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**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA: *THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT SPENDING*  
2003-04 TO 2014-15**

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**Abstract:** Women empowerment is an important key in achieving economic growth and development of any country. In past decades, women in India were considered as subject of welfare and category of disadvantaged groups such as destitute, disabled, aged etc. Nowadays, Category of women had been gained special importance since government have focused on “inclusive growth”, which means women must be included in the development process. This paper recognizes the importance of women empowerment in India by analyzing the impact of government expenditure on women and children development. The paper also presented various initiatives by government to improve the welfare of women more especially their empowerment. Budget analysis from 2003-04 to 2014-15 shows that government spending on women and children development is increasing every year, but the funds allocated did not matched with their needs. The results obtained are presented in table and charts. The policy implication of this paper is that, increase in public expenditure on women and children development could contribute a meaningful empowerment of women in India, if utilized in an efficient outcome oriented manner with more involvement of the stakeholders (women) in decision making and implementation.

**Keywords:** Budgetary allocation, government initiatives, India, women empowerment.

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**Introduction :** The term “empowerment of women” refers to the process of providing power to women to stand up against the control of the others and help them to leader a prosperous and a successful life. Economic development efforts to combat poverty can only succeed if women are part of the solution. When women are economically empowered, they raise healthier, better educated families, which have an impact on economic prosperous of their country. Understanding women’s economic contribution as well as the hurdles that prevent them from being successful is a crucial issue that each country must address.

Millennium Development Goal #3 gave emphasis on women empowerment due to its important to economic, social and political development of any country. When women are not reaching their potentials in the world of work, it affects not just their own lives but makes whole societies poorer. As well as being a right, women’s empowerment brings with it economic and social benefits for entire population.

India is amongst the fastest growing countries in the world today, with a GDP growth rate of more than 8 % during the XI plan period. This high level of growth can, however, be sustained only when all sections of the society, especially women become equal partners in the development process. It is well recognized that societies which discriminate by gender tend to experience less rapid economic growth and poverty reduction than societies which treat men and women more equally. Gender equality and empowerment would, thus, need to be a core development goal if the growth planned in the XII plan has to be achieved.

The importance of budgetary allocation on women and child development cannot be overemphasized in achieving women economic empowerment of any country. Similarly, in India government is allocating huge money on women and child development which include women empowerment. The question is whether the resources allocated are sufficient for their needs.

**Objectives of The Study :** India is the second largest populated country, and also has the higher number of people Below Poverty Line (BPL) in the world. The 2011 population census put the number of Indian women at about 586.5 million which is almost 48.48 percent of the total population (1,210.2 billion). India is spending huge money on women and child development which include empowering women in order to contribute meaningfully to the economy and to stand on their feet. What is doubtful however whether the resources allocated match with the needs of women. Therefore, the paper attempts to present the issues associated with women empowerment in India, by analyzing the impact of government spending on women and child development (women empowerment inclusive).

#### **2.0 Methodology**

The study is exploratory in nature, based on secondary data and information. The data is collected from secondary sources such as Indian budget website, Indian census website, Ministry of Women and Child Development publication, Journals, , UN News Centre website, among other agencies , and such information includes time series data on Central Government budgetary allocation to women and child development from 2003-04 to 2014-15. Results obtained were presented in table and chart.

## Results And Discussions

### 3.1. Concept of Women's Empowerment

The Inter-American Development Bank (2010) defined women's empowerment in terms of 'expanding the rights, resources, and capacity of women to make decisions and act independently in social, economic, and political spheres' (p. 3). The UN (2001) defined women's empowerment in terms of five components: 'women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally'.

### 3.2 Concept of Women's Economic Empowerment

According to International Development Research Centre, women's economic empowerment is: "The capacity for women to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognize the value of their contribution, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth"

Moreover, economic empowerment includes having the opportunity and ability to work, as well as fair pay. Yet it is also so much more than this.

### 3.3 Importance of Women Economic Empowerment

Women's economic empowerment – that is, their capacity to bring about economic change for themselves – is increasingly viewed as the most important contributing factor to achieving equality between women and men. But economically strengthening women – who are half the world's workforce – is not only a means by which to spur economic growth, but also a matter of advancing women's human rights. When governments, businesses and communities invest in women, and when they work to eliminate inequalities, developing countries are less likely to be plagued by poverty. Entire nations can also better their chance of becoming stronger players in the global market place.

### 3.4 Government Initiatives for Women Empowerment

With a view to empowering women socially, economically and educationally and to strengthen the processes that promote all round development of women through coordination and convergence of schemes/programmes of participating Ministries/Departments, the National Mission for

Empowerment of Women was launched by the Government on 8th March, 2012.

### 3.4.1 The National Policy for Empowerment of Women

The Government of India has declared 2001 as Women's Empowerment year. The national policy of empowerment of women has set certain clear-cut goals and objectives. The policy aims at upliftment, development and empowerment in socio-economic and politico-cultural aspects, by creating in them awareness on various issues in relation to their empowerment.

The National policy for empowerment of women envisaged introduction of a gender perspective in the budgeting process as an operational strategy. A few laws and legislations are enforced strictly for effective and proper implementation of this policy.

### 3.4.2 Schemes for Women and Child Development

The Ministry of women and child development, as the nodal agency for all matters pertaining to welfare, development and empowerment of women, has evolved schemes and programmes for their benefit. These schemes are spread across a broader spectrum such as women's need for shelter, security, safety, legal aid, justice, information, maternal health, food, nutrition etc., as well as their need for economic sustenance through skill development, education and access to credit and marketing.

The schemes of the Ministry like Swashakti, Swayamsidha, STEP and Swawlamban enable economic empowerment. Working Women Hostels and Creches provide support services. Swadhar and Short Stay Homes provide protection and rehabilitation to women in difficult circumstances. The Ministry also supports autonomous bodies like National Commission, Central Social Welfare Board and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh which work for the welfare and development of women.

### 3.5 Budgetary Allocation for Women and Child Development Education Sector

The budget is a financial plan, expressed in quantitative terms, and used in controlling government finances for a specified period of time, usually a year.

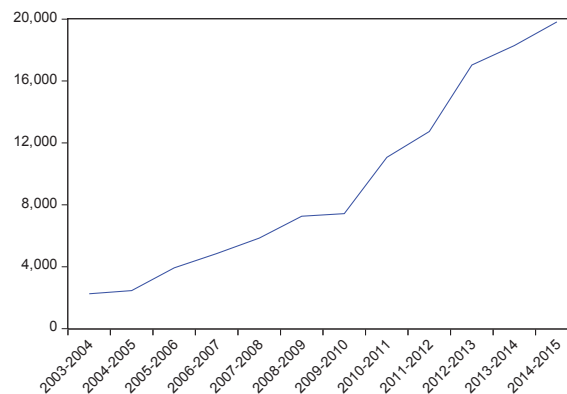
### 3.5.1 Importance of Budget for Women Empowerment

Budget impacts women's lives in several ways. It directly promotes women's development through allocation of budgetary funds for women's programmes and reduces opportunities for empowerment of women through budgetary cuts.

**Table 1: Budgetary Allocation to Women & Child Dev.**

Year	Budgetary Allocation (In crores of rupees)	Percentage Change
2003-2004	2253.64	2.00
2004-2005	2454.19	2.15
2005-2006	3931.11	3.48
2006-2007	4852.94	4.30
2007-2008	5853.00	5.18
2008-2009	7262.00	6.43
2009-2010	7428.00	6.58
2010-2011	11070.50	9.79
2011-2012	12733.00	11.27
2012-2013	17035.72	15.08
2013-2014	18285.65	16.19
2014-2015	19818.10	17.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>112977.85</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: indianbudget.nic  
Budgetary Allocation

**Fig. 1: Budgetary Allocation to Women & Child Dev.**

The India's budgetary allocations on Women and child development which include women empowerment continue increasing during the period under study. This shows the government commitment towards improving the welfare of Indian women (Table 1 and Fig. 1). The data shows that in the year 2003-04, the budgetary allocation is Rs.2253.64 crore account for 2.00% out of the total budgetary allocation (Rs.1, 12,977.85) during the period of the study which increase significantly to Rs.17035.72 crore account for 15.08% in the year 2012-13. Meanwhile in 2013-14 budget Rs.19818.10 crore was allocated to education which is 4.02% increase of 2012-13 allocation.

For all these there a need for government at all levels to show more concern on women and child development, more especially women empowerment which can lead the country to achieve more economic growth and development.

#### 4.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

This paper presented issues associated with women empowerment in India and also examined the impact of budgetary allocation on women and child

development from 2003-04 to 2014-15. The need to empower Indian women cannot be over-emphasized particularly in a democratic society which recognizes the need for individuals to develop their potentials and contribute to the overall development of the country. Government made legislations and policies which aimed to improve the wellbeing of women in order to contribute meaningfully to the development of the country. However, with all these legislations, policy commitments and planning, women remain a vulnerable group, and they haven't been fully empowered. Budgetary allocation on women and child development in general or gender budgeting in particular is a tool used by government for women's empowerments. No doubt, Government is allocating crores of rupees every year for this purpose; however, the resources allocated did not match with the needs of the Indian women. The policy implication of this paper is that, increase in public expenditure on women and children development could contribute a meaningful empowerment of women in India, if utilized in an efficient outcome oriented manner with

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more involvement of the stakeholders (women) in decision making and implementation

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