

**The Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre (BARC),  
Jaipur, Rajasthan**

## **Annual Report**

*September 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009*

**Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre**

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## Introduction

The Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre (BARC) as an organisation of “budget analysis” and “budget advocacy” has been trying to create awareness among people in Rajasthan, advocating that the public resources must not be unevenly distributed; rather the public budget should be seen as an instrument of redistribution of resources so that the share of the poor is ensured through public spending. So, people need to understand the state budget for the sake of the development of the masses, and thereby, for strengthening our democracy. If we do not know how much money is allocated for dalits, tribals, poor widows, other poor women, poor children, disabled people, workers of the unorganised-cum-informal sector, and small and marginal farmers, we will not be able to fight against the many evils of our society and improve the quality of life of the poor, and in doing so, the life of all citizens of Rajasthan. We need to know which physical infrastructure is getting priority – national highways or rural-urban link roads; electricity supply in the cities or in the villages; infrastructure for special economic zones or for social services like education and health, etc.

From 2002, BARC has been analyzing the Rajasthan State Budgets in order to share the findings with the people and organizations, to promote inclusive democracy and governance. Here we present the report and results of our work carried out from September 2008 to August 2009. In the beginning of the year, we prepared an Annual Action Plan and the report presented here is based on the activities carried out according to the annual plan of BARC.

## Our Day-to-Day Budget Work

Budget analysis is a never-ending, continuous process. Both analysis and advocacy require constant work almost on a daily basis. The state government presents its budget generally in the months of March every year. The budget data need to be updated for presentation, publication and sharing with others. It involves the task of overall state budget analysis, department-wise analysis, time-series or trend analysis, analysis of differences between allocations and outlays and then between outlays and outcome (i.e. whether or not desired number of people adequately benefited) etc.

The state of Rajasthan saw a regime change during the year being reported here, and the earlier BJP government was voted out of power and replaced by the Congress led government. The state government, after being elected to power, presented an interim budget for 4 months (vote for account) in February 2009. The state government later presented a modified budget in July 2009 for the financial year 2009-10. BARC responded to the state budget on both the occasions. We analyzed the over-all state budget data as well as department-wise budgets and the budgets for various social groups. During the reporting period, BARC has given priority to:

- overall state budget,
- budgets for Dalits and Tribals,
- agriculture budget,
- animal husbandry budget,
- irrigation budget,

- forest budget
- health budget,
- education budget,
- social security budget
- gender budget
- budget for unorganized labour
- budget for children

The analysis of the state budget was made available to many MLAs of the state who, in turn, used our analysis in their speeches during the discussion on the budget in the state Assembly. The analysis was also published in our newsletter titled “Budget Samachar” (Budget News) which is sent across to many NGOs, peoples organizations, government officers and elected representatives in the state. Besides, findings of the analysis were provided to local newspapers and media houses. Many newspapers carried articles quoting our data and our team members also published an article in a Hindi newspaper.

## Capacity Building of MLAs

*According to the action plan, **two** budget orientation meetings for the MLAs were proposed out of which **one** was conducted*

During the reporting period, we organised a budget orientation meeting for the new MLAs of Rajasthan on **24 February 2009**. The focus of the meeting was on “The Interface with New MLAs and Appraisal of Rajasthan Budget 2008-09.” For the financial year of 2009-10, the government put forward the vote on account. It was not a full budget. **13 legislators**, including the ex-home minister of the Rajasthan, participated in the meeting. The meeting was organized at Pant Krishi Bhawan, Jaipur. In the meeting, BARC presented a sound analysis of the 2008-09 Rajasthan Budget, showing the evidence of both the shortfall and strength of the said budget and the need for redressing the gaps to raise the level of standard of living of the poor of the state.

## Capacity Building of Members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) / Local Bodies

*According to the action plan, **two** experimental meetings and **one** budget workshop for the PRI members were proposed to be conducted*

We believe that PRI representatives need to be aware of the budget making process, budgetary provisions for different schemes and programs, and the overall performance of the government in public spending for the poor. With this objective, every year we conduct budget training programs for the PRI members. At the same time, we feel that we, as well as the elected representatives, need to understand the financial provisions related to PRIs, including the fund-inflow and -outflow, for an improved tracking of funds from the top to the grassroot level. With this objective, every year we conduct programs with them in order that they may learn the budget-making process and about other financial aspects of the lower layers of our democratic institutions. Since not much work has been done on Village, Block and District level budgets, we are learning along with the elected representative trainees, and as such, it is a kind of experimental work.

### **Experimental meeting**

During the reporting period, many Sarpanches from different Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) visited our office to learn about the budget of the state, and about various schemes in Rajasthan. They also shared with us their experience of Panchayat Budgets and of various programmes run in their Gram Panchayats.

### **One special workshop**

In the previous year, BARC had conducted a training programme for elected representatives in Jaipur District. In this year, we conducted a special workshop with 11 “budget guests” from China and Indonesia, in the area where the training had been done. We, with the guests, held an orientation meeting at **Rogari Village in Phulera Block** of Jaipur District for the elected representatives of the Gram Panchayats in the Block. This workshop was organized on **8 August 2009**. The discussion was held on fiscal status of Gram Panchayats, different rural development schemes, and NREGA implementation. **16 Sarpanches, 18 Village Secretaries from 28 Gram Panchayats, 26 Ward Members, 5 District Council Members and 1 MLA** attended the meeting.

## **Issue-Based Meetings**

*According to the action plan, **four issue-based meetings were proposed to be conducted***

During the reporting period, we organized **4 issue-based meetings**. Issue based meetings focus on any one issue of public concern. The participants are selected from those groups and individuals who are working on the concerned issue, including some media people. Through issue-based meetings, we try to give in-depth knowledge and information to the participants about the selected topics or issues so that they can carry on their advocacy work with ample information and data. Let us now describe the issue-based meetings we organized in the reporting period.

**+ Agriculture and Animal husbandry** – This meeting was conducted by us on **29 September 2008** in Kuchaman, District Nagour in collaboration with Gramin Swabhiman Sansthan. The meeting was attended by **60 representatives** from different organizations and farmers’ groups from 3 districts namely Nagour, Sikar and Churu. We shared many interesting findings of our analysis with the farmer groups and farmer’s union leaders. For example, we conveyed to the participants that seeds, fertilizers and new technology are not provided by the agriculture supervisors at the time of sowing, as they should be. Due to delay in the supply of agriculture inputs, the budget for agriculture is not properly utilized and the number of beneficiaries reduces. This subsequently trims down the agriculture budget. We also asked the participants to make people aware about the anomalies found in the implementation of the agriculture crop insurance schemes in different districts. We showed them the anomalies we had uncovered, and supported our findings with proper data and analysis.

**+ “Gender budget” – another issue-based meeting was organized on “Gender Budget”**. This meeting was organized at Khedi Malikpur in Jaipur district on **19 February 2009** in collaboration with the Gram Chetana Kendra, a local NGO. **31 women** from different organisations participated in the meeting. We presented our analysis and showed the participants that budgets for various schemes are not being fully utilized. In

the state, a lot of schemes are not women-friendly. After this recent state election, only 14 per cent of the elected representations are women MLAs in the Assembly of Rajasthan. They are not able to put pressure on the Government regarding the women's issue. Women political leaders are generally unaware about the dimensions of gender budgeting.

+ **“Gender budget”** – A second issue-based meeting on “Gender Budget” was organized in Alwar on **15 May 2009** in collaboration with the Matsh Mewat Shiksha and Vikash Sansthan. **30 women** from different organizations participated in the meeting. In front of them, we presented our analysis and we showed that the budgeted amounts for women are not fully utilized in women-specific schemes as well as in many other schemes. In the state, a lot of schemes are not “women friendly”. In Alwar district, particularly in the Mewat area, the literacy rate is very low as compare to the District literacy percentages. The low sex-ratio and the poor health conditions of women were also discussed in the meeting.

+ **“ Unorganised labour and their beneficiary schemes”** -- This issue-based meeting was conducted on **30 May 2009** at the State Resource Centre, Jaipur. The meeting was attended by **35 representatives** from different organizations and labour organisations from 4 districts, namely Jaipur, Dausa, Tonk and Ajmer. We shared many interesting findings of our analysis with the labour groups and labour union leaders. In this issue-base meeting, we also discussed workers' rights, labour laws and different welfare schemes run by the labour department. Schemes like “Jan Shribima Yojana”, “Vishvakarma Pension Yojana” and “National Child Labour Project” were also discussed.

## **Regional Budget Orientation and Awareness Events**

*According to the action plan, three Regional Budget Orientation and Awareness events were proposed to be conducted.*

During the reporting period, BARC organized **3 regional budget awareness meetings** in 3 different parts of the state. The focus in these regional meetings is on overall budget analysis work as well as major departments related to the social sector i.e. health, education, social welfare (including Dalits and Tribals) and some departments related to the economic sector such as agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry etc. The difference between an issue-based meeting and a regional meeting is that a regional meeting covers discussion of the budgets of several relevant departments whereas an issue-based meeting sheds light only on one particular topic or issue. There is also an emphasis in the regional meetings on helping the social development workers present understand how they can use the budget data, and budget awareness, in their work.

- **21-22 November 2008** – This workshop was organized by BARC at State Resource Center in **Jaipur District** and **36 participants** from different organizations, newspaper houses (not only to cover, but also to learn), farmer unions etc. of the districts of Jaipur, Tonk and Dausa attended the meeting. This meeting was attended by those from a very diverse fields of work. The participants asked us various questions relating to the budgets and schemes of the government during the meeting and we tried to satisfy them with proper answers.

- **16-17 January 2009** -- This regional budget orientation program was conducted by BARC in **Sawai Madhopur District** in collaboration with Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan (An organization of Single, Separated and Widow women). **39 participants** attended the program from different NGOs and people's organisations located in the districts of Sawai Madhopur, Tonk, Bundi, Karoli and Kota. Overall state budgets, budgets of different line departments, different welfare schemes for the poor, and gender budget issues etc. have been widely discussed in the meeting. The Association of Strong Women Alone (Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan) has asked BARC about budgets of widow pensions and other schemes for single women, over the last 4 years.

- **20-21 August 2009**: Changing from the earlier practice of taking up state's overall budget and various departmental budgets in the regional workshops, in this last workshop we focused on **panchayat budget planning**. Considering that the elections for PRIs are going to be held by end of this year, it was an appropriate issue to take up with the NGOs which work with PRIs in the state, so that "budget" can become an issue in the panchayat elections. Thus BARC organized a workshop on "Panchayat Budget and Planning" with collaboration with the Local Self Governance Unit of Astha Sansthan, Udaipur, and the program was held at the State Resource Center in **Jaipur**. In this workshop, about 47 representatives from different Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) and NGOs participated. Discussions were around various aspects of local government budgeting and planning, the fund-flow from state to Gram Panchayats and ways to track the development expenditures, were discussed. Two resource persons from the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), New Delhi also participated in the workshop and provided support and resources on these issues.

## Micro Studies

*According to the action plan **two** micro-studies were proposed to be conducted*

Micro studies are conducted to make an assessment of the impact of the government policies and expenditures on the poor and marginalized people. These studies also establish linkages between policy, budget and the grassroot realities. **Two** micro studies are currently being carried out.

- A micro study is being conducted on "**the economic reality and effectiveness of agriculture loans in different Districts.**" The data collection for the study is completed. Currently, we are engaged in report writing. The data for the study has been collected from 11 districts of Rajasthan in order **to examine how efficiently and effectively the agriculture loan scheme of the government, for which public funds are made available, is being utilized by the farmers for agriculture purposes in Rajasthan.** The government gives significant subsidies, which are part of these loans. The report of this study is being written.

- Another micro study is being conducted on the state of the "**Integrated Child Development Scheme**" (ICDS) in the state. The data collection for the study has been completed. Currently, we are engaged in report writing. Data for the study has been collected from four districts of Rajasthan (including both the best and the worst performing districts according to a government report).

## Publications

### **Newsletter –**

*According to the action plan, **four** issues of newsletter were proposed to be published*

Our newsletter, titled **Budget Samachar (Budget News)**, is a quarterly publication in Hindi. During the reporting period, **4 issues** of the newsletter have been brought out, containing detailed budgetary information, data, and findings of our analysis, so that common people, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) representatives, and key persons can be well-equipped with budget related knowledge and find some concrete evidence in support of their concerns. It also updates people on government actions and schemes.

Usually, each issue of our newsletter is of 4 pages. 1,000 copies of each issue are published and they are distributed to the different NGOs, voluntary organizations, activists, the legislators, government departments as well as to directorates, bureaucrats, policy makers, research organizations, academicians, journalists, district level key persons, and freelance social workers.

### **Booklets-**

*According to the action plan, **three** booklets were proposed*

We could not publish any of the 3 proposed booklets during the year reported. However, upon the request from collaborating Dalit organizations, we published one unplanned booklet, the end of June – the Hindi translation of the booklet entitled “**Welfare Scheme for Dalits**” which was published in English last year by BARC. The booklet lists all the schemes meant for Dalits in the state. It was published in the collaboration with the Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (Dalit Movement for Economic Rights), a programme of NCDHR (National Centre for Dalit Human Rights).

We have requested permission to carry over the unspent money meant for publication of booklets in 2008-09, or to use money from the “exchange rate gain”, and use that money in the financial year 2009-10 to publish 3 booklets. In addition, we will publish the planned number of booklets for 2009-2010.

## Press Conferences

*According to the action plan, **two** press conferences were to be organized*

In the reporting period, we conducted **one** press conference. This press conference was organized, jointly with the Gramin Swabhiman Sansthan on the issues of the **Agriculture Budget and Crop Insurance**, at the Kuchaman Press Club in Nagour District on **29 September, 2008**. We highlighted several things in relation to the agriculture budget, with supporting data, and our views were well highlighted in the print media.

In addition to the above, journalists and reporters have been continuously in touch with us and taken lots of information and data from us and published reports in their newspapers. Data/Information relating to Rajasthan Government's policies and budget have also been supplied to various organizations, legislators, media and Individuals. We are glad that many organisations, legislators and media are taking interests in budget information and also that they are disseminating our findings and reports in their own ways. This is helping in creating awareness about public expenditures for the poor and this is really desirable for the strengthening of our democracy. We expect that such interests of the civil society and others will be continuing in the future.

## **Advisory Committee Meeting**

*According to the action plan, two advisory committee meetings were to be organized*

Historically, the Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre was formed out of a workshop held in 2001, and conducted by M.D. Mistry and his budget team from Pathey, the Gujarat budget analysis group. The Workshop was held with over 50 NGO representatives from Rajasthan, and at the end of the Workshop, it was decided to form a budget analysis centre. It was also decided that those NGOs present would form an Advisory Committee, and that the budget analysis centre would be a resource centre serving the need for information for all related NGOs in the state.

BARC was established in 2002, and for the first few years, several members of the Advisory Committee met 2 times a year to hear about the progress of the Centre, and to take responsibilities for organizing Regional Budget Awareness Trainings. But slowly, some people moved on to other things, one professor if IDS moved away, and there have been no meetings, as such, of the Advisory Committee for 2-3 years now.

In fact, what is happening at the Regional Awareness Workshops, and the Issue-Based Meetings, is that those present give us advice and make requests for work and information which would help them in their work. So, in fact, there are 7 times a year (4 Issue-based, 3 Regional Workshops) when we get focused "advice".

Also, some NGO leaders keep in close touch with the Centre, some new ones come in and are active for some time. There are several "advisors" to the Centre, who are consulted as and when needed. The Newsletter goes out to all the old contacts, and lots of new ones too. It has been decided at the end of this year, that the earlier need for an "Advisory Committee" is now no longer needed, and that BARC will consult those around the state whenever they need to, according to the expertise of the persons contacted.

## **BARC Staff's Representation in the Media and in Trainings/ Seminars/Workshops Conducted by Other Organizations**

During the reporting period, the BARC staff members were invited as resource persons by several organizations. BARC staff participated in **11 trainings / workshops /**

**seminars / media events** as resource persons to talk about various aspects of the budget and budget analysis. The topics/themes included "National Rural Employment Guarantee Act", "National Convention on Budget", "Agricultural Development and Agriculture Budget", "National Rural Health Mission", Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana" (National Agriculture Development Programme), "Non-Timber Forest Produce", "Gender Budgeting", "Budgets for Dalits", "Enforcing Human Rights through Budgets", "Social Sector Budgets in Rajasthan", etc.

## **Orientation of BARC Staff**

*According to the action plan, four staff members of BARC were supposed to be visiting other organizations in the country for the purpose of sharing experiences in relation to budget work.*

In order to learn about rural development issues and related activities from others and to share views and experiences, every year the BARC staff members visit other organizations in the country. During the reporting period, 4 **BARC staff** visited the **Seemant Kisan Sahyog Sansthan**, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan on 25-29 August 2009, to exchange knowledge about drought condition in desert area of Rajasthan and share our experiences and work. In addition, 1 staff visited **Matsya Mewat Shiksha evam Vikash Sansthan**, Alwar, Rajasthan to see their work on the issue related to women's rights.

## **National Workshop on Budget Analysis and Advocacy**

A number of organizations are working in India to ensure that the poor people's get their due share in government budgets. In order to facilitate greater networking among the budget analysis organizations across the country through further dialogue, sharing and cooperation, a national workshop on budget analysis and advocacy was organized by BARC in Jaipur on 22-24 February, 2007. Organisations from various parts of the country shared their views and experiences in the workshop. In the last session of the meeting, there was a consensus that on the rotation basis one budget analysis centre of the country would take the responsibility of organizing one national convention every year. This year, i.e. **in 2009**, the meet was convened at **Bhopal** by Sanket, on **20-22 January**. From BARC, 2 representatives attended the meeting and shared the Centre's analysis, views, strategies etc. with others.

## **International Workshop on Budget Analysis and Advocacy**

**20-23 November 2008** – This international workshop was organized by International Budget Project (IBP) Washington and NCAS Pune at Tiruvantpuram. From BARC, 1 representative attended the meeting and shared the Centre's analysis, views, strategies etc. with others.

## **Additional Activity**

In addition to the above, BARC has been in continuous touch with the **International Budget Project (IBP), Washington**. Both of us are in touch with each other on various

issues relating to budget movement in the national as well as international arena. We have supplied them our materials for their library and newsletters. Over the telephone, they have interviewed us in order to know about our networking activities.

## **Conclusion**

This year, September 2008-August 2009 has *not* been a “business as usual” year! For one thing, in this period, there were both State Government elections, and Central Government elections. The state government elections were in February, and there was no usual state budget put up in the State Assembly in March. After the elections, the Congress led government first put up a “vote on accounts”, and then a full budget in July 2009 -- and the next full budget is due in March 2010.

Secondly, within BARC, the Senior Budget Analyst who was also Team Leader, resigned suddenly in December 2008. A new Team Leader, or Coordinator for BARC was selected in March 2009, but could not join until June 2009 – this meant that there was a gap of almost 6 months in which BARC was not functioning with full speed and direction. As BARC moves into September 2009, the team is determined to make up the unfinished work, and to move ahead according to plan. We have now prepared an annual action plan for the year ahead (including the left over work of the last year) and have started our work with renewed energy and conviction.