

A STUDY OF AWARENESS REGARDING THE BETI BACHAO–BETI PADHAO SCHEME AMONG PEOPLE IN RURAL AND URBAN SLUM AREAS OF YAVATMAL DISTRICT

***DR. SHARAD S. THAKARE**

**Assistant Professor in Education Gunvantrao Deshmukh College of Education, Pusad*

ABSTRACT

The “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” (BBBP) scheme, launched by the Government of India in 2015, is a major initiative aimed at preventing the declining child sex ratio, promoting girls’ education, and eliminating gender discrimination. Despite its significance, the scheme faces several challenges in reaching rural and urban slum communities, where socio-economic, cultural, and informational barriers reduce its effectiveness.

The present study investigates the level of awareness, sources of information, and obstacles related to the BBBP scheme among people in rural and urban slum areas. Using a descriptive–analytical survey method, a sample of 200 respondents (100 rural, 100 urban) was selected through multistage random and purposive sampling. Data were collected using a self-constructed and validated “BBB Awareness & Attitude Scale” with 20 objective items. Descriptive statistics were applied for analysis.

Findings reveal that urban slum respondents show higher levels of full awareness (48%) compared to rural respondents (32%). In rural areas, partial awareness (46%) and lack of information (22%) are more prevalent. Regarding sources of information, rural communities rely mainly on radio/television and government workers, while urban communities depend largely on social media/mobile. Major obstacles identified include lack of information and illiteracy in rural areas, and indifference, misconceptions, and inadequate publicity in urban areas.

The study highlights the need for context-specific strategies strengthening traditional media and educational outreach in rural areas, and promoting attitude-change campaigns via digital platforms in urban areas. The findings carry significant educational implications for policy-making, awareness programs, and empowerment of girls.

KEYWORDS: Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, awareness, girls’ education, rural slums, urban slums, gender discrimination, social barriers, educational implications

BACKGROUND

In India, several schemes have been implemented in the direction of women's and girls' equality, among which the "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" (BBBP) scheme is significant. This scheme was launched by the Central Government in 2015 with the objectives of preventing the declining child sex ratio, promoting girls' education, and eliminating gender discrimination at the social level.

However, reaching the people in rural and urban slum areas with information about this scheme remains a challenge, as these communities often face economic, social, and cultural barriers that limit their access to government initiatives.

In rural areas, traditional customs and cultural beliefs result in low awareness regarding girls' education and safety. Many families attach less importance to the birth of a girl child and, due to financial constraints, fail to provide necessary resources for their daughters' education. Moreover, poor access to healthcare services and government scheme information worsens the problem. In such circumstances, it becomes essential to increase awareness about the BBBP scheme.

The problem is no less severe in urban slum areas. Although people here give somewhat more importance to education, issues such as economic inequality, social discrimination, and safety concerns prevent girls from fully benefiting from educational opportunities. Since urban slum residents have relatively greater access to information through the media, their awareness level is slightly higher than in rural areas; however, many parents still do not fully understand the scheme and its benefits.

For the success of this scheme, it is necessary to spread awareness through local administration, non-governmental organizations, and schools, as well as by providing information at social gatherings and disseminating messages through the media. This would help parents understand the importance of girls' education, improve the child sex ratio, and bring about positive changes in social attitudes.

Therefore, studying the level of awareness of the BBBP scheme among people in rural and urban slum areas is important. Such research will help implement the scheme more effectively and develop appropriate policy measures for the empowerment of girls.

NEED OF THE STUDY

In India, several government schemes have been implemented for the equality of women and girls, among which the "Beti Bachao – Beti Padhao" (BBBP) scheme is highly significant. Discrimination against girls begins right from their birth and extends to education in the form of gender bias. This scheme is aimed at improving the birth rate of girls, maintaining a balanced child sex ratio, and promoting girls' education. However, in rural and urban slum areas, the effective implementation of this scheme faces several obstacles.

In rural slum areas, economic difficulties, social customs, and lack of education are commonly observed. Due to these factors, parents fail to understand the importance of a girl's birth, the benefits of her education, and the advantages offered under the BBBP scheme. In urban slum areas, though information sources are relatively greater, challenges such as financial constraints, safety concerns, and social discrimination hinder adequate awareness. In such circumstances, for effective implementation of the scheme, awareness campaigns through local administration, non-governmental organizations, schools, and media become necessary.

The purpose of this research is to study the awareness, sources of information, perceptions, and challenges related to the BBBP scheme among people in rural and urban slum areas. This will help understand how the scheme can be made more effective, how messages can be better communicated to the people, and what measures can contribute to the empowerment of girls.

From a scientific perspective, such a study enables the measurement of awareness levels, identification of obstacles, and formulation of policy recommendations. It is also important to understand the differences between rural and urban contexts, since socio-cultural variations influence the effectiveness of the scheme. Moreover, this research will be valuable in reducing gender discrimination, promoting girls' education, and strengthening awareness at the local level. Ultimately, it will enhance the efficiency of the BBBP scheme and help in implementing concrete measures for the empowerment of girls.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The “Beti Bachao – Beti Padhao” (BBBP) scheme plays an important role in empowering girls and reducing gender discrimination in India. The main objectives of this scheme are to improve the birth rate of girls, ensure their education, and bring about a change in social attitudes. However, due to insufficient information and awareness among people living in rural and urban slum areas, the impact of the scheme remains limited. Therefore, it is important to understand people's awareness and the challenges they face regarding this scheme.

In rural slum areas, social customs, economic hardships, and lack of education often prevent parents from realizing the importance of girls' education. Additionally, there are barriers in delivering information about healthcare services and government schemes. In urban slum areas, although the spread of information is somewhat greater and awareness levels are comparatively higher, issues such as economic inequality, safety concerns, and social discrimination prevent families from fully benefiting from the scheme.

In this context, studying the awareness of people in rural and urban slum areas regarding the BBBP scheme becomes highly essential. Such research will help identify obstacles in the implementation of the scheme, develop strategic measures to communicate information more effectively to the people, and make awareness programs more impactful.

From a scientific perspective, this study is significant for reducing gender discrimination, promoting girls' education, and bringing about social change at the local level. It will not only enhance the effectiveness of the BBBP scheme but also enable the implementation of concrete policy measures for the empowerment of girls in the future. Ultimately, it represents a positive step towards achieving social equality.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the level of awareness about the “Beti Bachao – Beti Padhao” scheme among people living in rural and urban slum areas.
2. To examine the sources through which information about the BBBP scheme reaches people in rural and urban slum areas, as well as the obstacles faced in the process.
3. To analyze the differences in awareness of the BBBP scheme between rural and urban slum populations and to suggest necessary measures for making the scheme more effective.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present study, the Descriptive–Analytical Survey Method has been used. The sample consists of citizens aged 18+ residing in rural slum areas/villages and citizens aged 18+ residing in urban slums located within the limits of municipal councils/municipal corporations. The total sample size is 200 respondents, out of which 100 are from rural slums and 100 from urban slums.

The selection of respondents was carried out using a combination of Multistage Random Sampling and Convenient/Purposive Sampling methods. Rural villages from each taluka and urban slums were selected accordingly. In each settlement, a list of households/route maps was prepared, and household surveys were conducted. The first available adult respondent from each eligible household was selected using the Kish Grid/Alternate Household Method.

For this research, a self-constructed “BBB Awareness & Attitude Scale” was used. The tool consisted of 20 objective items with response categories as *Correct/Incorrect/Don’t know*.

The tool development process involved the following steps: Consultation of government documents, IEC material, relevant literature, and field discussions. Expert validation of items by 5–7 subject experts in education, gender studies, public health, and social work. Calculation of Content Validity Index (CVI)/Content Validity Ratio (CVR); items with $CVR \leq 0.78$ were revised or eliminated. Pilot testing was conducted on 30 respondents (excluded from the main sample) to identify unclear wording or lengthy items, which were revised accordingly. The reliability of the tool was ensured through: Cronbach’s Alpha: Awareness ≥ 0.70 , Attitude ≥ 0.75 (expected). Test–retest reliability (2-week interval, $n \approx 30$): $r \geq 0.70$.

For data collection, coordination was established with local facilitators/Anganwadi workers/ASHA workers/NGOs, and necessary field permissions were obtained. Enumerators received training on questionnaire administration, interview techniques, neutrality, and gender-sensitive communication.

The process of data collection involved house-to-house visits → eligibility screening → informed consent → face-to-face structured interviews (15–20 minutes). Field protocols included daily record-keeping, minimizing incomplete responses, and conducting a 10% random back-check (quality check). For data management, daily data entry was performed using the double-entry system with error-checking to ensure accuracy.

Analysis and Interpretation

For the analysis of data, descriptive statistical techniques were used.

Table No. 1.1 Table showing the details of awareness about the “Beti Bachao – Beti Padhao” scheme among people living in rural and urban slum areas.

Level of awareness	Rural (n=100)		Urban (n=100)	
	N	%	N	%
Fully Aware – Has knowledge of the scheme, its objectives, and initiatives.	32	32.00%	48	48.00%
Partially Aware – Has only heard of the scheme / possesses brief or limited information.	46	46.00%	38	38.00%
Not Aware at All – No knowledge about the scheme.	22	22.00%	14	14.00%

From the above table, it is evident that people in urban areas show a higher level of complete awareness compared to rural areas. In urban slums, 48% of respondents demonstrated full awareness, whereas in rural slums it was only 32%. This indicates that people living in urban slums have comparatively clearer information about the scheme.

In rural areas, the proportion of partial awareness is higher at 46%, which shows that people have heard about the scheme to some extent but lack detailed knowledge about its objectives and initiatives. Moreover, the proportion of people having no awareness at all is also higher in rural areas (22%) compared to urban areas (14%). This suggests that there are obstacles in the dissemination of information in rural regions.

These statistics indicate that information and awareness mechanisms are more effective in urban areas, such as through media, government initiatives, schools, and non-governmental organizations. On the other hand, in rural areas, information about the scheme does not reach adequately, or its impact remains limited.

It is also observed that a section of the population in both rural and urban slums still remains unaware of the scheme, which highlights the need to expand the scope and effectiveness of awareness campaigns.

Table No. 1.2 Table showing the details of the major sources of information about the “Beti Bachao – Beti Padhao” scheme among people living in rural and urban slum areas.

Sources	Rural (n=100)		Urban (n=100)	
	N	%	N	%
Radio/Television	28	28.00%	18	18.00%
Schools/Women’s organizations	22	22.00%	14	14.00%
Government officials/ASHA workers	26	26.00%	20	20.00%
Social Media/Mobile	10	10.00%	34	34.00%
Relatives/Acquaintances	14	14.00%	14	14.00%

From the above table, it is clear that in rural areas, Radio/Television (28%) and Government officials/ASHA workers (26%) are the main sources of information. In contrast, in urban areas, Social Media/Mobile (34%) emerges as the most influential source.

The participation of schools/women’s organizations is observed at 22% in rural areas and 14% in urban areas, showing relatively higher involvement in rural regions. Relatives or acquaintances account for 14% in both rural and urban areas, making them an equally important medium of information in both contexts.

In rural areas, traditional media (radio, television, government machinery, organizations) continue to be the major sources of information. On the other hand, people in urban areas rely more on technology-based media (social media, mobile phones).

This comparison highlights the differences in the modes of information dissemination between rural and urban populations. For rural communities, face-to-face communication, government officials, and traditional media remain effective, whereas for urban residents, digital platforms provide faster and easier access to information about the scheme.

Table No. 1.3 Table showing the details of the obstacles faced regarding the “Beti Bachao – Beti Padhao” scheme among people living in rural and urban slum areas.

Barriers	Rural (%)		Urban (%)	
	N	%	N	%
Lack of information	34	34.00%	22	22.00%
Illiteracy	26	26.00%	12	12.00%
Inadequate government publicity	18	18.00%	20	20.00%
Indifference / Lack of interest	12	12.00%	26	26.00%
Social customs and misconceptions	10	10.00%	20	20.00%

From the above table, it is seen that in rural areas the major obstacles are lack of information (34%) and illiteracy (26%). This indicates that information about the scheme is not reaching the people in rural slums effectively, and even when information is available, illiteracy reduces its impact.

In urban areas, the most significant obstacle is indifference/lack of interest (26%). Along with this, inadequate government publicity (20%) and social customs and misconceptions (20%) also emerge as important barriers. This means that although information is available in urban areas, indifference and social factors restrict the effectiveness of the scheme.

Thus, obstacles in rural areas are mainly linked to lack of information and low educational levels, whereas in urban areas they are more related to mindset, indifference, and social misconceptions. In both rural and urban regions, around 20% of people reported inadequate government publicity, which clearly suggests the need for improvement in awareness and dissemination strategies.

CONCLUSION

People in urban areas are relatively more aware of the scheme, whereas in rural areas a large proportion of respondents still possess only partial or incomplete information. Hence, there is a need to strengthen information dissemination and publicity activities in rural slums. To achieve the true objectives of the scheme, special awareness programs are required in both rural and urban areas.

In rural areas, the major sources of information are Radio/Television and Government officials/ASHA workers, while in urban areas, Social Media/Mobile emerges as the most effective source. In both areas, relatives and acquaintances serve as equally important sources of information. Since the modes and methods of information dissemination differ between rural and urban populations, these differences must be considered while designing communication strategies. For effective awareness, traditional media and direct communication should be emphasized in rural areas, whereas digital media should be more effectively utilized in urban areas.

In rural areas, the biggest obstacles are lack of information and illiteracy, while in urban areas, indifference and social customs are the primary barriers. In both regions, inadequate government publicity has also been reported. Therefore, to achieve the real objectives of the scheme, in rural areas, effective information dissemination and

educational awareness need to be strengthened, while in urban areas, campaigns to change attitudes, encourage dialogue, and challenge social misconceptions are necessary.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

From this study, the following educational implications can be derived: A positive attitude towards girls' education can be developed among people. Parents, teachers, and social workers will receive information about the scheme and its objectives. Based on the findings of such surveys, educational schemes, scholarships, and special campaigns for girls can be planned at the local level. Teachers, NGOs, Anganwadi workers, and health workers can be trained to conduct effective awareness campaigns. The study will help identify the factors responsible for people's continued indifference towards girls. Through the use of educational resources, measures can be implemented to reduce social customs, superstitions, and gender discrimination. The conclusions will facilitate high-level policy formulation as well as comparative studies in other districts. Awareness programs can be designed and implemented in schools. The study will provide direction to reduce educational backwardness in slum areas. It will also help in evaluating the effectiveness of schemes that promote girls' education.

REFERENCE:

- 1) Tulasi, G. M. R., Singh, V. K., Rohith, S., & Priyanka, V. (2024). Awareness and attitude of beneficiaries towards Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme in Prakasham District of Andhra Pradesh, India. *Asian Journal of Agricultural Extension, Economics & Sociology*, 42(1), 11–16.
- 2) 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).
- 3) Pareek, S. (2022). Knowledge and attitude regarding “Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana” among young and aged rural adults: A cross-sectional study. *Journal of Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences University*, 17(2), 350–353.
- 4) Saini, V., & Sangwan, S. (2018). Awareness on gender empowerment and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao through intervention. *IMPACT: International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature (IMPACT: IJRHAL)*, 6(1), 227–234.
- 5) Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development. (2022). *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao: Below par spending initially due to lack of awareness, says ministry*. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from archival article.
- 6) The Times of India. (2017, October 9). *'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' leads to improvement in sex ratio at birth*. *The Times of India*.