

Increasing The Sex Ratio Through Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao: Cross Analysis Of Critical Success Factors

Ramani Dhanaraj¹

Head, Dept of Office Management
St. Joseph's College for Women (Autonomous)
Visakhapatnam
ramani@stjosephsvizag.com

Dr. T. Bhaskara Sudha²

Head, Dept of English
St. Joseph's College for Women (Autonomous)
Visakhapatnam
bhaskarasudha@stjosephsvizag.com

ABSTRACT

"If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her, man could not be".

When Gandhiji, asserted the above statement on the power of women, he was prophesying that women were capable of bringing about change in the society through her unusual natural powers coupled with her trained skills. Women's empowerment vis-à-vis their economic and political independence however would be based on their increasing numbers in public and corporate governance. .

The 2011 Population Census indicated a fact sheet of 940 females: 1000 males, an improvement from the 2001 data of 922 females to 1000 males. This reveals that India as a progressive nation is capable of both creating and sustaining a healthy sex ratio. Over 50 years, India had been maintaining a stable 930 females per 1000 males better than many Asian countries. However, the country's sex ratio at birth, which is the number of females born per 1,000 males, is showing a worrying decline, according to a Sample Registration System (SRS) survey. The figure stood at 896 for 2015-17, down from 898 in 2014-16 and 900 in 2013-15.

As a result of a son meta preference, the economic survey estimates that India could have close to 21 million “unwanted girls,” i.e., girls whose parents wanted to have sons instead. One of the major programmes over the years like ‘Save the girl child’ ‘Nari Shakti’ ‘Beti bachao, Beti padhao’ had the key focus of increasing women power through ‘saving them in the womb’.

Key words: *declining sex ratio, women’s empowerment, ‘Beti bachao, beti padhao’ Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)*

1. Introduction:

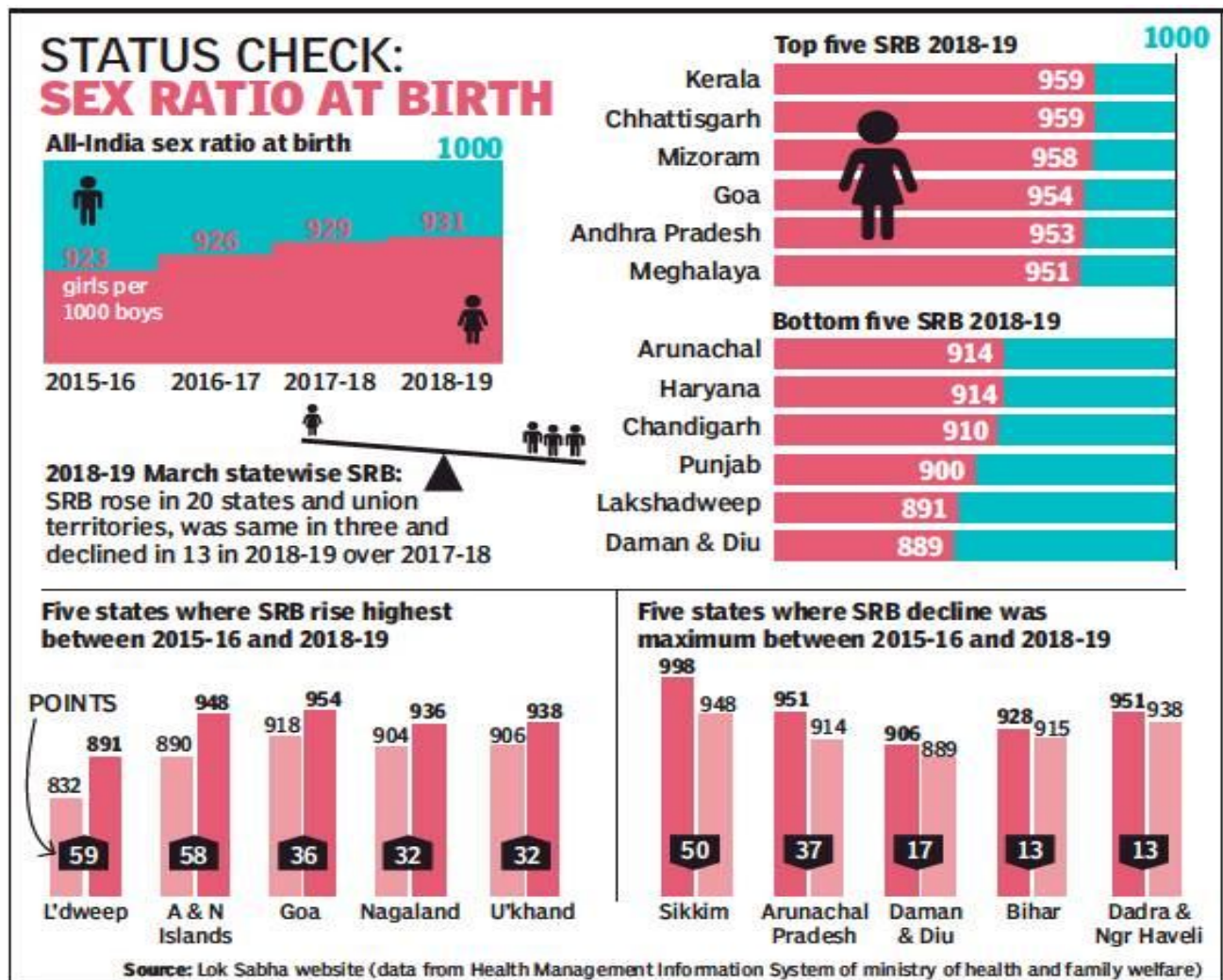
For all the social campaigns and awareness drives to end sex selection in India, the preference for sons is still going strong. In recent years, though, it has taken a more subtle form.

According to an Economic survey in 2017-18, many Indian parents are opting to continue having children till they have the desired number of sons. The survey terms this phenomenon as the son “meta” preference, and suggests that while it avoids sex-selective abortion, it can still hurt female children by reducing the resources available to them. Many a time girls do not have access or equity to the resources that they are eligible for through the various promised schemes by the Government.

“Families where a son is born are more likely to stop having children than families where a girl is born. This is suggestive of parents employing ‘stopping rules’,” says the survey, which was led by chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian.

2. Literature Review

Going back to the initial days after independence, it appears that the situation had been more than bleak. Burns et al. (2001), speculated that (1) the patriarchal role is still emphasized for a democratic society, (2) that women have fewer resources than men that are associated with running for political office, (3) that there is institutionalized discrimination, and (4) socialization of women lead them to different conclusions from men. It’s not the numbers game – having just more Women but having women who maintain good health and participate in corporate and public governance.



According to the World Health Organisation, the natural “sex ratio at birth” (SRB) is considered to be 1.05. This means that at birth, on average, there are 105 males for every 100 females. The chart above shows how, in India, the sex ratio changes with each child that is born. The sex ratio of the first child in Indian households with more than one child is 1.07, fairly close to the biologically determined natural sex ratio. But the sex ratio of the last child for first-borns is 1.82—heavily skewed towards boys, according to the authors of the survey. The contrast becomes clearer when India is compared to a country like Indonesia, where the SRLC is close to the ideal sex ratio, regardless of birth order and whether or not the child is the last to be born.

Looking at the scenario today, with young people and mature educated adults being influenced by the social media through focus groups and tweeting, it was pertinent to study a trend of increasing sex ratio or vice versa. Besides with the revolution of the social media, namely Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp having made a dent into the

electoral mandate since 2014 by the BJP and other regional parties too, it would serve a purpose to find out whether people have their own informed opinions or are just being part of the flow of concretized public opinion. The study focuses on the increasing quantum of young and middle aged people and their awareness of women in varied roles in India.

3. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP)

A large section of Indian society prefers a male child and the affluent groups even more so. People in urban areas are in a better position to exploit the system as they have greater access to more and better medical facilities. So, they often resort to neonatal tests, although these are banned in India. This allows them to abort a girl child. Traditionally, societies in West Bengal and the North-East are matriarchal. It may be noted that the SRS data captures only births registered in the records as against the Census that captures all the residents of the country.

Steered into action after witnessing a steadily declining sex ratio in India (2011: 918 girls for 1,000 boys), the Modi government launched its flagship Project Rs. 200 crore project called 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' in October 2014. This programme aims to provide the girl child survival, safety and education, and also fight patriarchal and regressive mindsets by celebrating the birth of a girl child. It seeks to fight gender bias that girls face at all stages of their lives, and offers them benefits which make them hold their heads high and become achievers.

Under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana

- The Savings scheme called the Sukanya Samriddhi account has been introduced which is exclusively meant for a girl child, where parents or guardians of the child can save money for their daughters to be used for the girl child's education or marriage. There is no tax deduction from this account and this was visualised as solving the issue of girl child considered as a financial burden. This yojana is making a strong case in saving the girl child, and encouraging parents to educate their girls. It is focused on promoting gender equality, girl child protection and providing girls with medical aid. The scheme provides good rate of interest. Withdrawal from this account is permitted only by the girl child, after she attains

the age of 18. This provides strong financial security for the girls when they become adults.

- ☛ There are other schemes like Ladli Laxhi which has been initiated by state government which provide financial help to Girl child.
- ☛ There has been no school fees for girls in government schools. Some private school also provide discount to girl child.
- ☛ Women have been given preference in getting loans under Mudra Loan Scheme

4. Critical Success Factors of the BBBP

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP)	Save girl child, educate girl child
Scheme Target	To balance child sex ratio between both genders (Boy & Girls)
Launch Date	22-Jan-15
Place of Launch	Panipat, Haryana
Social Media Hashtag Promotion	#SelfieWithDaughter
Brand ambassador	Madhuri Dixit Nene
Number of Identified districts with Low Child Sex Ratio	100
Strategies used in BBBP	Social Mobilization and Communication Campaign
Money given to villages for maintaining balanced sex ratio	Rs. 1 Crore
Who Controlling BBBP Scheme?	3 Ministerial Department (Women & Child, Health & Family Welfare, and HRD)

The program was formally inaugurated in January 2015 in Haryana, the state with India's lowest SRB. Haryana enforced a 1 lakh Rupee reward for reporting PCPNDT (Pre-Conception, Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique) and MTP (Medical Termination of Pregnancy) Act violations. One year later, Haryana witnessed 834 girls for every 1000

boys (vs. India's average: 919) has improved to 903. This marked the first decade of Haryana crossing the 900:1000 ratio.

Critical analysis of BBBP Project: Modi's ambitious Beti Bacchao, Beti Padhao which took off in 2015 aimed at creating better awareness among people with regard to welfare schemes intended for girls. Earlier in 2019, the budget allocated for this progressive, flagship programme was also doubled. However, according to the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, literally more than 90 percent of allocated funds for the programme from last fiscal year still remain unused for reasons unknown.

These findings only suggest that it is not a mere cultural backlog that makes the situation unfavorable for girls, but beyond calculatable logic. A lack of strong political will, coupled with inept implementation of policies at grass-roots level, is also to be blamed. It is disheartening that in the world's largest democracy, we are still celebrating success stories of the first woman pilots, woman space scientists and woman drivers. Though they are all proud achievements for a country whose history is burdened with the subjugation of women, we are far behind in ensuring an equal society which is fair to our girls.

5. Conclusions

Economical and Social Experts say that the limited success of the scheme is largely due to the fact that the government isn't releasing the funds effectively and that it is spending too much on publicity instead of concrete interventions in the education and health sectors. According to economist Mitali Nikore, "Only a small proportion of the funds, about 5 percent each, is allocated for education and health interventions". "Further, another 5% is allocated for training and capacity building at the district level, with training at the central level receiving only 1%," she further wrote in a blog in The Times of India. She terms the pattern of expenditure, "highly skewed towards just one pillar of the scheme" – publicity. According to her, the government should have instead made provisions for "strengthening long term, measurable outcomes related to education and health envisaged under the scheme". So though the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme

might have generated a lot of advertising and buzz for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it's success hasn't quite been up to the mark as envisaged. There are criticisms levelled against the amount spent on publicity and having a celebrity star as Brand Ambassador and being lavish in endorsements.

The lack of policy implementation, indiscriminate diversion of funds and the failure of monitoring mechanisms are some of the reasons for the failure of the BBBPS. To achieve the objectives of the scheme, the government must ensure stricter enforcement of the policy guidelines and improve the monitoring mechanisms it employs.

There have been reports that state governments have issued orders to independent agencies to check the validity of the data collected by district officials. Audits in various districts revealed that the births of all girls had been registered while those of some baby boys had been concealed to present improved figures of the gender ratio in some districts.

7. References (Works cited)

- [1]Bhat, P.N.Mari (2002, 2003), "On the trail of 'missing' Indian females", Parts 1 and 2, Economic and Political Weekly 37(21-27 December): 5105-5118 and (28 December- 3 January): 5244-5263.
- [2] Bhattacharya, P.C. (2006), "Economic development, gender inequality, and demographic outcomes: Kulkarni, P.M. (2007), "Estimation of missing girls at birth and juvenile ages in India", UNPFA (http://www.unfpa.org/gender/case_studies.htm).Evidence from India", Population and Development Review, 32(2): 263- 291.
- [3] Das Gupta, M. (1987), "Selective discrimination against female children in rural Punjab, North India", Population and Development Review, 13(1): 77-100.
- [4] Sarkaria, M.K. (2009), "Lessons from Punjab's 'missing girls': Toward a global feminist perspective on 'choice' in abortion", California Law Review, 97: 905-45.
- [5] Sen, Amartya. "More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing." The New York Review of Books 37.20 (1990). Web. 18 August 2011.