



# AGRI MAGAZINE

(International E-Magazine for Agricultural Articles)

Volume: 03, Issue: 04 (April, 2026)

Available online at <http://www.agrimagazine.in>

© Agri Magazine, ISSN: 3048-8656

## Beyond the Slogan: Has Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Truly Transformed Gender Equality in India?

\*Indrajit Mandal and Namitha Rajendran

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Extension Education, I. Ag. Sc.,

Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-221005, Uttar Pradesh, India

\*Corresponding Author's email: [namitharajendran005@gmail.com](mailto:namitharajendran005@gmail.com)

India's Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme, launched on 22 January 2015 in Panipat, Haryana, completes a decade in 2025. Initiated in response to a declining Child Sex Ratio of 918 girls per 1,000 boys and low institutional deliveries, the programme has evolved from a targeted awareness campaign into a nationwide movement for the survival, protection, and education of the girl child. Over the past decade, the Sex Ratio at Birth has improved to 930, girls' secondary enrolment has risen to 80.2%, institutional deliveries have reached 97.3%, and the overall sex ratio has increased to 1,020 females per 1,000 males. Implemented under Mission Shakti, BBBP integrates normative, regulatory, and economic interventions to address gender disparities. Despite these gains, challenges such as son preference, inheritance inequality, dowry practices, and regional and social disparities persist. This article critically examines BBBP's achievements and gaps, arguing that the next phase must move beyond awareness toward structural entitlement.

**Keywords:** BBBP, gender equality, sex ratio, girl child education, Mission Shakti, Viksit Bharat

### Introduction

India has always been a land of daughters of Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Durga. Yet for decades, the birth of a girl child was greeted in too many homes with silence rather than celebration. The Child Sex Ratio (CSR) had fallen from 927 in 2001 to a troubling 918 in 2011, with some districts of Haryana and Rajasthan plunging below 850, a demographic distress signal India could no longer ignore (Census of India, 2011). Gender inequality in India is a web of interconnected crises: patriarchal inheritance structures that make sons economic assets and daughters financial liabilities, a dowry system that despite being illegal since 1961 — persists in practice, and the spread of ultrasound technology that enabled sex-selective abortions. Together, these forces were making daughters disappear statistically, socially, and in too many cases, literally.

In this light, Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced a policy called "Save the Daughter, Educate the Daughter" in Panipat, Haryana, on 22nd January 2015, popularly known as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP). The selection of the site was intentional because Haryana was among states in India with the lowest sex ratio at birth (PIB, 2025, Jan., 21). The Indian constitution had been providing equality since its inception. For example, Article 14 guaranteed equal rights for all, while Article 15 (3) provided for special provisions for women in India. In addition, Article 39(d) ensured equal pay for both men and women. However, despite legislation, no transformation is possible without proper implementation (Halder *et al.*, 2026). BBBP was a commitment made at the national level to put the constitutional provision into action.

## Background, Objectives and Key Features

### Policy Background

However, post-independence India saw many legal measures to protect the girl child through education – like the Operation Blackboard Scheme in 1987, the National Policy on Education in 1968, and the Prenatal Diagnostic Technique Act in 1994. However, the execution did not go as smoothly as it should have (Halder *et al.*, 2026). By 2012, the government classified certain districts that recorded abnormally low SRB ratios as "gender critical districts." It is this very data from these districts that led to BBBP's formation (IBEF. n.d.).

### Objectives

BBBP's design incorporated the following six measurable goals: (i) increase SRB by two points every year (IBEF. n.d.), (ii) maintain institutional delivery rate above 95 percent, (iii) register an additional one percent of pregnant women in the first trimester for Antenatal Care services, (iv) enroll one percent more girls into secondary schools, (v) minimize dropouts at secondary level and (vi) sensitize individuals about MHM (PIB, 2025, Jan., 21).

### Key Features

The BBBP is a 100 percent centrally funded program being implemented through sub-schemes of Mission Shakti namely Sambhal (Safety) and Samarthya (Empowerment). The financial allocation depends on district level SRB ratio – ₹40 lakhs annually in case of SRB ratio  $\leq 918$ , ₹30 lakhs in 919-952, and ₹20 lakhs for more than 952. Three channels drive delivery simultaneously:

**Table 1: Implementation Channels of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme**

Channel	Mechanism and Instruments
Normative	Awareness campaigns— Selfie with Daughters, Beti Janmotsav, Yashaswini Bike Expedition
Regulatory	PCPNDT enforcement, Digital Guddi-Gudda Board for real-time SRB monitoring
Economic	Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana savings scheme; skilling via Betiyan Bane Kushal

Target groups span households, schools, Anganwadi Centres, medical professionals, Panchayati Raj Institutions, SHGs, and media recognising that changing gender norms requires mobilising every layer of society. At district level, SANKALP Hubs serve as single-window convergence centres, with Anganwadi and ASHA workers as the last-mile delivery agents (PIB, 2025, Jan., 21).

### A Decade of Results — What the Data Shows

A scientist never celebrates a hypothesis; she celebrates evidence. Here the evidence is with appropriate caveats genuinely encouraging.

**Table 2: Key Performance Indicators of BBBP — Baseline vs. Current Status (2014 to 2025)**

Indicator	2014–15 Baseline	2023–25 Latest	Change
Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)	918	930 (HMIS, 2024–25)	+12 points
Overall Sex Ratio	943 (Census 2011)	1,020 (NFHS-5)	+77 points
Girls' GER – Secondary	75.51%	80.2% (UDISE)	+4.7%
Institutional Deliveries	61%	97.3%	+36.3%
1st Trimester Antenatal Care Reg.	61%	71%	+10%
Schools with Girls' Toilets	92.1%	97.4%	+5.3%

The example of Haryana merits particular mention in this regard, as SRB has increased from 876 (2005) to 923 (2019), showing statistical significance and having a positive monthly trend directly contributed by BBBP (Gupta *et al.*, 2021). In surveys conducted in households in Madhya Pradesh, it was found that 89.5% BBBP awareness existed among respondents, 63.2% were encouraging girls to study, and 40.4% saw a change for the better in literacy rates in the villages. The most remarkable change is probably that of institutional deliveries increasing from 61% to 97.3% through the combined effect of BBBP campaigns and Janani Suraksha Yojana initiatives (Bhartia *et al.*, 2024, PIB. 2022, Dec., 14).

These innovations were effective in ensuring that the programs were implemented on ground. For example, the bike rally Yashaswini involved 150 female cyclists, who rode more than 10,000 km, while the initiative 'Selfie With Daughters' received substantial involvement from the masses (PIB, 2025, Jan., 21). Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav was successful in ensuring that more than 100,000 drop-out girls were brought back into the schooling system. Initiatives such as Bal Cabinet ensured participation by the girls in leadership roles, while Collector Ki Class provided free training to needy children. Moreover, 487 Sukanya Samridhi Grams were established in North Gujarat, resulting in more than 450,000 savings bank accounts opened by girls (IBEF. n.d.).



Figure 1: National Thematic Workshop on Women and Child Development

## An Honest Reckoning: Challenges That Remain

A good scientist does not hide the error bars. BBBP's successes are real; so are its limitations.

### Critical Gaps in BBBP's First Decade

**Regional Heterogeneity:** Of the 640 districts, only 422 had improvements in their SRB within the first four years. The 34% did not make any gains IBEF. (n.d.). The SRB of Haryana fell to 910 in 2024, its lowest in eight years (Pati, 2025, January 4).

**Structural vs. Symptomatic Change:** The BBBP has been successful in raising awareness, but it has not succeeded in reforming the economic structure which supports son preference through inheritance systems which discriminate against females, gendered divisions of labor which assign caregiving roles to women, and dowry systems which continue to exist. (Hossain & Nikolov, 2021).

**Enforcement Gaps:** Unregulated services for determining the sex of fetuses are still a problem, even in cities and across different states. An awareness campaign without any legal action is like a catalyst without a container, using a scientific analogy.

**Intersectional Exclusions:** A third-party evaluation by NITI Aayog (2019–2024) found that the SAMBAL vertical of Mission Shakti, including Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, is highly relevant and effective in addressing gender issues. However, it also highlights persistent intersectional challenges, as factors like caste, disability, tribal identity, and migration limit the programme's reach. The study emphasizes the need for stronger inter-sectoral convergence and targeted strategies to better include the most marginalised girls (PIB, 2026, Feb., 06).

## The Road Ahead: From Progress to Structural Transformation

The overall sex ratio of India has become 1020 in totality, wherein the sex ratio in rural areas is 1037 while in urban areas it is 985 (NFHS-5) – the highest ever since 1881. The Child Sex Ratio has increased from 918 in 2011 to 933 in 2023. Female literacy has also been improved from 54% in 2001 to approximately 74% in 2025 (Census 2001; PIB, 2022, Dec.,14). It is in such a favorable environment that the seeds of BBBP have been sown.

This is followed by a more concrete stage where progress made is turned into change in structure. As seen from a recent NITI Aayog assessment (2019–2024), the Sambal vertical, which includes BBBP, was very effective, yet emphasized the need for greater convergence between different sectors in order to serve the most marginalized girls (NITI AAYOG, n.d.). The success achieved can already be seen from improvements in SRB and enhanced coverage in terms of Mission Shakti platforms, which also include SANKALP centers converging with BBBP (PIB, 2026, Feb.,13). However, sustainable change can only happen through greater

economic empowerment, stricter enforcement of re-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, greater involvement of the community via SHGs and women's groups, as well as inclusion of tribal, disabled, and other marginalized girls based on disaggregated data (MoWCD, n.d.; International Institute for Population Science, 2022). The end result by 2035 should be quite clear all districts should show an overall improvement. In essence, BBBP needs to transition from a campaign for creating awareness to being a system of entitlement and accountability for each and every girl.

## Conclusion

As Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam emphasized, educating the girl child is synonymous with educating the nation. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative reflects India's commitment to this principle. Over the past decade, notable progress has been achieved in terms of improvement in sex ratio at birth, girls' secondary enrolment, institutional deliveries and the overall sex ratio has risen to 1,020 females per 1,000 males. These figures signify real improvements in survival, education, and maternal safety. Over the past decade, notable progress has been achieved: the Sex Ratio at Birth has improved, girls' secondary enrolment has increased to 80.2%, institutional deliveries have reached 97.3%, and the overall sex ratio has risen to 1,020 females per 1,000 males. These figures signify real improvements in survival, education, and maternal safety.

However, persistent structural challenges remain. Gender inequality continues to be embedded in socio-economic norms, inheritance practices, and uneven policy enforcement. Regional disparities are evident, with a significant proportion of districts yet to achieve consistent improvement in SRB. Moreover, intersectional barriers related to caste, disability, tribal identity, and migration still restrict access for the most marginalised groups. BBBP has managed to evolve itself into a nationwide movement, but its future hinges upon turning awareness into concrete rights. The way forward lies in ensuring better implementation of PCPNDT Act, economic empowerment, increasing participation of the community through SHGs, and using evidence-based approaches. Improvement needs to be made evident by 2035 within each district. The daughters of India are now coming into focus as change-makers; the onus is on the institutions to foster this transformation.

## References

1. Bhartia, A., Agarwal, R., & Baruah, R. (2024). The Effectiveness of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme: Evidence from Madhya Pradesh (2015-2023). *Journal of Student Research*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.47611/jsrhs.v13i4.8016>
2. Census of India. (2001, 2011). Census tables. Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Retrieved from: <https://censusindia.gov.in/census.website/data/census-tables>
3. Gupta, R., Singhal, G. L., Goyal, A., Kaur, G., Purohit, N., & Prinja, S. (2021). Combatting the imbalance of sex ratio at birth: medium-term impact of India's National Programme of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao in the Haryana State of India. *Health Policy and Planning*, 36(10), 1499-1507. doi: 10.1093/heapol/czab111. PMID: 34508362.
4. Halder, Sangita & Bika. (2026). Fighting for Rights through SDGs: Beti Bachao Beti Padhao. 4. 1-31. Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/399880245\\_Fighting\\_for\\_Rights\\_through\\_SDGs\\_Beti\\_Bachao\\_Beti\\_Padhao](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/399880245_Fighting_for_Rights_through_SDGs_Beti_Bachao_Beti_Padhao)
5. Hossain, M. S., & Nikolov, P. (2021). Entitled to property: inheritance laws, female bargaining power, and child health in India. In IZA Institute of Labor Economics, *IZA Discussion Paper Series*. Retrieved from: <https://docs.iza.org/dp14498.pdf>
6. IBEF. (n.d.). Beti Bachao, beti padhao (BBBP) Scheme. India Brand Equity Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://www.ibef.org/government-schemes/beti-bachao-beti-padhao>
7. International Institute for Population Science. (2022). National Family Health Survey (NFHS - 5), 2019–21, INDIA REPORT. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. Retrieved April 17, 2026, from <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR375/FR375.pdf>

8. MoWCD, (n.d.). BBBP Public Insights. Missan Shakti. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. Retrieved from: <https://missionshakti.wcd.gov.in/resource>
9. NITI AAYOG, (n.d.). Women and Child Development. National portal of India. Government of India. Retrieved from: <https://niti.gov.in/divisions/division/women-and-child-development>
10. Pati, I. (2025, January 4). Hry sex ratio hits lowest point since 2016, Ggn among dists with sharpest fall. *The Times of India*. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/gurgaon/hry-sex-ratio-hits-lowest-point-since-2016-ggn-among-dists-with-sharpest-fall/articleshow/116948922.cms>
11. PIB. (2022, Dec.,14). *Significant Decline in Maternal Mortality in India*. Ministry of Women and Child Development. PIB Delhi. Retrieved from: <https://www.pib.gov.in/FeaturesDeatils.aspx?NoteId=151238&reg=3&lang=2>
12. PIB. (2022, Mar., 16). *Sex Ratio at Birth*. Ministry of Women and Child Development. Govt. of India, Press Information Bureau. Retrieved from: <https://www.pib.gov.in/FeaturesDeatils.aspx?NoteId=151238&reg=3&lang=2>
13. PIB. (2025, Jan., 21). *Empowering India's Daughters A Decade of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao's Success*. Ministry of Women and Child Development. Govt. of India, Press Information Bureau. Retrieved from: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2120877&reg=3&lang=2>
14. PIB. (2026, Feb., 06). *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao focuses on creating mindset and behavioural changes towards the girl child*. Ministry of Women and Child Development. Press Information Bureau, Delhi. Retrieved from: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2224413&reg=3&lang=1#:~:text=Further%2C%20once%20in%20a%20year,80.2%25%20in%202024%2D25>
15. PIB. (2026, Feb., 13). *Government has adopted multi-pronged approach to address the educational, social and economic empowerment of girls*. Press Information Bureau, Delhi. Retrieved from: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2224413&reg=3&lang=1#:~:text=Further%2C%20once%20in%20a%20year,80.2%25%20in%202024%2D25>