



ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF FLAGSHIP GOVERNMENT BBBP SCHEME ON WOMEN'S EDUCATION: A PRIMARY SURVEY-BASED STUDY IN MAHARASHTRA

Economics

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the implementation and impact of women development and livelihood enhancement scheme in Maharashtra, drawing upon a comprehensive state-level assessment. The study explores how major government initiatives such as Beti Bachho Bedi Padhaao (BBBP) have influenced socio-economic women conditions across rural and urban areas. Using extensive fieldwork and a multi-stage random sampling approach covering 811 households across 10 districts, the paper highlights key outcomes, success stories, and existing gaps. The findings offer valuable insights for strengthening inclusive and sustainable development policies in Maharashtra.

KEYWORDS

Government Initiative, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Child Sex Ratios, Women Development

INTRODUCTION

The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme was introduced by the Government of India on 22 January 2015 as a national initiative to address the persistent problem of gender imbalance and to promote the overall development of the girl child. The scheme represents a coordinated effort among the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Ministry of Education, highlighting the government's integrated approach to women's welfare and empowerment.

The scheme was first implemented in selected districts with adverse child sex ratios, where social and cultural biases had negatively affected the survival and status of girl children. Maharashtra was included as a priority state under the programme due to concerns related to declining child sex ratios in certain districts. The initiative seeks to transform societal attitudes by reinforcing the message that girls and boys have equal value and rights in society.

A key objective of the BBBP scheme is to prevent gender-based discrimination, particularly at the stage of birth, and to ensure that girls receive equal opportunities for education, health care, and personal development. By strengthening service delivery systems and promoting awareness about women's rights, the scheme aims to create a supportive environment for girls from birth through education.

According to Census data, the child sex ratio in India declined from 927 girls per 1,000 boys to 918 girls per 1,000 boys by 2011, which raised serious social and demographic concerns. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme was launched by the Government of India in January 2015 in response to the alarming decline in the child sex ratio in the country. According to projections by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), the sex ratio was expected to decline from 939 in 2011 to 898 by 2031, highlighting the urgency of policy intervention. Initially implemented in 100 districts with low child sex ratios, the scheme was later expanded to cover all districts of India. The programme aims to address gender imbalance through awareness generation, improvement in girls' education, and enhancement of health and survival outcomes.

Reviewed Literature

In response, the BBBP scheme focuses on celebrating the birth of the girl child, discouraging outdated social practices, and encouraging communities to actively participate in improving the status of women. In Maharashtra, the scheme plays an important role in fostering gender sensitivity, enhancing educational participation of girls, and promoting long-term women's empowerment.

Kumari (2017) outlined the expected outcomes of the BBBP scheme, which include improvement in the sex ratio, reduction in under-five mortality, increase in institutional deliveries, better sanitation facilities for girls in schools, and improvement in the nutritional status of girls. Bhattacharya and Deb (2020) emphasized that the BBBP campaign plays a crucial role in promoting girls' school enrolment and retention, which in turn helps in reducing the incidence of child marriage.

At the grassroots level, Rani, Dahiya, and Yadav (2019) conducted a

village-based study in Haryana and found a significant increase in awareness regarding female foeticide and girls' education after exposure to BBBP awareness programmes. Similarly, Devi, Gupta, and Verma (2021) observed a high level of awareness about the scheme among respondents in Kanpur district. However, Sarkar and Biswas (2019) noted that despite policy efforts, practices such as prenatal sex determination continue in certain regions, indicating gaps in effective implementation. Gupta et al. (2018) reported a statistically significant improvement in the sex ratio at birth in Haryana after the implementation of BBBP. Majhi (2023) further argued that BBBP, along with state-level initiatives, has contributed to delaying early marriage among girls, though stronger legal measures and sustained awareness campaigns are still required.

Overall, the literature suggests that while the BBBP scheme has positively influenced awareness, attitudes, and demographic indicators, challenges related to deep-rooted social norms and uneven implementation persist. The present study seeks to build upon these findings through a primary survey-based analysis.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the level of awareness among households about the objectives and key components of the BBBP scheme.
- To examine the perception and attitudes of parents and community members towards the girl child, with special reference to education and health, under the influence of the BBBP scheme.
- To analyze the impact of the BBBP scheme on enrolment, retention, and continuation of girl children in school, based on primary survey data.
- To identify the challenges and gaps in the implementation of the BBBP scheme at the grassroots level and suggest suitable measures for its effective functioning.

Sampling Framework

To begin with, primary survey-based research requires a comprehensive sampling design. The present study uses a multi-stage random sampling method, which is a type of cluster sampling. In this method the population is divided in clusters that are embedded into one another. Thus, under multi-stage sampling process the sampling units are hierarchically arranged: primary, secondary, tertiary, etc. where units are established in accordance with the number of stages in the multi-stage sampling design (Shimizu, 2014). In this case the study applies this method in the following way:

Stage 1: 10 districts of state of Maharashtra are divided in five administrative divisions namely, Amravati Division, Aurangabad Division, Pune Division, Nashik Division, Kolhapur Division. In this stage two districts were randomly selected from each administrative division this were Amravati and Yavatmal, Aurangabad, and Parbhani, Satara and Kolhapur, Nashik and Malegaon, Pune and Ahilyanagar (old name Ahmednagar) from each district three villages which are the part of one tehsil were identified for actual survey. While efforts were made to cover all administrative divisions, logistical constraints resulted in the survey focusing on all five specific divisions: and Nagpur divisions were regrettably not included in the survey. Under the Amravati Division, Amravati and Yavatmal districts were surveyed. In the Aurangabad Division, Parbhani and Aurangabad District were

included in the survey. In the Nashik Division, Nashik and Malegaon districts were included in the survey while Pune division, Pune and Ahilyanagar Districts were surveyed. Lastly, under the Kolhapur Division, Satara and Kolhapur District were surveyed. These selections culminated in a total of ten districts where the survey was conducted. **Stage 2:** Next, from each of the 10 selected districts, the survey randomly selected Gram Panchayats and Blocks. Through this process, a total of 30-Gram Panchayats and 10 Blocks were identified and surveyed. **Stage 3:** From each of the total 30-Gram Panchayats and 10 Blocks, the study identifies villages randomly. **State 4:** Finally, from each village, based on the list of beneficiaries obtained from gram panchayat or office of Block Development Officers (BDO) we identify households such that we have at least 10-15 beneficiaries of above mentioned scheme. This results in a planned sample size of 703 households. Additionally, the study surveyed approximately 104 households from urban areas to assess the impact of the BBBP. In total, the survey covered 811 households.

Descriptive Statistics of Survey Coverage and Household Demographics

Table 2.1 represents key descriptive statistics from a survey conducted across various districts and villages in Maharashtra. As already mentioned, covering an expansive scope, the survey spanned across 10 districts, 10 BDOs and 30 villages, engaging with a substantial sample of 811 households, encompassing both rural (703) and urban areas (104). This broad reach signifies a comprehensive representation of the diverse population across the region. The demographic breakdown further illuminates the inclusivity of the study, with significant participation from various social categories. Notably, the survey included 213 households from Scheduled Castes, 73 from Scheduled Tribes, 225 from Other Backward Classes, and 291 from the General category. Additionally, 9 households identified as 'Other' or 'Don't Know,' adding depth to the socio-economic spectrum covered.

The study comprehensively assessed the outreach of BBBP government schemes across Maharashtra, revealing significant participation and impact. In Maharashtra, the BBBP emerged with the good coverage, benefiting 811 households. This analysis underscores the diverse range of government interventions and their substantial impact on households across different socio-economic sectors in Maharashtra. Moreover, the data highlights the agrarian backbone of the region, with 432 households owning land. The average landholding size of approximately 2.34 acres per household underscores the importance of agriculture in livelihoods and local economies. These statistics offer a comprehensive snapshot of Maharashtra's socio economic dynamics, providing policymakers with valuable insights to tailor interventions effectively.

Analysis Of BBBP Scheme Performance:

Awareness Levels

The analysis of awareness about the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme reveals that while 35.4% of respondents are familiar with the program, a significant portion comprising 64.6% are not aware of it. This indicates a need for enhanced awareness campaigns and outreach efforts to ensure broader dissemination of information about the BBBP initiative. Increasing awareness can play a pivotal role in promoting the objectives of the BBBP scheme, which aims to address gender-based discrimination and promote the education and welfare of girls in India.

Societal Attitudes

An overwhelming majority of respondents, constituting 99.9%, believe that if a family were to find out that their child is a girl, they would still welcome her. This positive perception suggests a shift in societal attitudes towards gender equality and acceptance of girl children, aligning with the objectives of the BBBP scheme. It reflects a growing awareness and recognition of the importance of empowering and supporting girls in society.

Gender Distributions Of Births

Among respondents who reported the birth of babies in their families since 2015, the gender distribution indicates a relatively balanced ratio of male to female births. 49.20% of reported births were boys, while 50.80% were girls, suggesting a positive trend towards gender equity in new births within the surveyed population. This balanced gender distribution signifies progress towards addressing gender-based discrimination in family planning and childbirth practices.

Infant Mortality

A very small percentage (4.20%) of respondents reported the unfortunate event of a baby or young infant below 2 years of age dying since 2015. The gender of the deceased baby was reported as male. While the incidence of infant mortality is low within the surveyed population, it highlights the need for continued efforts to ensure the health and well-being of all children, irrespective of gender.

Intentions For Girls Education

A significant proportion (69.69%) of respondents expressed their intention to enroll or have already enrolled their daughters for secondary education. This reflects a positive attitude towards girls' education, aligning with the objectives of the BBBP scheme to promote access to education and empower girls.

School Infrastructure

In surveyed schools, 84.51% reported the presence of functional toilets for girls, indicating progress towards providing essential sanitation facilities. However, concerning the availability of sanitary napkins in school toilets, the majority (76.67%) reported their absence, highlighting a gap in ensuring menstrual hygiene management in educational institutions. Addressing this gap is crucial for promoting girls' attendance and participation in education while ensuring their dignity and well-being. Overall, the analysis underscores both progress and areas for improvement in advancing the objectives of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme. While positive societal attitudes and intentions towards girls' education are evident, there is a need for heightened awareness, continued efforts to address gender-based discrimination, and investment in infrastructure to ensure the holistic development and empowerment of girls across India. The data indicates a slight gender disparity in the distribution of children born, with 46.26% being boys and 53.74% being girls.

Regarding the consideration of a good marriage opportunity, a notable gender disparity emerges. While 33.82% of boys outrightly reject the idea, only 17.72% of girls share the same sentiment. Conversely, a higher proportion of girls (29.11%) express willingness to consider a good marriage opportunity compared to boys (16.18%). A significant portion of respondents from both genders remain unsure or hesitant, with 41.18% of boys and 51.90% of girls indicating that their decision depends on various factors. Additionally, a small percentage of respondents refuse to answer, constituting 8.82% of boys and 1.27% of girls.

Aspirations For Employment After Completing Education

In terms of aspirations for employment after completing education, a substantial majority of both boys (70.59%) and girls (60.76%) express a desire for employment. However, there are differences in uncertainty levels, with a higher percentage of girls (39.24%) indicating uncertainty compared to boys (27.94%). A negligible percentage of boys (1.47%) express disinterest in taking up employment after completing education, while none of the girls surveyed share this sentiment.

BBBP Scheme Impact on Behavior towards Male and Female Child - Average Age

For the question, till what age/class do you plan or hope he/she studies? The average age for boys is 19.38 and for girls are 19.73. The combined average age is 19.57. The difference between boys and girls is -0.35. The p-value at a 5% level of significance is 0.7805, indicating that the difference in planned or hoped-for ages of education between male and female children is not statistically significant. For the question, at what age do you plan or hope he/she will marry? The average age for boys is 25.57 and for girls are 23.66. The combined average age is 24.54. The difference between boys and girls is 1.92. The p-value at a 5% level of significance is 0.0001, indicating that the difference in planned or hoped for ages of marriage between male and female children is statistically significant.

Table 1. Scheme Impact on Behavior Towards Male and Female Child - Average Age

	Boys	Girls	Combined	Boys and Girls difference	p-value at 5% LOS
Till what age/class do you plan or hope he/she studies?	19.38235	19.73418	19.57143	-0.3518243	0.7805

At what age do you plan or hope he/she will marry?	25.57353	23.65823	24.54422	1.915302	0.0001
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Source: Calculation Based on Survey Data

doi:10.1002/9781118445112.stat0570Waldmann, E. (2018). Quartile regression: A short story on how and why. *Statistical Modeling*, 18(3-4), 203-218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1471082X18759142>

Findings Of The Study

The study reveals that the Maharashtra represents a comprehensive endeavor to dissect and evaluate the intricate web of socio-economic factors shaping the lives of its residents. This comprehensive approach aimed to provide a holistic understanding of the beneficiaries of rural development and livelihood enhancement schemes in the region of Maharashtra. Spanning diverse landscapes, cultures and communities, Maharashtra presents a microcosm of India's socio-economic diversity, characterized by a blend of urban dynamism and rural resilience. At the heart of this complexity lies a shared aspiration for progress and prosperity, fuelled by a collective determination to overcome challenges and build a brighter future for generations to come. Central to the report's narrative is the notion of inclusive development, which serves as a guiding principle for all government schemes and initiatives. In a state as diverse as Maharashtra, inclusivity is not merely a slogan but a fundamental imperative, essential for ensuring that the benefits of development reach every corner of society. Through a robust sampling framework, the study attempts to capture the voices and experiences of marginalized communities, whose perspectives often remain unheard amidst the cacophony of mainstream discourse. By amplifying these voices, the report seeks to empower communities to become active participants in their own development journey, fostering a sense of ownership and agency that is essential for sustainable change. The key pillar of the study is its assessment of government scheme and programs aimed at addressing the myriad challenges facing the state. The study assesses flagship scheme like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao in Maharashtra, providing insights for policymakers.

The major findings of the primary survey indicate a mixed impact of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme at the household and institutional levels. The study reveals that only 35.3 per cent of households were aware of the BBBP scheme, suggesting limited penetration of scheme-specific information and the need for stronger awareness and outreach initiatives. Despite this, a notable 69.69 per cent of households reported a positive change in their perception towards the education of the girl child, reflecting a gradual shift in societal attitudes and growing acceptance of gender equality in educational opportunities. The survey further highlights improvements in school infrastructure, with 84.51 per cent of households confirming the availability of functional toilets for girls, which supports a safer and more inclusive learning environment. However, the availability of sanitary napkins in school toilets remains critically low, as only 23.33 per cent of households reported such facilities. This gap points to persistent challenges in menstrual hygiene management, which may adversely affect school attendance and retention of adolescent girls. Overall, while the BBBP scheme has contributed to positive attitudinal changes and infrastructural improvements, the findings underline the need for enhanced awareness campaigns and greater focus on health and hygiene-related support within schools to ensure holistic empowerment of the girl child.

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