/files/2022-01/World%20Toilet%20Day%20Report_5.pdf

The poor and vulnerable mostly depended on the public health care system, however inadequate and overburdened facilities have added to their vulnerabilities without being able to access them.

marginal increase in allocation for health for Dalit women considering their poor health indicators. However, a deeper analysis of the schemes reveals that in most of the years the allocation has been towards the general and non-targeted schemes³. There has been no targeted allocation in all the financial years. For instance, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana saw an allocation of Rs.111.91Cr in the FY 2020-21 and Rs77.79Cr in the year 2021-22. However, the PMJAY scheme aims to provide healthcare to poor and lower-middle-income families through a health insurance scheme covering Rs.5lakh per family. This is a general scheme and there is no specific target for the SC community.

³ Non-Targeted and General schemes: Non-targeted schemes are schemes that are not designed to benefit the needs of the SC community and are mainly notional in nature and General schemes are the ones that benefit everybody and not necessarily SCs.





Similarly, other schemes like ‘Flexible Pool for Communicable Diseases’ saw an allocation of Rs35Cr in the FY 2020-21 and Rs.34.59Cr in the year 2021-22. We also saw many non-targeted allocations across the years. In the FY 2021-22 and 2022-23, there has been an allocation of Rs.119.50Cr and Rs.136.10 Cr respectively towards “Infrastructure Maintenance” which is a very notional allocation and does not directly benefit the community.

The disastrous Covid period has exposed the limitations of the public health care system, especially for those from marginalised communities. Despite that, we see very limited allocation towards health-related schemes for the Dalit community. As per the recent Oxfam report “The current expenditure on health, by the centre and the state governments combined, is only about 1.25 per cent of GDP which is the lowest among the BRICS countries. The low priority given to health expenditure is also reflected in the share in total expenditure of the government, which is only

4 per cent whereas the global average stands at 11 per cent⁴”. Even considering the vulnerabilities faced by the Dalit women engaged in sanitation work and manual scavenging, not a single direct benefiting scheme has been allocated in the post covid budget addressing these challenges. Ayushman Bharat: Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana initiated by the government targeted free testing and treatment under the scheme, however, its very limited allocation for Dalit women and the ‘dissatisfactory levels of awareness made further inconsequential by a distressingly poor Scheme coverage among the Scheduled Caste households. This increases the probability of out-of-pocket expenditures and/or a severely curtailed capacity to afford medical assistance in the pandemic⁵.

4 Inequality Report 2021: India’s Unequal Healthcare Story https://d1ns4ht6ytuzzo.cloudfront.net/oxfamdata/oxfamdatapublic/2021-07/India%20Inequality%20Report%202021_single%20lo.pdf?nTTJ4toC1_AjHL2eLoVFRJyAAAgTqHqG

5 Delayed and Denied: Injustice in COVID-19 Relief National Factsheet, NCDHR http://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/10-NCDHR-national-factsheet_weclaim_April-May-2020.pdf



Access to Education

The untouchability and purity-pollution discourse has overridden the concepts of equity in many educational institutions as many Dalit students face discrimination and abuse as students.

Quality education for the women from marginalised communities is one of the major vehicles to fill the development gap between these women and women from the dominant caste groups. For the marginalisation of Dalit women, lack of quality education and other support mechanisms is one of the major reasons. In terms of educational attainment Dalits, especially Dalit girls usually lag behind the other dominant caste particularly because of their poor socio-economic conditions and also because of the discrimination experienced by them in educational institutions. The cultural practices, and gender stereotypes also often add to this exclusion¹. Additionally, the control by the upper caste in the spaces of education can also be considered as one of the important factors for the under-development of the Dalit girls in the

educational arena. The untouchability and purity-pollution discourse has overridden the concepts of equity in many educational institutions as many Dalit students face discrimination and abuse as students. In many educational institutions Dalit students especially, girls are discriminated against by other caste groups, they are often forced to eat separately, denied college hostel rooms, segregated in the classrooms, and refused services in the college canteen, even to the extent that they also face physical violence in the hands of the upper caste students. Numerous such incidences of violation and discrimination often go unreported. Similarly, the spaces of higher education also continue to be dominated— both in terms of curriculum, faculty, and student profile by dominant castes. The caste operates in such a way that this hierarchy is maintained and preserved by the upper caste. Such vast exclusionary mechanisms

¹ UNICEF, Global Initiative on out-of-school children https://idsn.org/wp-content/uploads/user_folder/pdf/New_files/India/2014/Unicef_Report_on_Out_of_School_Children_in_South_Asia_-_2014.pdf

based on caste have hindered Dalits, especially girls from the community from attaining education. This is also one of the major reasons behind the high drop-out rates among Dalit students and also for the disproportionate suicide rates among Dalit students. Furthermore, increased emphasis has been laid on the continuous obstacles faced by the Dalit community despite the constitutional reservations made for them. These reservations have received substantial criticism on the grounds that it dilutes merit and reduces efficiency, however, still today the spaces of learning continue to vehemently oppose the entry of the excluded communities. Direct practices of discrimination continue to be an important characteristic of most educational institutions, but the attribute of 'indirect discrimination' operated by the state in the form of shrinking budgetary resources stands as a critical challenge for Dalit students. The

education. COVID-19 has increased the existing disparity in access to education and will do so further. It has exposed students from these communities to many more challenges like poor access to digital infrastructure, lack of financial resources and space, and lack of livelihood opportunities and social protection. The pandemic has pushed many students towards informal employment, increasing their vulnerability². The challenges are even more for the young girls from families engaged in sanitation work and manual scavenging. The plight of these students has not even been discussed anywhere.

The figure below reflects the allocation for Dalit women in the last four financial years for the programmes related to education including all the primary, secondary and higher education under Statement 13 and Statement 10(A).

Financial Year	SC women Allocation for education-related schemes (in Rs. Crs)	Targeted Allocation (in Rs. Crs)	Non-Targeted Allocation (in Rs. Crs)	General Allocation (in Rs. Crs)
2022-23	3056.62	1989.63	155.87	911.12
2021-22	2484.53	1576.34	69.14	839.05
2020-21	1997.86	1232.71	70.22	694.93
2019-20	1970.92	1211.74	89.39	669.79

Source: Union Budget Expenditure Profile FY2019-2020 to FY2022-23, Statement 10A and 13

shrinking fiscal space has led to the government spending less on the social sectors.

Additionally, Covid 19 has brought about a new set of challenges completely disrupting the education sector. There was quite a huge digital divide created among the poor SC students. Government entitlements become even more important for students from marginalised communities to realise their right to

Across these 4 years allocations were mainly seen under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of School Education and Literacy and Ministry of Women and Child Development. On average there have been around 30-35 schemes

² Confronting the Pandemic: Response and Recovery for Dalit and Adivasi students <http://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Confronting-the-Pandemic-Response-and-Recovery-for-Dalit-and-Adivasi-students-1.pdf>

with allocation both under Statement 13 and Statement 10 A across all 4 financial years. In the year 2019-20 the allocation for Dalit women for education was Rs.1970.92Cr from the total eligible centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (CS). In the financial year 2022-23, the allocation is Rs.3056.62Cr for Dalit women as compared to the FY 2021-22 with an allocation of Rs.2484.53Cr and Rs.1997.86Cr in the FY2020-21. In the last 4 financial years, there has been a marginal increase in allocation for education for Dalit women. Even the post-pandemic budget didn't reflect any such allocations addressing the specific needs of the young Dalit girls.

However, a deeper analysis of the schemes reveals that in most of the years there has been a huge allocation towards general and non-targeted schemes³. Our analysis reveals that across the years the allocation towards the general schemes has increased from Rs.669.79Cr in 2019-20 to Rs.911.12Cr in 2022-23 and there has also been a substantial increase in non-targeted allocation from Rs.89.39Cr in the FY 19-20 to Rs.155.87Cr in the FY 2022-23. For instance, the scheme "Support to Indian Institutes of Technology" was allocated Rs.41.09Cr in FY 2022-23, Rs.37.77Cr in FY 2021-22, Rs.37.80 in FY2020-21 and Rs.30.92 in FY 2019-20. Similar non-targeted allocation was seen in many other schemes like Grants to Central Universities (CUs), and University Grants Commission (UGC) among many others. UGC saw an increased allocation of Rs. 67.65Cr in FY 2022-23 as compared to Rs.24.36Cr in FY2020-21. None of these schemes has targeted the objective of the development of SC and ST students.

Some very important direct benefiting schemes for the SC students saw declined allocations. Hostels ensure increased access to education for students especially girls considering the socio-economic conditions of the families of these girls. In the FY 2019-20 Department of Social Justice and Empowerment allocated Rs.92.76 towards Girls Hostel for SCs, however in the later financial years this scheme didn't see any allocation. Similarly, the 'National Overseas Scholarship for SCs' also saw a decline in allocation over the years. In FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21, there was an allocation of Rs.6 Cr while from FY 2021-22 the scheme didn't see any allocation at all. Furthermore, the scheme "pre-matric scholarship of those children whose parents are engaged in unclean occupations and prone to health hazards" has now been revised under the new nomenclature of 'Pre-matric scholarship scheme for SC and Others' from 2021-22. Already for the above-mentioned scheme, there has been negligible allocation across the years, with Rs.1.50Cr in FY2019-20, and Rs.7.75Cr in FY2020-21, now with this merging with another scheme, makes it difficult to unpack the increases and decreases in the individual scheme considering the economic recovery being widely discussed in the current times as an aftermath of Covid 19.

Post Matric Scholarship (PMS) is one such direct benefiting scheme launched in 1944 and is one of the best centrally-sponsored schemes under the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCP). By enabling access to higher education, it has the potential to bridge socio-economic gaps faced by the communities it is aimed at. PMS is a massive scheme, covering about 62 lakh students across the country. They come from the poorest of poor households, with an annual income below Rs 2.50 lakhs. Data

³ Non-Targeted and General schemes: non-targeted schemes are schemes that are not designed to benefit the needs of the SC community and are mainly notional in nature and General schemes are the ones that benefit everybody and not necessarily SCs.

from the All-India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) shows the increase in the number of enrolled students in the last five years. In 2014-15, students belonging to SC had a share of 13.5%. By 2018-19, this had increased to 15% for SCs. In absolute terms, their numbers amounted to 55.67 lakh SCs. Across all the 4 years there has been a substantial increase in allocation from Rs.878Cr in FY2019-20 to Rs.896Cr in FY2020-21 to Rs.1024Cr in FY 2021-22 to Rs.1698Cr in the current financial year, however, the utilization under PMS scheme has exceeded allocation, implying that allocation falls short of demand. For instance, under the Scheduled Caste Component Plan in 2017- 18, utilization exceeded allocation by Rs. 66 crores (Rs. 3,414 crores versus Rs 3,348 crore). Similarly, in 2019- 20, utilization exceeded allocation by Rs. 21 crores. A utilization rate above 100% implies inadequate funding in meeting the growing needs of eligible students across the country. Yet, it is a major concern that utilization rate in PMS has fallen in 2020-21, the pandemic year. Under Post Matric Scholarship for SC, as on 21st February 2021, only Rs. 1,185 crore was utilized against the revised estimate for allocation of Rs. 3,815 crores—a utilization rate of just 31%. As much as Rs. 2,630 crores have been found unutilized. Additionally for the Post Matric Scholarship, the budget approved for the MSJE (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) by the MoF (Ministry of Finance) has been constantly lower than the ministry's demand, even when the utilisation of funds is more than 95 per cent⁴.

Even during the Covid period the allocation for Post Matric Scholarship remained lower than the amount demanded. Appallingly at a time when many SC/ST students are facing

challenges in accessing education decreased allocation towards direct benefitting schemes makes them even more vulnerable. The struggles with which Dalit and Adivasi women reach education, especially higher education are not unknown to us. Covid 19 has led to a new set of crises for women, especially in the context of closed university spaces, difficulty in accessing smartphones, computers, the internet, and health crisis, restricting them to domestic spaces making them even more vulnerable. Women's education automatically becomes a non-priority amidst such a crisis. In such a predicament government should have come up with new schemes for the students, especially from these marginalised communities to overcome barriers posed by the current pandemic.



⁴ Confronting the Pandemic: Response and Recovery for Dalit and Adivasi students <http://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Confronting-the-Pandemic-Response-and-Recovery-for-Dalit-and-Adivasi-students-1.pdf>



Livelihood and Labour Market

The condition of the sanitation workers and manual scavengers during this period was even worse. Working as frontline workers many of them lost their lives during the covid period. During the pandemic loss of livelihood was more prevalent among this group.

Exclusion and discrimination is visible not only in civic and political spheres but also in the economic arena, particularly in terms of occupation, labour employment and market arrangement. 'In the market economy framework, the occupational immobility would operate through restrictions in various markets such as land, labour, credit, other inputs, and services necessary for any economic activity. Labour being an integral part of the production process of any economic activity would obviously become a part of market discrimination,' write Newman and Thorat¹. Dalits are often restricted to particular kinds of occupations that are often considered 'polluted', with low wages and with very few options for mobility. Manual scavenging is one of the definitive examples that reflects their economic position in the labour market. Based on caste hierarchy, Dalits make up the

majority of manual scavengers in the country, in which Dalit women are seen in huge numbers. Around 1.2 million scavengers in the country are involved in Sanitation work.² The working conditions of these sanitary workers have remained unchanged for over a century. Between 2002 and 2003, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment admitted to the existence of 676,000 scavengers. The entrenched concept of pollution and discrimination connected with manual scavenging makes it difficult for them to find any alternative livelihood opportunities, pushing them into the age-old vicious circle of poverty and exclusion. It is sad to note that over the last few years the deaths of sewage workers have increased, with 634 deaths related to manual scavenging recorded in the last twenty-five years. Gender along with caste also plays a major factor in the labour market operations.

¹ Newman and Thorat, 'Caste and Economic Discrimination: Causes, Consequences and Remedies'.

² Indian Council of Medical Research and Environmental Information System, India

Most of the time Dalit women are employed in the informal sector and are exposed to job-related insecurities and discrimination. Dalit women lack access to income-earning assets and regular employment and depend mainly on wage labour. As per NSSO data in 2009–10, 38 per cent of Dalit women were self-employed as compared to 62 per cent of upper-caste women— this indicated that access to permanent sources of livelihood was not equal within the category of women.

Additionally, the pandemic has led to an economic crisis with long-term impacts on the economic activity, employment and livelihood of Dalits especially women. The lockdown during the pandemic had impacted everyone however for the Dalit the impact has been three-fold in terms of a huge number of job losses. Furthermore, lack of access to any means of production like land and trade makes them even more vulnerable. As per the recent Oxfam India Discrimination

areas due to the closure of non-agricultural activities³.

Considering that Dalit women are mostly engaged in the informal sectors like construction, brick making, domestic servants, and casual labourers, to name a few, some of the worst impacts during covid were in the form of a decrease in salaries, loss of jobs in mass level, longer working hours, discrimination and exclusion leading to economic distress. The condition of the sanitation workers and manual scavengers during this period was even worse. Working as frontline workers many of them lost their lives during the covid period. During the pandemic loss of livelihood was more prevalent among this group.

The figure below reflects the allocation for Dalit women in the last four financial years for the programmes related to livelihood and entrepreneurship under Statement 13 and Statement 10(A).


Financial Year	SC women Allocation for livelihood-related schemes (in Rs Crs)	Targeted Allocation (in Rs. Crs)	Non-Targeted Allocation (in Rs. Crs)	General Allocation (in Rs. Crs)
2022-23	2210.52	631.20	1276.61	302.71
2021-22	1682.78	600.00	772.73	310.05
2020-21	248.56	33.00	0.00	215.56
2019-20	238.79	33.00	0.00	205.79

Source: Union Budget Expenditure Profile FY2019-2020 to FY2022-23, Statement 10A and 13

Report 2022, the increase in unemployment rate rose from 11 percent to 22 percent for SC/ST and from 10 per cent to 20 per cent in the case of the general category as an impact of the pandemic. As per the report the biggest hit of the pandemic was on casual employment, which was relatively severe in urban

Across these 4 years, allocations were mainly seen under the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Department of Rural Development, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, and Ministry of

³ Oxfam, 2022 “India Discrimination Report 2022” https://d1ns4ht6ytuzzo.cloudfront.net/oxfamdata/oxfamdatapublic/2022-09/Low%20Res%20IDR%202022_0.pdf?kY0rnFo63vB4a5VOLwnbHJJl0zqaXam9

A woman wearing a vibrant, multi-colored sari (purple, blue, green, and pink) is captured in motion, sweeping a light-colored, possibly concrete or paved, surface. She is holding a long-handled broom with a dense, golden-brown head. The background is a blurred, light-colored ground, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall image conveys a sense of daily labor and maintenance.

The condition of the sanitation workers and manual scavengers during this period was even worse. Working as frontline workers many of them lost their lives during the covid period. During the pandemic loss of livelihood was more prevalent among this group.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. On average there have been around 7-10 schemes with allocation both under Statement 13 and Statement 10 A across all 4 financial years. In the year 2019-20 the allocation for Dalit women for livelihood and entrepreneurship was Rs.238.79Cr from the total eligible centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (CS). In the current financial year, the allocation was Rs.2210.52Cr for Dalit

women. In the last 4 financial years, there has been an increase in allocation for livelihood and entrepreneurship for SC women.

However, a deeper analysis of the schemes and programmes shows a totally different picture. As evident from the above table, there has been a huge allocation towards non-targeted and general schemes. Across the years' allocation towards the targeted schemes has been very minimal with Rs.33Cr in the FYs

2019-20 and 2020-21, followed by Rs. 600Cr in the FY 2021-22 and Rs.631.20Cr in the FY 2022-23. This increasing trend of non-targeted allocation is very disturbing as these schemes may or may not benefit the women on the ground.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) is a critical scheme with a huge allocation in the last 2 financial years. It's a rural employment guarantee programme providing a substantial source of livelihood option. Considering the wage component of the scheme to include it under Statement 10A is against the Niti Ayog guidelines of the SC Component Plan. However, from a gender perspective, the scheme is very critical considering that women have accounted for more than half of the work participation under the scheme. In the last 2 financial years, the scheme saw an allocation of Rs. 772.73Cr in 2021-22 and Rs. 1276.61 Cr in 2022-23. Appallingly, there are several studies highlighting the discrimination faced by Dalit women in accessing MGNREGA, particularly in obtaining job cards, opening bank accounts, payment of wages, and information about employment among many others. Several studies have indicated a decline in participation of Dalits especially women in the total employment generated under the scheme⁴.

The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment introduced the Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) in 2007 to aid the rehabilitation of 'former' manual scavengers transitioning to other occupations. Over the last 4 years, there has been a reducing trend of allocation towards this scheme for

Dalit women. In FY 2019-2020 and 2020-21, there was an allocation of Rs.33Cr which was reduced to Rs.30Cr in FY 2021-22 and in FY 2022-23 it has been further reduced to Rs21Cr. This comes as a rude shock considering the huge number of Dalit women involved in manual scavenging despite the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers Act, 2013, with a greater emphasis on rehabilitation. Additionally, women involved in manual scavenging, particularly in cleaning dry latrines are not even recognised as manual scavengers.

Another programme with recent allocation for Dalit women is Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana. Implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment from the year 2020-21 aims towards providing skill development training programmes for persons from marginalised communities like SCs, sanitation workers, manual scavengers, and waste pickers among many others. This is one of the very few targeted schemes for Dalit women helping for their economic upliftment. The allocation for this scheme towards Dalit women was Rs.30Cr in the FY 2021-22 while it was reduced to Rs.25.20Cr in the FY 2022-23.

The Covid crisis has exposed women especially Dalit women to greater economic crisis increasing the need to have greater social protection schemes in the form of health insurance, maternity benefits, old age and widow pension, and disability assistance to ensure faster recovery for the women from this community. Adequate child care facilities are also critical to ensure Dalit women's increasing participation in employment. Within statements 10A and 13 there is a need to have more such schemes exclusively for Dalit women keeping in account their vulnerabilities.

⁴ The Print; "India's rural employment plan has been giving fewer and fewer jobs to the most deprived" <https://theprint.in/india/governance/indias-rural-employment-plan-has-been-giving-fewer-fewer-jobs-to-the-most-deprived/195332/>



Policy Recommendations

Health

- ❁ Targeted health schemes to be implemented for Dalit women with free access to health check-ups and maternity support
- ❁ Public health centres should be established and fully functional catering specifically to the needs of the women from marginalised communities like Dalits and Adivasis.
- ❁ Health Insurance schemes for Dalit women.
- ❁ Earmarking budgetary schemes for the provision of essential lifesaving drugs.
- ❁ 50% of the total health schemes allocated for Dalits of the total CS and CSS schemes to be allocated for health schemes and programmes for Dalit women and develop specific reporting mechanisms to track the spending.
- ❁ Free access to Covid vaccine for women from marginalised communities.

Livelihood & labour market

- ❁ A minimum social protection plan that guarantees access to universal basic healthcare and basic income security to all Dalit women engaged in the informal sector of work especially those engaged in manual scavenging.
- ❁ Targeted schemes related to livelihood to be implemented for Dalit women and multi-pronged strategy to be implemented to ensure the rehabilitation of the women
- ❁ The allocation for the Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) should be increased and adequate schemes provided to ensure that this practice is totally eliminated. Adequate mechanisms should be in place to monitor and track the effective use of funds.
- ❁ Appropriate and innovative skill development training should be given that match the experiences and skills of Dalit women, particularly those engaged in manual scavenging.
- ❁ More schemes related to asset building and entrepreneurship for Dalit women.

Education

- ❁ Immediate release of pending Post Matric Scholarship funds to all students who haven't received the amount during the pandemic.
- ❁ A dashboard to monitor the disbursement of scholarships to all student beneficiaries that is updated in real-time. Plus, a monitoring cell is to be established within nodal ministries.
- ❁ Government helpline to ensure that students can get all the information they need regarding scholarships.
- ❁ Nodal ministries should institute an active complaint mechanism to address complaints and grievances of students, along with clear guidelines regarding scholarships and other challenges faced by Dalit girls.



Conclusion

Gender Responsive Budgeting as a mechanism is gaining impetus in India and has begun as a promising fiscal origination, however, it has not translated effectively into policies that impact women, especially Dalit women. GRB does not focus on women from marginalised communities and considers them as a homogenous category. As a situation described in the paper there is an urgent need to ensure an intersectional approach that recognises and addresses the exclusion and discrimination particularly faced by Dalit women. Gender Budget Statement (GBS) reflects a similar trend with no specific allocation for Dalit women across the Ministries/ Departments, making it caste blind. While on the other hand Statement on allocation for Welfare of SC (Statement 10A) is completely

gender blind with no specific allocation for Dalit women. The biggest solution to make the budgetary process inclusive is realising the vulnerabilities particularly faced by Dalit women and the need to have caste and gender perspectives in the budget planning process itself. There is a critical need to enable the community particularly Dalit women to be active partners and to proactively engage in the planning and implementation of public entitlements for effective implementation and better programmes for their welfare and development. There is a need to boost livelihood and developmental components for Dalit women, especially in the post covid period with new innovative schemes for skill enhancement, entrepreneurship development and rural development.

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About Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan

Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA) is a Unit of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights and is working towards securing and strengthening the economic rights of the Dalit and Adivasis Community and believes strongly in bolstering the agency of the community. The main vehicle is through access to public entitlements like Livelihood schemes, education, entrepreneurship and asset building through the constitutional provisions of budgetary allocations. DAAA believes strongly in the inclusion and promotion of marginalised communities in the economy of the country. DAAA makes strategic interventions in public policy, planning, budgeting, advocacy and research and implementation and monitoring of the SCP TSP sub plans. DAAA has worked extensively in the last 7 years to make scholarships a reality for students from the rural and semi urban areas and has managed to ensure scholarships reach atleast one lac students. DAAA encourages, supports and enables students to access the post matric scholarships and works on ensuring the effective implementation of this scheme.

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