



## For Favour of Publication

**Patna, 9 August.** To celebrate the 15 years of adoption of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in India and for strengthening GRB, International Growth Centre (IGC) India - in collaboration with Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI) and Gender Resource Centre, Women Development Corporation, Government of Bihar - organised a Conference on “Strengthening State Effectiveness for Gender Inclusive Development” at Hotel Maurya, Patna today.

Dr. Shaibal Gupta (Member Secretary, ADRI and IGC Bihar Lead) gave the welcome address. Setting the context for the conference, he highlighted the rationale for GRB in India. Dr Ashok K Lahiri (Member 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission and Former Chief Economic Adviser, Government of India) delivered the keynote address on 15 years of GRB in India. He broadly focussed on the why and what of GRB, achievements so far in India, and the way forward. In his view, the fact that GRB has sustained in India for 15 years is positive, but there is scope for improvement in fiscal marksmanship. There needs to be much more focus on the best Public Finance Management (PFM) practices spanning the entire budget cycle from preparation, allocation, prioritisation, execution, monitoring and evaluation.

Delivering the IGC India 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary distinguished lecture, Prof Bina Agarwal (University of Manchester) discussed the potential of group farming based on her fieldwork in Kerala and Telengana. Her research shows that group farming can benefit women farmers, but groups alone cannot overcome major gender disadvantages such as lack of land ownership. For this tenancy reform is needed, as is government land transfers to women and support to them for accessing their claims in family land.

Making closing remarks for the inaugural session Dr. Pronab Sen, Country Director, IGC India pointed out that demand related to GRB should ideally come from the state governments. In order to adopt best practices in GRB proper institutions are needed at the state level.

Prof. Gita Sen (Public Health Foundation of India) delivered the distinguished lecture titled “Pathways to gender equality in India: a long and winding road?” She highlighted the need to sensitise programme managers and those running policies to the realities of the lives of women. In her view, it is the society that will mobilise society; the role of the government is to remove constraints and provide the wherewithal for social change to take place. Yamini Mishra (Amnesty International) and Shrijna Dixon (Independent Researcher) presented their ongoing IGC research on GRB in Bihar, which involves looking at the key GRB processes and mechanisms institutionalised by Bihar, and the extent to which Bihar’s current GRB architecture can be located within the state’s overall planning and budgeting cycle. Based on this analysis, the researchers propose an illustrative GRB state architecture and a roadmap for the state to effectively pursue and achieve its GRB policy commitments.

The second half comprised two panel discussions, ‘Equality and Empowerment’ and ‘Gender Responsive Budgeting: Evidence and Good Practices’. Key government participants included N Vijaya Lakshmi (Managing Director, Women Development Corporation), Nilotpal Goswami (Principal Accountant General), and Dipak Kumar Singh (Principal Secretary, Labour Resource Development).

The event concluded with an IGC Special Lecture by Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay (KIT Royal Tropical Institute Netherlands) on ‘Gender mainstreaming futures: What two decades of experience is telling us’; chaired by Balamurugan D (Chief Executive Officer, JEEViKA).

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