

Business Standard

Union Budget 2023: Allocations for women's issues higher than last year

Housing and rural employment schemes are also part of gender budget, which was first introduced in 2005-06

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Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will be presenting her fifth Budget

per cent allocated in the previous year as per budget estimates.

Nirmala Sitharaman is India's first full-time woman finance minister. She has been in office since fiscal year 2020 (FY20). The gender budget has been an average of 4.6 per cent of the total expenditure as per budget estimates during her tenure. The average during the previous 15 years was 4.9 per cent.

Some years have seen higher gender-related spends than was budgeted. For example, it was six per cent in FY21 according to revised estimates, compared to budget estimates of 4.7 per cent.

A larger share of government spending will go towards dealing with issues affecting women than in the previous budget.

A total of five per cent of the total expenditure is allocated towards issues affecting women, shows figures from the gender budget document. This is higher than the 4.3

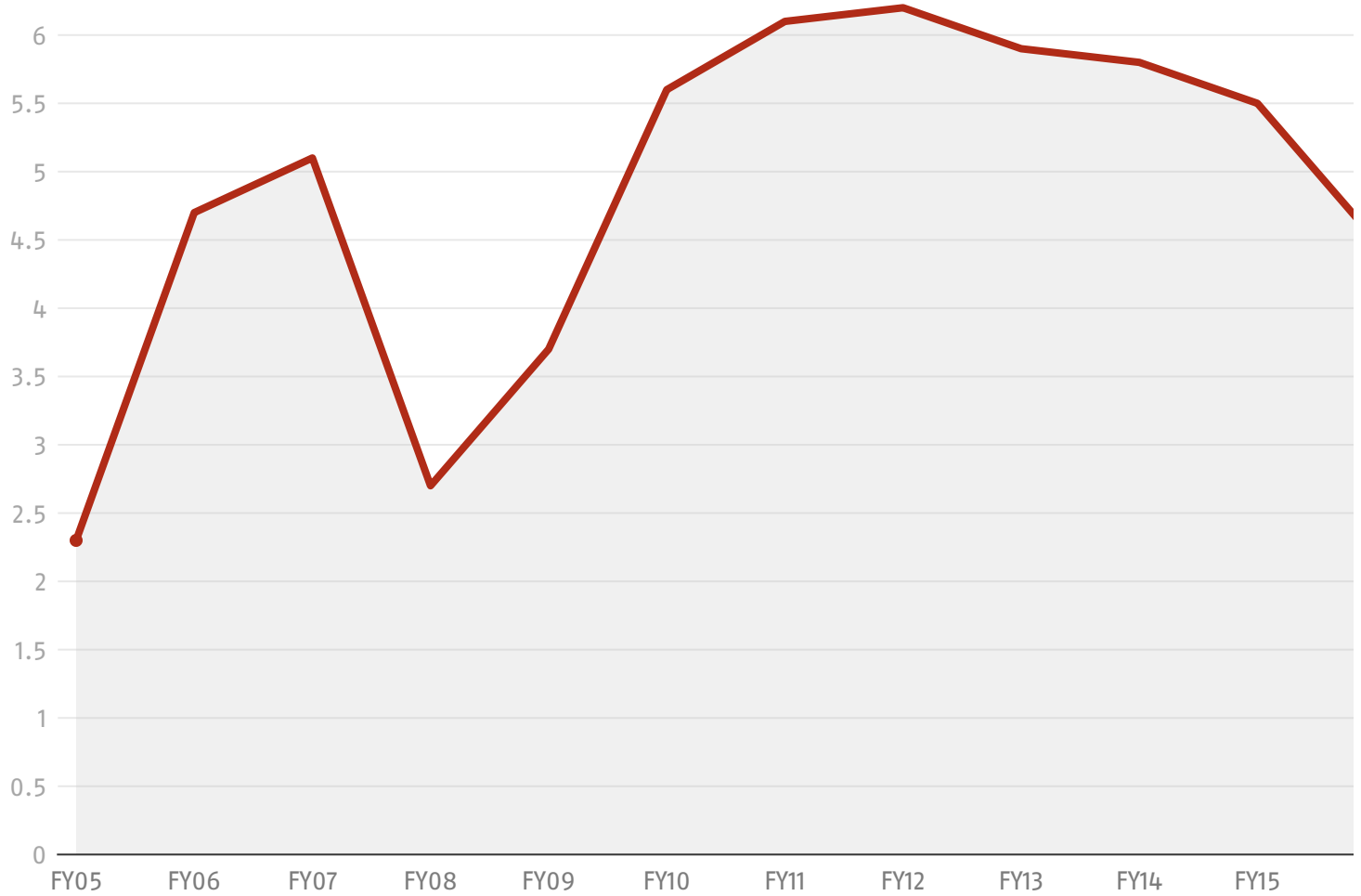
The gender budget was first introduced in 2005-06. It recognises the fact that there are several issues including education, employment and safety in which women are lagging because of societal pressures and other issues. The gender budget attempts to keep an account of resource allocation in a way that would help address such issues. It consists of two parts. The first deals with schemes that are entirely for women. The remainder are schemes in which at least 30 per cent of the provisions are for women.

“The rationale of Gender Budgeting arises from the recognition of the fact that the national budget impacts various sections of the society differently, through the pattern of resource allocation and priority accorded to competing sectors... The purpose of gender budgeting is to monitor expenditure and public service delivery from a gender perspective, as a means of mainstreaming women's concerns in all activities and improving their access to public resources,” said a previous budget document.

The scheme with the largest allocation in the gender budget is the Rural Housing (Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana) which has an allocation of Rs 54,487 crore. The government has also included the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme within the gender budget, it is worth Rs 25,000 crore. Other schemes included under the gender budget are the Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan, the Flexible Pool for RCH and Health System Strengthening as well as the National Health Programme and National Urban Health Mission, the Samagra Shiksha scheme, the Samarthya scheme for women empowerment and the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin). The five schemes are worth nearly Rs 45,000 crore.

Steady allocations

Shows allocations to schemes which may help women as a share of the overall budget



Based on budget estimates

Source: Budget documents, Business Standard calculations