

# Promoting Gender Equality and Addressing Gender Discrimination through Education: The *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* Initiative (BBBP) in India

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## ABSTRACT

The *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (BBBP) scheme, initiated by the Government of India in 2015, stands as a beacon of hope in the country's quest for gender equality and the empowerment of girl children. This groundbreaking program addresses gender discrimination, promotes education, and strives to improve the socio-economic status of girls. Despite India's rich cultural heritage, gender-based disparities and skewed sex ratios persist, and BBBP seeks to challenge these deeply ingrained norms. Through a comprehensive set of strategies, including awareness campaigns, financial incentives like the *Sukanya Samriddhi* Account, and community engagement, BBBP has made notable progress in achieving its objectives. The scheme places a strong emphasis on education access, resulting in increased enrolment rates and reduced dropout rates among girls. Furthermore, it extends its support to skill development and vocational training, ensuring that girls have opportunities for growth beyond primary education. The reviews of BBBP reveal that while significant strides have been made, challenges such as cultural norms and economic factors impacting girls' dropout rates persist. Collaboration between government agencies and NGOs has played a pivotal role in the scheme's success, expanding its reach and impact. Looking forward, there is a call for the continued expansion of BBBP's programs, sustained efforts, and innovative approaches to further promote gender equality and women's empowerment. BBBP is a transformative initiative that addresses gender disparities, empowers girls, and reshapes societal attitudes. It represents not just a government program but a societal shift toward a more equitable and inclusive India where every girl has the opportunity to thrive, contribute to society, and lead the way toward a brighter future.

**Keywords:** *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (BBBP), Gender Equality, Girl Child Empowerment, Socio-economic Impact, Education Access, Awareness Campaigns

In India, there is a market failure when it comes to girls' education, so finding efficient solutions to this problem is a crucial area for future research. When the market is unable to distribute resources efficiently, it is said to be in a state of market failure (Garg, 2022). To end welfare loss and promote allocative efficiency, government action through strategies like raising awareness and spending is therefore necessary. Due to its underconsumption and positive externalities, such as its greater economic significance for the community, education for girls in India is a prime example of a market

failure (Garg, 2022). In January 2015, the Government of India launched a groundbreaking initiative called *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (BBBP) to address gender discrimination and empower girls in the country. The program, operated by the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Human Resource Development, and Health & Family Welfare, aims to

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change societal mindsets, promote gender equality, and safeguard the rights of girl children (Meenakshi & Bakshi, 2022). One of the first programmes launched by the Indian government in 2015, *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (save the girl child, educate the girl child), sought to raise awareness about gender empowerment and the value of education for girls (Garg, 2022). The world's population is made up virtually entirely of women. The best approach to enhance the health, diet, and economic situation of a home, which is a small unit of a country's economy, is through education for women (Kritika & Pandey, 2022). With a focus on education and awareness, the BBBP scheme envisions a future where every girl has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the nation's progress. India, a nation with a rich cultural heritage, has long recognized the importance of women in society. However, gender discrimination and inequality persist, particularly in the treatment of girl children. To address this issue and empower the girl child, the Government of India launched the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (BBBP) scheme on January 22, 2015. This ambitious program aims to tackle discrimination, enhance women empowerment, and ensure the well-being and education of girl children across the country. The campaign's objectives included raising awareness and enhancing the effectiveness of education and social programmes for girls in India (Garg, 2022). The six Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, and Uttarakhand were the main targets of this scheme. By ensuring there is sufficient involvement and consulting services (such as human resource development) in the education sector, the initiative seeks to serve as a catalyst for advancing girls' education in India (Garg, 2022). By protecting and educating girl children, the programme seeks to solve issues including the dropping child sex ratio, gender inequity, abortion, female feticide, etc. The programme strives to ensure that girls are born, raised, and educated with equal rights and free from prejudice so that they can become active members of society (Chourasiya, 2021). The '*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*' campaign seeks to ensure that girls are born, raised, and educated with equal rights and free from prejudice so that they can become active members of society. By strengthening the educational system, it aims to empower women and girls while combating deeply ingrained sexism in society (Chourasiya,

2021). Gender empowerment is seen as a way for women to go through many of the obstacles they experience, including those related to education, economic opportunities, social security, health care, and position in decision-making because of their gender (Campbell & Manganello, 2018). Gender empowerment is seen as a way for women to go through many of the obstacles they experience, including those related to education, economic opportunities, social security, health care, and position in decision-making because of their gender (Meenakshi & Bakshi, 2022).

### **Objectives of *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao***

The *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme has several key objectives:

#### **1. Tackling Discrimination**

The scheme aims to change the mindset of society and address the discrimination faced by girls in various forms. It seeks to eliminate gender-based inequalities and create a more inclusive and equal society.

#### **2. Enhancing Women Empowerment**

By promoting the education and participation of girl children, the scheme aims to empower women and provide them with opportunities for personal and professional growth. It aims to break the barriers that limit their potential and contribute to the overall development of the nation.

#### **3. Reducing Child Sex Ratio Imbalance**

One of the primary concerns the scheme addresses is the declining child sex ratio (CSR) in certain regions of the country. By raising awareness and implementing targeted interventions, the scheme aims to improve the CSR and ensure the survival and protection of the girl child.

#### **4. Ensuring Education for Girl Children**

Education plays a vital role in the empowerment of individuals and societies. The scheme emphasizes the importance of education for girl children, aiming to provide them with equal access to quality education and encourage their active participation in the learning process.

## Implementation and Key Features of the Scheme

The implementation of the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme involves various strategies and initiatives:

### 1. Awareness Campaigns

Mass communication initiatives are undertaken to spread awareness about gender discrimination, the importance of girl child education, and the consequences of gender-based violence. To address the issue of declining CSR, the scheme organizes advocacy campaigns at the national and regional levels. These campaigns aim to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality, the value of the girl child, and the consequences of gender-biased practices.

### 2. Multi-Sectoral Interventions

In gender-critical districts across the country, the scheme implements multi-sectoral interventions to address the specific challenges faced by girl children. These interventions involve collaboration between different government departments and organizations to ensure comprehensive support and services.

### 3. Financial Incentives

To encourage parents to invest in the future of their girl children, the scheme introduced the *Sukanya Samriddhi* scheme. This financial incentive-linked scheme allows parents to open a savings account in the name of their girl child, ensuring financial security and enabling them to pursue higher education or other aspirations.

### 4. Community Engagement

Community participation is crucial for the success of the scheme. The scheme engages local governing authorities, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders in promoting a supportive environment for the girl child. This includes training programs, discussions, and awareness campaigns within communities.

### 5. Preventive Measures

The scheme aims to prevent inhumane practices such as female foeticide and infanticide by creating a sense of value and protection for the girl child. It

emphasizes the importance of safeguarding their well-being and ensuring their survival.

## 6. Education and Gender Equality

Promoting education and gender equality are at the core of the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme. It strives to provide equal opportunities for girls to access education, participate in extracurricular activities, and pursue their ambitions without societal barriers.

## 7. Government interventions

Multi-sectoral interventions are implemented in 100 gender-critical districts across the country to address issues related to gender inequality and enhance the welfare of girls.

## 8. Training programs

Local governing authorities, government employees, and educational institutions are provided with training to sensitize them towards gender issues and enable them to actively participate in the societal change process.

## 9. Incentives and recognition

Various programs and initiatives are introduced to recognize and reward academic achievements by girls, encouraging them to excel in their studies.

## Eligibility and Application Process and eligibility criteria

To benefit from the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme, certain eligibility criteria must be met:

1. The family should have a girl child below 10 years of age.
2. A *Sukanya Samriddhi* Account (SSA) must be opened in the name of the girl child in any Indian bank.
3. The girl child should be a resident of India. Non-Resident Indian (NRI) citizens are not eligible for the BBBP scheme.

To apply for the scheme, interested individuals can visit a post office or bank where the scheme is available. They need to fill out the application form for BBBP/SSA, attaching all the required supporting documents. These documents include a birth certificate, proof of identity and address of the parents, and a passport-size photograph.

## Benefits of *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* Scheme

The *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme offers several benefits to girl children and society as a whole:

1. **Financial Security:** Through the *Sukanya Samriddhi* Account, girl children can attain financial security for their future. The account is exempted under the Income Tax Act and offers a good rate of interest, ensuring savings grow over time. The scheme provides a platform for parents to save for their girl child's future education and financial needs through the *Sukanya Samriddhi* Account, which offers tax benefits and an attractive interest rate.
2. **Gender Equality:** The scheme promotes gender equality by addressing societal biases and discriminatory practices. It strives to create a more inclusive society where girls have equal opportunities and rights. BBBP promotes gender equality by challenging discriminatory practices and fostering an environment where girls have the same opportunities as boys.
3. **Education and Empowerment:** The scheme emphasizes the importance of education for girl children. By providing equal access to education and encouraging their participation, it empowers them to pursue their dreams and contribute to the nation's development. BBBP aims to empower girls by promoting their education and ensuring equal access to educational opportunities, enabling them to pursue their dreams and contribute to society.
4. **Awareness and Welfare Services:** The scheme aims to generate awareness about the challenges faced by girl children and the welfare services available to support them. It ensures that girls and their families are aware of their rights and the resources available for their well-being. The scheme generates awareness about gender issues, leading to positive changes in societal attitudes and behaviors towards girl children.
5. **Government support:** Through various interventions and initiatives, the government provides support and resources to improve

the welfare, safety, and well-being of girl children.

## Expansions and Future Outlook

The *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme continues to evolve and expand its scope. Some of the key areas of expansion and future focus include:

1. **Secondary Education and Skill Development:** The scheme aims to increase secondary enrollment and skill development opportunities for girls and women. It strives to provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in various occupations and contribute to the workforce.
2. **Menstrual Hygiene and Adolescent Health:** The scheme recognizes the importance of menstrual hygiene and aims to raise awareness and provide support in this area. It addresses the stigma associated with menstrual health and ensures access to safe and hygienic practices.
3. **Prevention of Child Marriage:** The scheme actively works towards preventing child marriages and ensuring the safety of girl children from physical and mental harassment. It strives to protect their rights and provide a supportive environment for their growth and development.
4. **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:** The promotion of gender equality remains a key focus of the scheme. It aims to eliminate gender-based discrimination and empower women to participate fully in all aspects of society.
5. **Increasing child sex ratio:** There has been a positive trend in the child sex ratio, with an upward movement observed in several districts covered under the BBBP initiative.
6. **Improving educational participation:** The scheme has contributed to an increase in the gross enrollment ratio of girls in secondary schools, ensuring greater access to education for girls.
7. **Infrastructure development:** Efforts have been made to provide functional toilets for girls in schools, ensuring their hygiene and convenience.

8. **Healthcare and welfare:** The scheme emphasizes the importance of healthcare and nutrition for girls, leading to improved health indicators and reduced instances of underweight and anemic girls.
9. **Awareness and sensitization:** BBBP has successfully created awareness about the rights and well-being of girl children, fostering a sense of social responsibility and gender equality.

This programme has paved the way for advancements in girls' rights and education in India. To maintain these initiatives, management must, however, improve its effectiveness and collaborate with other programmes with related objectives. While awareness initiatives have been successful in changing stereotyped beliefs, problems cannot be solved by raising awareness alone. The secret would be to be aware and to act effectively (Garg, 2022).

### Other Initiatives for the Girl Child in India

Alongside the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme, the Indian government has introduced various initiatives to promote the welfare and development of the girl child:

- ❑ **National Girl Child Day:** Celebrated on January 24th every year, this day aims to raise awareness about the importance of girl child rights and their empowerment.
- ❑ **National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education:** This scheme provides financial incentives to encourage girls' enrollment and retention in secondary education.
- ❑ **Scheme for Adolescent Girls:** Targeting girls aged 11 to 14 years, this scheme focuses on improving their nutritional status, health, and overall development.
- ❑ **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana:** Apart from being a part of the BBBP scheme, this savings scheme offers long-term financial security for the girl child's future education and marriage expenses.
- ❑ **CBSE Udaan Scheme:** A scholarship program that supports the education of girl students and encourages them to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields.

The Literature provided offer insights into the "*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (B3P) scheme," a flagship initiative by the Government of India launched in 2015. The primary objective of the B3P program is to address and combat gender imbalance in the sex ratio at birth (SRB) and to ensure the social protection and empowerment of girls.

Several key themes emerge from the reviews:

1. **Gender Inequality and Discrimination:** The reviews consistently highlight the pervasive issue of gender inequality and discrimination in India. Despite cultural ideals that regard women as goddesses, the reality is far from these ideals. Gender-based discrimination and skewed sex ratios are serious challenges that the B3P program seeks to address.
2. **Socio-economic Impact:** The reviews shed light on the socio-economic impact of the B3P scheme, emphasizing its role in reducing gender disparities. The program aims to empower women economically and improve their access to education. It provides financial incentives, scholarships, and awareness campaigns to support this goal.
3. **Education Access:** Access to quality education for girls is a significant focus of the B3P scheme. The reviews discuss how the program has increased enrollment rates and reduced dropout rates among girls. B3P's efforts extend to skill development and vocational training, ensuring that girls have opportunities for growth beyond primary education.
4. **Awareness and Attitude Change:** B3P's awareness campaigns are highlighted as a pivotal tool in changing societal attitudes toward gender equality and the value of educating girls. The reviews suggest that these campaigns have positively influenced communities to support girls' education and celebrate the birth of girl children.
5. **Community Engagement:** The reviews also stress the importance of community engagement. B3P encourages active participation of local communities in initiatives aimed at reducing gender disparities and dropout rates. Community

support is seen as a crucial element in achieving the program's objectives.

6. **Challenges and Barriers:** Despite its successes, B3P faces challenges in addressing deeply rooted cultural norms, gender-based discrimination, and economic factors that contribute to girls' dropout from schools. The reviews emphasize the need for continued efforts and specific strategies to overcome these obstacles.
7. **Government and NGO Collaboration:** Collaboration between government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is identified as a key driver of B3P's success. Partnerships have expanded the reach and impact of the program's initiatives.
8. **Future Directions:** Looking ahead, the reviews call for the expansion of B3P's programs, sustained efforts, and innovative approaches to engage younger generations in promoting (Kritika & Pandey, 2022) gender equality and women's empowerment. Awareness campaigns, financial support, and collaboration with international organizations are seen as avenues for further progress. The most significant increase in knowledge was found for the BBBP programme in general information, awareness of the scheme's benefits, and information about female feticide and abortion. In the Rewari district, however, the greatest increase in knowledge was found for general information, followed by awareness of the scheme's benefits, programmes under the scheme, and information about female feticide and abortion (Rani *et al.* 2019). The new strategies and initiatives must include a number of tools for the social empowerment of women, including the right and access to education, health care, adequate nutrition, the right to property and equal opportunity, the legal and institutional mechanisms to assist women in need, the right to access the media, and finally dispute redressal mechanisms. In India, socio-cultural practises that limit the empowerment of women and girls are deeply rooted, and women themselves hardly ever oppose them. These obstacles don't simply restrict women from reaching

their potential; they also inhibit them from moving forward in life and making decisions that have an impact on their lives (Kritika & Pandey, 2022). Through the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* programme, the Indian government made a good effort to address difficulties involving girl children, from the time they are not yet born until they are adults (Verma *et al.* 2018). In summary the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme as a vital step toward achieving gender parity and improving the socio-economic status of girls in India. While challenges persist, the program's impact on reducing gender disparities, increasing access to education, and changing societal attitudes is evident, offering hope for a more equitable future.

## CONCLUSION

The *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme is a powerful initiative that aims to transform society by empowering and safeguarding the rights of girl children. Through awareness campaigns, government interventions, and financial incentives, the scheme promotes education, gender equality, and the overall well-being of girls. With its expanding reach and notable achievements, BBBP is playing a crucial role in shaping a brighter future for the girl child in India. By nurturing their talents and providing equal opportunities, we can ensure that every girl has the chance to thrive, contribute to society, and be the catalyst for positive change. The *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme stands as a significant initiative in India's pursuit of gender equality and the empowerment of the girl child. By addressing discrimination, promoting education, and providing financial security, the scheme aims to create a more inclusive and equal society. Through collaborative efforts and community engagement, India strives to ensure that every girl child receives the opportunities and support needed to thrive and contribute to the nation's progress. In conclusion, the reviews of the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (B3P) scheme underscore its critical role in addressing gender inequality and discrimination in India. B3P has made significant strides in reducing gender disparities, increasing girls' access to education, and changing societal attitudes through awareness campaigns. However, challenges like deeply ingrained cultural norms and

economic factors continue to impact girls' dropout rates. The program's success relies on sustained efforts, community engagement, and innovative strategies to overcome these obstacles. B3P stands as a beacon of hope for achieving gender parity and empowering girls in India, but continued commitment and collaboration are essential for its long-term impact.

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