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Promise vs Progress: Where Does India's Gender Budget 2025-26 Stand?

Paving the Path for Women-Led Development

In the run-up to India's ambitious Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, gender budgeting emerges as both a reflection and a catalyst of our national development priorities. Since its inception in 2005-06, India's Gender Budget has grown from a token gesture to a substantial policy instrument aimed at empowering women across sectors.

The 2025-26 Union Budget aligns with India's global commitments towards gender equality and women's empowerment, echoing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) and G20 priorities. But does allocation translate into impact? Can promises evolve into tangible progress? This article explores the contours of India's Gender Budget 2025-26, critically assessing its focus, achievements, and the road ahead.

The Union Budget 2025-26 reiterates India's unwavering commitment to **women-led development**, embedding gender equality at the core of economic strategy. With an allocation of **₹2.71 lakh crore**, the Gender Budget marks a **4.4% increase** over last year's revised estimate, constituting **5.2% of the total budget and 0.64% of GDP**.

Spanning education, health, entrepreneurship, safety, and governance, this budget envisions a society where women are not just beneficiaries but active agents of change. It underscores the Government of India's resolve to create an inclusive economy where every woman participates equally in the country's growth trajectory.

Section A: The Allocation Landscape

The Gender Budget is methodically categorized:

- **Part A:** Schemes exclusively benefitting women (100% allocation)
- **Part B:** Schemes with 30-99% allocation towards women

Component	2024-25 (RE)	2025-26 (BE)	% Change
Part A	₹1,08,370 crore	₹1,18,157 crore	9.0%
Part B	₹1,51,303 crore	₹1,52,679 crore	0.9%
Total	₹2,59,673 crore	₹2,70,836 crore	4.4%

Key Ministries Driving the Gender Agenda:

- Women and Child Development
- Rural Development
- Health and Family Welfare
- Education
- Skill Development & Entrepreneurship

Collectively, these ministries shoulder the responsibility of shaping India's gender-responsive policies.

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