

## **NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON GENDER BUDGETING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

A three day National Workshop on Gender Budgeting in Higher Education Institutions was held at Inter University Centre for IPR Studies (IUCIPS) Conference Hall, CUSAT from 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025. The workshop was hosted by the Women's Studies Centre in association with the School of Management Studies, Cochin University of Science and Technology and was funded by 'Gender Grants 2024' of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, UK.

### **Detailed Report on the National Workshop on Gender Budgeting in Higher Education Institutions held on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

The workshop on gender budgeting in higher education institutions was organised as a pioneering effort to address the critical areas like i) equipping HEI administrators and policy makers with the knowledge and tools to understand gender budgeting principles, ii) training participants on how to link financial allocations with performance metrics that promote gender equality in education, iii) encouraging the adoption of gender-responsive budgeting practices, iv) discussing innovative approaches to foster gender equality and v) highlighting how gender budgeting supports the achievement of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by ensuring more equitable resource distribution, all with specific focus on implementation at Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT).

### **Inauguration**

The inaugural session was held at IUCIPS Conference Hall, CUSAT on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 9.45 AM. The welcome address was delivered by Dr.Zakkariah K.A, Director of the School of Management Studies. Dr.Sangeetha K. Prathap, Assistant Director of the Women's Studies Centre and Associate Professor at the School of Management Studies gave a detail description about the workshop. Dr. Asha Gopalakrishnan, Director of the Women's Studies Centre presided over the meeting and delivered the presidential address. She spoke about the need for inclusiveness and progressiveness approach in dealing with matters relating to gender equity. She suggested that CUSAT can show the way by adopting measures like increasing the participation of women in decision making bodies and gender sensitive/ gender neutral approach in documentation.



Photos of inaugural session



Photos of inaugural session

Prof. Mini Sukumar, Member, Kerala State Planning board, Thiruvananthapuram inaugurated the national workshop and delivered the inaugural address. She led the team which prepared the gender budget for the Kerala State. In her inaugural address, she gave an overview of the gender budgeting practice of gender-informed resource allocation adopted by the State. In higher education, the female participation is quite high and there is increase in demand for improved accessibility, gender equitable and accessible space for men, women and transgender persons. She concluded by mentioning that the workshop could help us understand the way forward to address issues relating to intersectionality, infrastructure, migration and the structural changes in the context of gender becoming a technical matter.

Dr. P.K. Baby, Syndicate Member, CUSAT and Prof.Dr. Sam Thomas, Director of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), CUSAT offered felicitations. Dr. Devi Soumyaja, Assistant Professor at the School of Management Studies and Advisory Committee member of the Women's Studies Centre proposed the vote of thanks.

## **Day 1, Forenoon Session 1 - 'Exploring Possibilities of Gender Budgeting in Higher Education Institutions'**

The forenoon session started by 11:15 AM. The workshop started with the session on 'Exploring Possibilities of Gender Budgeting in Higher Education Institutions' led by Dr.SangamithraDhar. Dr.SangamithraDhar is the Coordinator and Program Lead for Gender Responsive Budgeting at UN Women India. In the session, she explained how UN Women works directly with the governments in the area of gender budgeting. There are 18 schemes in the field of education and the budgeting process involves preparation of budget estimate, revised estimate and actual estimate. She stressed on the aspect of addressing the social, economic and political gaps in implementation. She also implied that the decision making bodies does not have women. In conclusion, she stated that rigorous work is needed to keep the momentum by focussing on schemes, gaps, documentation and judicious accounting.



Dr. Sangamithra Dhar on Exploring Possibilities of Gender Budgeting in HEIs

No. of Participants: 38

Venue: Inter University Centre for IPR Studies (IUCIPS) Conference Hall, CUSAT

## **Day 1, Forenoon Session 2 - ‘Gender inclusivity in policy making’**

The next session on ‘Gender inclusivity in policy making’ was handled by Prof. Mini Sukumar, Member, Kerala State Planning Board. She explained about the women’s role in Kerala model development demonstrating good performance as per the indices on sex, education, mortality, life expectancy etc.. She spoke about the various gender related issues including participation of women in public sphere, gender expressions in cultural space, social cases against women, the insufficiency of women participation in power centres, absence of decision making role for women within and outside family etc. She stressed on the need for looking through the ‘gender lens’ in all aspects of policy making, the interventions necessary for ensuring reservations for women, decentralisation, devolution of funds to local bodies and transferring of offices to local self-government institutions to ensure more participation of women. She explained the continued activities of State Planning Board in Kerala and the process of gender budgeting allocating 10% for all projects. She also elaborated on the gender audit exercise undertaken by University of Calicut during 2016 and the observations of the audit, which included gender profiling of teaching and non-teaching faculty, low participation in higher positions and committees, increasing number of women in student profile, gender aspects in curriculum and syllabus, formation of sexual harassment committee and anti-ragging committee, highlighting the best practices and identifying the gaps. She concluded with the remarks that the gender budgeting is not a piece meal conversation, but is a holistic one with the aim of understanding the hurdles in women participation in social, economic and political spheres and evolving ways and means to ensure a more equal society.



Prof. Mini Sukumar on 'Gender inclusivity in policy making'

No. of Participants: 38

Venue: Inter University Centre for IPR Studies (IUCIPS) Conference Hall, CUSAT

### **Day1, Afternoon Session, January 08, 2025 - 'Unpacking Gender in Policy Making'**

The afternoon session started by 2 PM. Smt. Sunitha Bhaskar, the Additional Director General of the Field Operations Division of the National Sample Survey Office in New Delhi addressed the meeting. In her address, she focussed on the importance of gender segregated data and gender budgeting in all sectors for planning, fund allocation and evaluation while policy making. The biased approaches deprive some sections of society from desired opportunities. There is need for initiating gender budgeting cells in all institutions to bring about change.



Smt. Sunitha Bhaskar addressing

The panel discussion on the theme ‘Unpacking Gender in Policy Making’ was chaired by Dr .Nirmala Padmanabhan, Dean (Economics), St. Theresa’s College, Ernakulam and joined by panellist Ms. Anjali Singh Chauhan, Chief Programme Officer, National Gender and Child Centre, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, Utharakhand. The discussion explored the nuances of integrating gender perspectives into policymaking processes, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in achieving inclusivity and equity, accountability, and collaboration. The ideas shared inspired the participants to approach gender budgeting not merely as a financial tool but as a means to create equitable policies that address diverse societal needs.



Unpacking Gender in Policy Making – Dr. Nirmala Padmanabhan, Ms. Anjali Singh Chauhan

No. of Participants: 20

Venue: Inter University Centre for IPR Studies (IUCIPS) Conference Hall, CUSAT

## Day 2, Forenoon Session 1 – January 09, 2025 - Gender Budgeting in Institutional Policies and Practices

The second day session started at 10 AM with the panel discussion on Gender Budgeting in Institutional Policies and Practices. The discussion focussed on how gender responsive budgeting influence institutional policies, bridge gender gaps, and promote equity in decision making. Dr. S Harikumar ,Prof. Emeritus, Department of Applied Economics, CUSAT chaired the session.



Photos of Gender Budgeting in Institutional Policies and Practice

Shri Sudheer M.S., Finance Officer, Kerala University of Health Science, Thrissur in his session explored the possibility of preparing a gender budget for CUSAT. He examined the annual budget of CUSAT for the year 2023-24 in detail, the four fold structure of the budget consisting of Non Plan, Plan, Funded Projects and Debt and Recoveries and the receipts and payments under the various heads. The possibility of segregating each item to include gender component was discussed in detail. He explained about the accounting principles, cost centres, steps for approval of the budget and means to translate the current budget to a gender budget. The proposal for gender budgeting included apportioning on the basis of actual staff strength, student strength, gender specific equipment in laboratories and workshops, contingencies and other expenses, for which additional columns on the basis of gender to be incorporated. He also highlighted the complexity of the process being an in-depth analysis. He also suggested that the policies required at central level includes publishing through web site, loading in the accounts module, submission of bills by cost centres, re-appropriation if necessary and each submission to include the gender classification, deciding on the ratios for apportioning etc.. The session indicated the way forward in the process of moving towards gender

budgeting in CUSAT with an emphasis on the requirement of strategic and policy decisions at the apex level.

No. of Participants: 44

Venue: Inter University Centre for IPR Studies (IUCIPS) Conference Hall, CUSAT

**Day 2, Forenoon Session 2 – January 09, 2025 - Gender Budgeting in Institutional Policies and Practices**

Next session was led by Dr. Vanishree Joseph, Deputy Director, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad. She explained how the gender responsive budget is responsive to the needs of the society and how it can be used as a financial public policy tool. She elaborated on the concepts of intersectionality within the gender spectrum and how class, caste, physical parameters etc define the vulnerability of the weaker sections. She spoke about the evolution and importance of policy in improving the condition of women over a period of time, the steps taken for employing more women in various domains, women ownership in housing, prevention of sexual harassment through enactment of law, moving towards gender parity in enrolment, retention, enrichment, capacity building etc. She discussed various schemes undertaken by Government including NRLM, MNREGA etc. The details of Statement 13 of the India Budget which includes the gender responsiveness were also discussed. She explained the gender aspects in the New Education Policy and the women centric initiatives and spending proportions provided in the UGC Budget. She provided an overview of the various initiatives and fund allocation by UGC for specific requirement of women including women's hostel development, STEM Scholarships for women, Indira Gandhi Scholarship for single girl child, Women's Studies Centre, leadership development programme, gender sensitisation programme, grievance mechanisms, digital compliance and monitoring system, anti-ragging and safety measures. On a critical note, she mentioned the absence of a separate budget for women in India, the lack of a legal back up and opined that most of the measures address the practical needs and not the strategic needs. The way forward, as suggested by her is to sensitise from the bottom, from the local self-government with initiatives from the Union and State Governments.



Session was led by Dr. Vanishree Joseph

No. of Participants: 44

Venue: Inter University Centre for IPR Studies (IUCIPS) Conference Hall, CUSAT

- **Day 2, Afternoon Session 1 – January 09, 2025 – Tools and Techniques for Gender Budgeting in HEIs**

The panel discussion conducted in the afternoon session was chaired by Dr. S Harikumar, Prof. Emeritus, Department of Applied Economics, CUSAT. The panelists for the sessions were Dr. Mridul Eapen, Hon. Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram and Dr. Nirmala Padmanabhan, Dean (Economics), St. Teresas College Ernakulam. Dr. Mridul Eapen discussed the methodology for gender budgeting as a five-step framework developed for gender budgeting, which includes i) situational analysis of critical domains, ii) extent to which policy addresses the differences, iii) ex-post analysis focusing on expenditure, iv) monitoring the spending of money vs. planning and v) assessment of impact of expenditure and to what extent the situation in step (i) has changed. She explained the gender budgeting practices adopted by the Union and Kerala State governments, which focus on provisions for expenditure with the vision for providing enabling environment, stopping violence against women and improved participation of women in all sectors. The way forward suggested by her includes monetary evaluation, systematic maintenance of data, assessing the differential impact on men and women, technical project of mainstreaming gender equality in policy, programmes and projects and the political project of challenging inequality and promoting women's rights.



Photos from the seminar

Dr.NirmalaPadmanabhan presented an analysis of the various tools and techniques adopted by University of Calicut, IIT Mumbai, Nirmala College, Muvattupuzha, Bharathiar University, Chennai and University of Oxford in gender audit. She explained the Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool used by the European Institute for gender equality, the indicators, the methodology for analysing, assessing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the gender equity plan. She gave an overview of the various policies relating to gender adopted by Government of India and Government of Kerala, the provisions in the New Education Policy 2020, National and State policies on skill development, National innovation and start up policy, Start up policy of Government of Kerala, the guidelines in NBA, NAAC, NIRF and KIRF. She suggested that rating agencies should include gender audit in the rating scale. The session ended by 3:30PM.

No. of Participants: 37

Venue: Inter University Centre for IPR Studies (IUCIPS) Conference Hall, CUSAT

### **Day 2, Afternoon Session 2 – January 09, 2025 – Group Work**

A case study on “Gender Budgeting at the University of Suma (a hypothetical University)” was led by Ms. Anjali Singh Chauhan. The problems of gender disparities and lack of gender-disaggregated data in budgeting were identified. The budget allocation under various heads were provided. The participants were divided into five groups and each group discussed the challenges as specified below:

- 1: Addressing Gender Imbalances in Research Funding
- 2: Gender- Sensitive allocations for students support services
- 3: Gender representation in Leadership and Governance
- 4: Gender – Inclusive campus infrastructure
- 5: Gender Disparities in career services and Post-Graduation outcomes
- 6: Gender Equality in faculty recruitment and retention

- 7: Gender and Pay Equity
- 8: Gender responsive teaching and learning resources
- 9: Monitoring and evaluating Gender Budgeting outcomes
- 10: Addressing gender imbalance in acquiring/ filing of patents
- 11: Addressing gender imbalances in start-up ecosystem on campus



Session led by Ms. Anjali Singh Chauhan

Each group presented their observations, inferences and solutions. The panelists provided their views and suggestions on each of the point under discussion, making the session participative. The session concluded by 6:00 PM

No. of Participants: 32

Venue: Inter University Centre for IPR Studies (IUCIPS) Conference Hall, CUSAT

### **Day 3, Forenoon Session – January 10, 2025 – Monitoring and Evaluation of Gender Budgeting Outcomes.**

The third day's session was a group activity where insights and concepts discussed in the first two days of the workshop were applied for monitoring and evaluation of the gender

budgeting outcomes. Dr.MridulEapen, Hon. Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Ms. Anjali Singh Chauhan, Chief Programme Officer at the National Gender and Child Centre, LalBahadurShastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, Uttarakhand, Dr. S Harikumar, Prof. Emeritus, Department of Applied Economics, CUSAT and Dr.NirmalaPadmanabhan, Dean ( Economics), St. Therasas college Ernakulam along with the participants which included members/ faculties from Finance department (CUSAT), School of Management studies (CUSAT)and Department of Legal Studies (CUSAT) and research scholars.



Group activity as part of seminar

The exercise included detailed micro level analysis of the annual budget data of CUSAT for the financial year 2023-24 discussing the possibility of incorporating gender sensitisation and participation under each accounting head in the budget. The participants and resource persons contributed with great interest in assessing the expenditure heads, its utilisation and the gender aspect. The discussions resulted in valuable suggestions from the group which included the practical challenges for conducting the gender budget, preparation of the required formats, framing guidelines for standardising, conducting situation analysis and identifying the gaps, the need for collaborative working, identification of funding areas, strategic decisions on audits and policies, etc. The necessity for synergy of the various departments like economics, management, budget studies and finance section in formulating the gender budget was emphasised.

## **Conclusion**

The three-day National Workshop was an exploratory experience enriched through active and involved participation of the resource persons and the participants. The workshop could ensure the co-operation of the resource persons and the participants, especially from the finance section and the various departments at the University for continuing the exercise to complete the process of gender budgeting in CUSAT. The workshop prepare a road map towards development and implementation of a gender sensitive budget in the University with the aim of leading to more equitable outcomes in higher education. The workshop was appreciated as a pioneering effort in the area of Gender Budgeting in Higher Education Institutions and would pave the way for future discussions for development of actionable policy recommendations to improve gender budgeting frameworks in HEIs. The workshop could contribute to the dialogue of ensuring greater participation of Higher Education Institutions in fostering gender equality through targeted programs and budgetary interventions.

No. of Participants: 14

Venue: Hall of Fame, School of Management Studies, CUSAT