

BUDGET ANALYSIS RAJASTHAN CENTRE (BARC) **The Annual Report 2007-08**

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 government budget is not a document that is isolated from our democracy; rather it is very much a component of our democracy. So, we need to understand it for the sake of the development of the people and thus 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. 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 analysing Rajasthan Budgets in order to share the findings with the people and intervene in budgeting and governance from the perspective of the poor and marginalized. Now, we are going to present the report and results of our work carried out in 2007-2008.

Our Day-to-Day Budget Work

Budget analysis is a never-ending, continuous process. Both analysis and advocacy require constant work almost on daily basis. The 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. During the reporting period, BARC has given priority to:

- overall state budget,
- budgets for Dalits and Tribals,
- agriculture budget,
- animal husbandry budget,
- irrigation budget,
- health budget,
- education budget,
- gender budget etc.

Capacity Building of MLAs

During the reporting period, we organised a budget orientation meeting for the Rajasthan MLAs on the **8 February 2008**. The focus of the meeting was on “**The Appraisal of Rajasthan Budget 2007-08.**” **21 legislators**, including the Speaker of the Rajasthan Assembly, Cooperative Minister, and the President of the Pradesh Congress Committee, participated in the meeting. The meeting was organized at Pant Krishi Bhawan, Jaipur. In the meeting, BARC presented an elaborated analysis of the 2007-08 Rajasthan Budget, showing the evidence of both the shortfall and strength of the said budget and the need for redressing the gaps for raising the level of standard of living of the poor of the state. The MLAs noted down the points we made during the presentation and later used the same during the budget debates in the Assembly.

In addition to this activity, we supplied many, expenditure-and-welfare-related, questions to the MLAs. They submitted the same in the House through proper channel prior to the Budget Session so that the Ministers are compelled to answer them in the Assembly House. And, finally, the concerned Ministers replied to the questions in the House. This is the way BARC has been trying to strengthen the democracy, sensitizing the legislators about both the technical aspects of budgets and the issues pertaining to the poor people.

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

We believe that PRI representatives need to be aware of the budget making process, budgetary provisions for different schemes and programmes, and the overall performance of the government in public spending for the poor. At the same time, we also need to understand the financial situations, including the fund-inflow and -outflow, at the PRI level for an improved tracking of funds from top to the grassroot level. With this objective, we conducted a budget orientation meeting for the representatives of the gram panchayat and panchayat samiti at **Khandel, Sambhar, Jaipur, on 8 August, 2007**. In the meeting, **42 PRI representatives** took part in the discussions and shared their valuable views with us. We also gave them lot of inputs relating to budgets as mentioned above.

Issue-Based Meetings

During the reporting period, 3 issue-based meetings have been organised. The participants are selected from those who are working on the concerned issues. 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. It is not that we finish our duty by organising one or two meeting/s in a year; rather continuous follow-up is also done in various ways. Let us now describe the issue-based meetings we organized in the reporting period.

+ Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Budgets -- organised a two-day issue-based meeting at the State Resource Centre in Jaipur on **4-5 April 2007**. The meeting was attended by **25 participants** from **15 different districts** of Rajasthan. In the meeting, detailed discussion was held on issues like agriculture and animal husbandry budgets of Rajasthan. Detailed information about crop insurance scheme and animal insurance scheme was given to the participants and different critical aspects of these schemes were discussed in detailed. Worries were expressed in the meeting about the fall in number of animals in the state and some organizations committed that they would take up the issue with the state government and it was decided that BARC would be providing relevant data and information to strengthen the move.

+ Primary Education and Midday Meal Scheme -- was conducted on **30 October 2007** in the district of Alwar in collaboration with Alwar Mewat Shiksha Ebam Vikas Sansthan. The meeting was attended by **70 representatives** from different organisations of the three districts viz. Alwar, Karauli and Bharatpur. We shared many interesting findings of our analysis with the participants. For example, we conveyed to the participants that drop-outs of a large number of girl students from primary schools can be checked by recruiting a greater number of female teachers because there is a clear shortage of female teachers in the primary schools. We also asked the participants to make people aware about the anomalies found in the implementation of the midday

meal scheme in different districts. We showed them the anomalies with proper data and analysis.

+ **“Budgets for Dalits”** – organised at Pant Krishi Bhawan, Jaipur on **11 February 2008** in collaboration with the Centre for Dalit Rights. **69 people** from different organisations participated in the meeting. In addition, some key persons such as the national level Dalit leader Mr. Paul Divakar, Prof. Surjit Singh, Director, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, etc. were also invited in the meeting. In front of them, we presented our analysis and we showed that the Dalits are getting only 2 per cent of the Plan Size whereas, according to the provision, they deserve to receive 17 per cent in Rajasthan. We also told that there are 17 per cent representation (from reserved seats) of the Dalit MLAs in the Assembly of Rajasthan, but still they are not able to put pressure on the Government regarding the issue. Dalit political leaders are generally unaware of the 17 per cent provision. We asked that BARC has been raising these issues in the budget orientation meetings with MLAs, but at the same time other organizations, mainly Dalit organizations, also need to talk to the MLAs and try to build their capacity in this matter. The participants agreed and said that they would also conduct meeting for the MLAs under the banner of the Centre for Dalit Rights.

Regional Orientation and Awareness Events

During the reporting period, BARC has organized 3 regional budget awareness meetings in 3 different districts of the state. The focus of such meetings is given on some major departments related to social sector i.e. health, education, social welfare (including Dalits and Tribals) and also some departments related to 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.

· **20-22 July 2007** -- the first regional budget orientation program was conducted in the **District of Barmer** for the coordinators of the Society to Uplift Rural Economy (SURE), Barmer. The meeting was organized in response to the request of SURE. **40 participants** took part in the meeting. All the main budget issues have been discussed in the meetings and the impacts of globalization as well as liberalization have also been discussed in the meetings at length.

· **29-30 November 2007** – a workshop was organized at Mirdha Dharmshala in **Nagaur District** with the organisational help of Grameen Swabhiman Sansthan, Nagaur and **125 participants** from different organizations, newspaper houses (not only to cover, but also to learn) , trade unions etc. of the districts of Nagaur, Bikaner and Jodhpur attended the meeting. This meeting was virtually a very interesting meeting since the participants comprised of 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. The meeting was grossly highlighted in both the print and electronic media.

· **17-18 January 2008** -- a regional budget orientation program was conducted at **Madar in Ajmer District** in collaboration with Savera Sansthan. **35 key participants** attended the meeting from different NGOs and people’s organisations located in the districts of Ajmer, Tonk and Pali. Overall state budgets, budgets of different line departments,

different welfare schemes for the poor etc. have been widely discussed in the meeting. The participants committed that they would further strengthen the budget movement through their networking, advocacy and lobbying so that the issues raised in the meeting can draw the attention of the government for necessary remedies through public expenditures.

National Workshop on Budget Analysis and Advocacy

A number of organizations are working in India to ensure the poor people's 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. 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 in a year. This year, i.e. **in 2008**, such a national meeting was convened at **Pune** by Samarthan, Mumbai, on **2-4 February**. From BARC, two representatives attended the meeting and shared the Centre's analysis, views, strategies etc. with others.

BARC Staff's Representation as Resource Persons in the Media and in Trainings/Seminars/Workshops Conducted by Other Organizations

Last year, the BARC staff members were invited as resource persons by several organizations. During the reporting period, BARC staff participated in 26 trainings/workshops/seminars/media events as resource persons to talk about Budget Analysis. The topics include: "National Rural Employment Guarantee Act", "Agricultural Development", "National Rural Health Mission", "Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana", "Midday Meal Scheme", "Role of Youth in Development", "Forest Produce", "Gender Budgeting", "Budgets for Dalits", "Enforcing Human Rights through Budgets" etc.

Micro Studies

Micro studies are conducted to make an assessment of the impact of the government policies and expenditures on the poor and marginalized people. One micro studies have been fully completed during the reporting period.

- A micro study on "**Swajaldhara Scheme**" has been completed and data generated has been shared in the workshops organised by us and also shared with the media in press conference. This scheme has been formulated to ensure safe drinking water for the rural people. We carried out the study **to examine about how efficiently and effectively the scheme was being implemented in rural Rajasthan.**

Publications

Newsletter –

Our newsletter is a quarterly publication. 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, CSO representatives and key persons

can be well-equipped with budget related knowledge and find some concrete evidence in support of their concerns.

Usually, each issue of our newsletter is of four 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 and Leaflets – 3 Booklets and 1 leaflet were published in the reporting period

1. In April 2007, we published a booklet entitled “**Understanding Budget Terminologies and Process for Monitoring Public Expenditures**” in English. Earlier, we had published a similar booklet in Hindi, but there was a need for publishing a booklet on budget terminologies in English too. The English booklet has helped us to cater to the needs of our, although limited but important, national audience and partners.

2. In August 2007, we published another booklet in English entitled “**Trade Liberalisation and Indian Farm Sector**”. This booklet has enormously helped our partners, as we received feedbacks, to understand the situation of Indian agriculture, farmers and farm-trade at the backdrop of globalization.

3. A leaflet was published in September 2007 on the issue of widow pension budget. The title of the leaflet is: “**Vidhava Pension Budget Barao, Vidhavao ko Bachao**”. In the 2007-08 budget, the government had raised the widow pension benefit per head from Rs. 250 to Rs. 400, which was good step. But, surprisingly, the government did not increase the total allocation under the widow pension budget as compared to the previous year. So, this could have reduced the number of beneficiaries in the said year. To prevent this, we published the leaflet in simple manner and distributed it to our partners for raising a joint and strong voice. Finally, this proved to be worth since the government increased the total allocation in the revised budget.

4. In December 2007, we brought out an important publication in Hindi. The title of the booklet is: “**Sarkari Vikas Yojanay aur Aam Admi Tak Unki Pahounch**” This publication is based on the primary data collected through a micro-study. In this study, we evaluated the success and failure of several welfare schemes that are meant for the poor.

Press Conference

One press conference was organized at Kota Press Club in Kota District on **24 January, 2008**, jointly with the Kota unit of the Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan on the issues of the **economic conditions of widows and the widow pension budget**. We conveyed several things, with data and information, to the media. And our views were well highlighted in both the print and electronic media.

In addition to this, journalists and reporters have been continuously in touch with us throughout the year and took lot of information and data from us and published reports in their newspapers.