



“BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO” TRANSFORMING FURURES OF GIRL CHILD - AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract

The girl child plays a significant role in the cultural, social, political, and economic life of India. Indian constitution gives boundless prominence to the equality of status and opportunities for girls. This paper examines how girls' overall growth can be enhanced through imparting information to all in various meaningful paths. Girls' development should be progressively considered in relation to national development. Hence, Beti Bachao, the Beti Padhao scheme has been briefly highlighted. The objective of this paper is to give some information to all the scholars regarding problems, challenges, and constitutional and legal provisions of girls. The national policy on education (1986) states, "The education of girls should receive emphasis not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation." Child Sex Ratio is defined as the number of females per thousand males in the age group 0-6. According to the census data gathered in 2011, the Child Sex Ratio in India was 927 girls per 1,000 boys, a lower value compared to the world average of 934 girls per 1000 boys (UNICEF 2020). However, this ratio fell to 919 girls per 1,000 boys as measured by the census conducted in 2011. These numbers reflect the decrease in the female birth ratio. Education plays a key role in generating awareness amongst people regarding the reasons for the low Child Sex Ratio and the importance of addressing this issue and reducing the gender imbalance in society. It is therefore widely believed that India has been witnessing a declining Child Sex Ratio and under-consumption of girl education as a result of appropriate education.

Keywords: Girls Education, Declining Sex Ratio, Social Justice, Women Empowerment, Equality of Status, Social Change

Introduction:

In India, sex determination before birth and post birth discrimination against the girl child has increasingly led to an alarming situation, which may lead to lots of bad consequence's. Census of 2011 showed a significant declining trend in the Child Sex Ratio between 0-6 years which declined to an all- time low of 918. Strong socio cultural and religious biases, preference for son and discrimination towards daughters has accentuated the problem. Coordinated and meaningful efforts are needed to ensure survival, protection and education of the girl child to make them realize their full potential. The Government announced Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme to address the issue of decline in Child Sex Ratio through a mass campaign and multi-sectoral action plan in 100 gender critical districts across the country. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi rendered top most priority to this issue by himself launching the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign from Panipat district in Haryana on 22nd January, 2015. With a mission to increase awareness about the program especially in rural India, a special awareness campaign was launched by the Directorate of Field Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India in February-March 2015 in collaboration with the Ministry of Women & Child Development. According to the United Nations estimates between the years 2000 and 2020, India became one of the countries with the most lop-sided child sex ratio, driven by the after-effects of the abortion legislation and the introduction of prenatal analytical know-how in the 1970s. The trend of sex-selective abortions saw an upward trajectory till about 2011 when India witnessed an overall high of 111 males per 100 females in the 2011 census. However, according to the latest National Family Health Survey NFHS (2019-21)the gap has reduced over the last decade, to about 109 males per 100 females and further to 108 males per 100 females. A similar trend has been observed in terms of female literacy rates in the country. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), also known as Save the Daughter. The campaign seeks to combat deep-rooted gender bias and discrimination against girls by raising awareness, encouraging community participation, and improving the delivery of welfare services meant for women and girls

Review of Literature on Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

According to Kumari et al. (2019), the lack of awareness amongst the girls and ladies in Hisar, Haryana suggests otherwise. While young girls are aware of their rights, their mindset of the ladies is still governed by the preexisting stereotypes. Kumari suggests that more girls were aware about the fact that boys are getting higher education in comparison to girls. However, the small sample size in the study cannot help us draw a conclusion for the entire population impacted by this policy.

Menezes (2016) outlines the effect of gender budgeting on creating awareness about the importance of education. During 2014-15, while Rs. 100 crores (\$14 million approx.) have been spent on the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign, the author finds that there has been a decline of more than one third allocation in the total amount allocated for women and child development in India. The government did not release the funds allocated towards this scheme. Gender budgeting is an important pillar which helps ensure that sufficient funds are spent to generate sufficient awareness needed to bring about a change in society.

Parmar et al. (2020) argue that while the campaign is contributing towards better social empowerment on women through education, the preexisting notions and lack of awareness amongst some groups still question the impact of girl education.

Significance and need of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

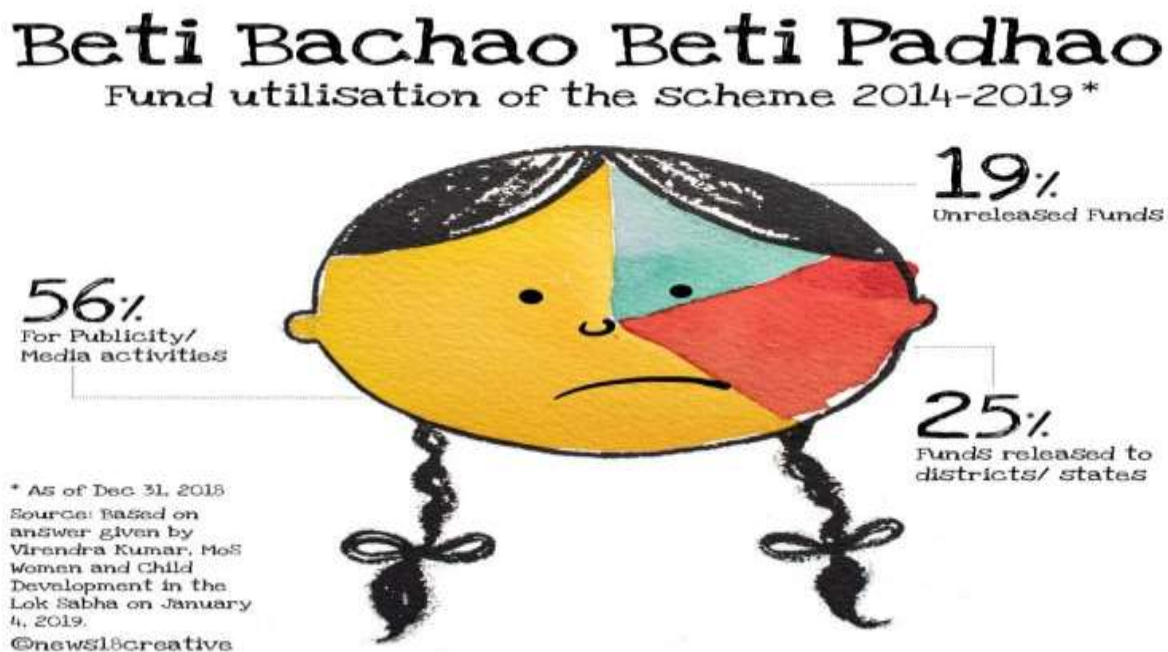
According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2021² India was placed at 107th rank among 146 countries in female education which covers literacy and enrolment rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. India's position has seen a relatively upward trend since 2018 which can be attributed to massive campaigns and interventions run by the government under its flagship programme 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' (BBBP). The Government of India together with the Ministry of Women & Child Development (MoWCD), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW), and Ministry of Human Resources Development (MoHRD) launched BBBP in 2015 with the key quantitative objectives of improving the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) in selected gender critical districts by two points in a year, reducing gender differentials in under five child mortality rate from 7 points in 2014 to 1.5 points per year and increasing enrolment of girls in secondary education to 82 percent by 2018-19. The scheme was initially launched in only 161 districts and eventually covered all 640 districts of the country. The BBBP scheme has been quoted as a

proactive initiative for dealing with gender-based discrimination against the girl child as the 161 districts that have been a part of the initial implementation of the BBBP scheme have witnessed an improving trend of SRB in 104 districts.

Objectives of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana

1. To Improve the girl child sex ratio
2. To Ensure gender equality and women empowerment
3. To Prevent gender-biased, sex selective elimination
4. To Ensure survival and protection of the girl child
5. To Encourage education and active participation of the girl child

Fund Utilization of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Program



Sources: Provided by Virendra Kumar:2019

Statement of the Problem

There is a sharp declining child sex ratio (CSR): The 2011 Census revealed that the CSR (number of girls per 1,000 boys aged 0–6) had reached an all-time low of 918, down from 927 in 2001. With adding to the declining of girl child ration there is a widespread gender discrimination. The

decline was a clear indicator of deep-rooted gender bias, manifesting as both pre-birth discrimination. Being male dominated patriarchal family in India, it has become a regular phenomenon that female feticide through the misuse of diagnostic tools. It has been evident from the northern part of India, scanning of mother's womb has been done with Rs.200 of scanning charge. Addition to that post-birth discrimination like neglect of a girl's health, nutrition, and education has become a common phenomenon in the male dominated society in India. With accumulation of these there is strong bias of Socio-Cultural attitude. The parents from the village strongly believe that daughters are financial burdens as they have to shell out huge amount for dowry. Hence they prefer male children for their family. Apart from their traditional approaches families from the illiterate background feel that during their old age male son will look after them and even after their death male child is essential for to perform religious ceremonies in order to obtain moksha or salvation after their death

Progress on monitorable targets

Indicator	2014-15	2019-20
1. Sex Ratio at Birth	918	934
2. Enrolment of Girls in secondary education	77.45%	81.32%
3. Percentage of 1st Trimester ANC Registration	61%	71%
4. Percentage of Institutional Deliveries	87%	94%

Image Source: www.tribuneindia.com 2020

Methodology of the Study:

Present study is based on both Primary and Secondary data. Primary data collected from the parents who were beneficiaries of the Beti Bechavo and Beti Padavo. About 50 parents of the Beti Behavo and Beti Padavo beneficiaries were selected on Random Sampling Method. In order to easy the research paper Questionnaire and Interview Scheduled method was used to collect the

information from the beneficiary parents. More information was collected from the officials of the Panchayats of Mandagadde gram panchayat of Shivamogg District of Karnataka. Secondary data were collected from the newspapers, internet and from the magazines like Times of India, The week.

Challenges of implementing Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Analysis and Discussion)

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao faces challenges, which hinder its impact on improving girl child welfare.

- 1. Improper Utilization of Funds:** From 2014–2018, out of ₹368 crore allocated for the scheme, only ₹291 crore was released, with a disproportionate ₹162.4 crore disbursed in 2017–18 alone. However, audits revealed that less than 20% of the total released funds were spent by states in 2016–17, highlighting serious inefficiencies in both allocation and utilization at the ground level. Consequently, the reports from the accounts department have proved that there is improper implementation and utilization of funds.
- 2. Fragile Supervising of the Program:** Beti Bachavo Beti Padavo is a program it is managed and coordinated by the inter-ministerial level. In order to implement such a mass program it is very important to have a regular meetings with lower rung officials to top officials including the ministers. But unfortunately, Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audits found that states like Haryana and Punjab had irregular or no meetings of the mandated district and state-level task forces. Regrettable to note that between 2015–2016, only one state-level meeting was conducted in Haryana, while most districts failed to fulfil with the quarterly meeting requirement, where the officials of the concerned department were assigned to conduct meetings and rectify the pros and cons of the program.
- 3. Implementation Cavities at Grass Root Levels:** In Haryana and Punjab, CAG noted poor compliance with scheme guidelines. For example, out of the targeted ₹15 lakh award for schools across three districts in Haryana, only ₹1 lakh was awarded. Additionally, many districts of Punjab and Haryana officials who were supposed to submit monthly progress report of the incurred expenditure of the program either delayed and many absent during the meetings. This shows the callous attitude of the concerned officials who were not ready to put their efforts to empower this women empowerment program.

4. **Shortage of Trained personnel to handle the program:** At the grassroots, a lack of trained personnel to execute outreach programs and monitor progress has hindered the implementation of the program. Furthermore, the top officials of the program who were responsible for the implementation of did not trained the grass root workers. At the same time, there was acute shortage of women leadership who were supposed to involve in the program effectively. Being women empowerment program it was required that women should take the lead, but the government did not appoint considerable number of female officials thus led to the miss communiqué between the beneficiaries and the government.

5. **Slow Pace of Fund Utilization:** Originally Beti Bachavo and Beti Padavo is a fast paced program. Through rapid funding and organizing skills a girl child is empowered in a swift manner. Regrettably, for this program due to the lethargic attitude of the concerned official's money spent in a very slow paced manner. Between 2016 and 2019, states like Punjab, Haryana, Orissa reportedly utilized only about 23% of the funds released to them. When the year end came they showed underutilized utilization statement and returned the balance amount to the central government. This hindered the actual empowerment of female children due to the fund underutilization.

6. **Increased Drop Out Rate of Female children:** Despite increased enrolment, keeping girls in school remains a challenging task. Approximately 17% of girls dropped out in classes 9 and 10 in 2020, often due to early marriage, household chores, or lack of proper sanitation facilities like lack of toilets and washroom. Additions to that due to the traditional attitude of village folks, elders and parents of girl child are not ready to send their female children to another village where higher primary schools are situated.

7. **Deep-Rooted Patriarchal Mindsets:** The preference for male children and the "burden" narrative around daughters remain strongly practiced in Indian Rural areas. It is a hurricane task to change the mindset of the rural patriarchal families, changing these fundamental socio-cultural norms is a slow process that hasn't always matched the pace of the awareness campaigns. Even though considerable amount of Beto Bachavo and Beti Padavo money has been spent on advertisement, unfortunately it failed to reach the rural masses.

8. **Regional Disparities while implementing the program:** Critics and advisors of the Beti Bachavo and Beti Padavo opinioned that success of the program is uneven across India. While some districts show improvement, others in states like Odisha, Karnataka, and Bihar continue to struggle with low child sex ratios and high dropouts. Critics found that sluggish attitude of the officials, unethical character of the grass root workers did not take much interest to implement the program. They have done their duty not with diligent care instead they have done their duty with as they are paid for their jobs.

Recommendations for better Implementation

1. Make the program more Tech Savvy

While technology has become essential for most basic functions such as education, payments, and communication, leveraging technology for monitoring and evaluation purposes is authoritative. Beti Bachavo and Beti Padavo program needs top class media campaign in raising issue of female child over male kid. Hence, the concerned officials must make more initiative by using digital way of propaganda. It must use digital technology to popularize the program. The top rung officials of the program must use YouTube, Twitter, Telegrams and Internet paths to reach the common men, that too in a shorter period of time. Additionally, program details like funding, utilization, beneficiary details also to be announced in the digital platform. This may reach the common folks in millions in a shorter period of time.

2. Appointing more Woman Teachers

India is predominantly a traditional society. Female kids are not encouraged to go to schools. In the present scenario it is very difficult to convince the parents to send their female wards to schools. In order to increase the girl's enrolment in the primary and higher primary schools it is a logical perception that more and more women teachers have to be appointed in the rural areas. Naturally women teachers understand the female students better than their male counter parts at the same time girl students are more comfortable with the women teachers in an overall circumstance. If more female teachers are appointed inevitably the enrolment of girl's students will increase drastically in the rural areas.

3. Encourage women participation in the program

In order to implement and make success of the gender sensitive program like Beti Bachavo and Beti Padavo women participation plays a prominent role. Experts believe that women are best diplomats while convincing parents and girl students to enroll for schools. Psychologist believe that women are masters in communicating with the villagers elders they can easily highlight the program success with their own narration this may bring miracle changes in the minds of the people. Community-level workers who often work in a close nexus with the people and know the community quite well should be the face of this scheme. Hence, the officials who are responsible for implementation of Beti Bachavo and Beti Padavo can utilize the service of local frontline workers such as ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, and Mahila Mandals should be key players in the implementation of the scheme.

4. Refresher and Capacity Building program to be organized for on ground staff

Beti Bachavo and Beti Padavo is a gender sensitive program. Implementing this program requires lots of creativity and convincing capacities. Hence, the ground level staff must be provided with Refresher training and capacity building courses in a regular interval. Resources persons from the prestigious institutions must be invited and special lectures and motivations talks to be given to the ground level workers. This help the ground level workers rejuvenate themselves and encourage them to participate in the gender sensitive program more efficiently. Additionally, digital skill program also to be taught in their sessions. Apart from that community reach training program has to be opened for the staff.

5. Provision to setup clean and functional toilets for girl's schools

It is very important to note that clean toilets and washrooms are a key requirement for girl's schools. This will reduce the girls to face unwanted situations and haphazard environment. According to a survey conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (2020) the lack of toilets and washrooms are responsible for major cause for the high dropout rates among the girl students in rural India. Ensuring the availability of toilets on public properties such as schools would help boost the enrolment rate automatically.

Conclusion

In the face of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme achieving the major task of bringing the issue of son preference to the forefront, the scheme in its present form is at risk of failing its central task due to poor implementation and monitoring of the concerned officials. The lack of frequent meetings at the district and state levels can lead to the scheme losing the momentum it has created in the past few years. Hence, authoritative for the district- and state-level action committees to have representation from community-level workers, cognizance of the challenges faced by the female students such as unavailability of toilets and adept monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to have measurable outcomes indicative of the progress made on the objectives of the schemes. Subsequently having evaluated the policy through the parameters of change in the child sex ratio, enrollment ratio, effectiveness of the awareness drives and the fund allocation. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao has been a breakthrough scheme to ensure that the girl child is provided with equal educational and welfare opportunities as their male counterparts. Although the enrollment rates and CSR show improvements, it is commanding to dig deeper and understand whether they reflect an underlying improvement in the human capital. To ensure that the desired educational changes are seen, it is important to introduce other balancing policies which focus on specific reforms under the education sector. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao cannot work in seclusion. Furthermore, the funds allocated towards this program should be diverted from the national level to the district level for effective intervention and progress in the education aspect and in the attitudes of people surrounding women empowerment. Additional with that an effective utilization of the available technology, the progress can be monitored and analyzed.

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