



Government Response To Crisis Arising From Gender-Based Violence In Haryana – A Literature Review

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Abstract:

Gender-based violence continues to pose a significant challenge to social development and gender equality worldwide. Recognising its seriousness, the United Nations has identified the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls as one of the Sustainable Development Goals. In India, the Government has introduced the *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (BBBP) programme to address gender discrimination and promote the survival, protection, and education of the girl child. This paper presents a review of the literature examining the Government of Haryana's response to the crisis arising from gender-based violence, with particular reference to the implementation of the BBBP programme. The review explores the conceptual understanding of crisis, government initiatives aimed at preventing gender-based violence, and policy responses designed to address its social consequences. The analysis is based on secondary sources, including peer-reviewed research articles, books, government publications, policy documents, official reports, and selected newspaper articles. The paper contributes to the existing body of knowledge by critically synthesising the available literature and forms part of the author's doctoral research on government crisis communication and gender-based violence.

Keywords: gender-based violence; crisis communication; government communication; government crisis management; government public relations; public relations; *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*.

Introduction

Gender-based violence encompasses a wide range of harmful practices, including female infanticide, early and forced marriage, honour killings, child sexual abuse and exploitation, domestic violence, and other forms of violence rooted in gender inequality. Despite legislative safeguards and policy interventions, these practices continue to persist across different sections of society. Frequent media reports of honour killings, rape, domestic abuse, and sexual harassment underscore the continuing prevalence and seriousness of gender-based violence in India.

According to the United Nations Global Database on Violence Against Women, approximately 29 per cent of women in India aged 15–49 years have experienced physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner at least once during their lifetime. These figures highlight the magnitude of the problem and emphasise the need for sustained policy interventions, effective governance, and greater public awareness to address gender-based violence.

Governments across the world have introduced a range of legislative, institutional, and communication-based initiatives to prevent gender-based violence, protect survivors, and deter offenders through stricter enforcement of laws. In India, the Government launched the *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (BBBP) programme from Panipat in Haryana in January 2015 as a multi-sectoral initiative aimed at addressing gender

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discrimination, improving the child sex ratio, and promoting the survival, protection, and education of the girl child.

Against this backdrop, the present paper reviews the existing literature to examine the Government of Haryana's response to the crisis arising from gender-based violence through the implementation of the BBBP programme. It seeks to assess the extent to which the programme has achieved its stated objectives and to evaluate the available evidence regarding its contribution to addressing gender inequality and reducing violence against women.

Research Gap

A review of the existing literature indicates that the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme has been examined predominantly from demographic, policy implementation, and socio-economic perspectives. Previous studies have largely focused on improvements in the child sex ratio, female education, women's empowerment, budgetary allocations, and the overall implementation of the scheme. While these studies provide valuable insights into the programme's achievements and limitations, they offer limited understanding of BBBP as a governmental response to the broader social crisis arising from gender-based violence.

Furthermore, the existing literature has paid comparatively little attention to the communication dimension of the programme. Although awareness campaigns, community mobilisation initiatives, media advocacy, and public outreach constitute important components of BBBP, there has been insufficient examination of how these communication strategies have contributed to crisis management, public engagement, behavioural change, and the promotion of gender equality. Similarly, the role of government communication and public relations in influencing public attitudes towards the girl child and addressing deeply embedded gender biases remains inadequately explored.

Another notable limitation in the literature is the absence of an integrated assessment of the Government of Haryana's institutional response to gender-based violence. Most available studies evaluate individual programme outcomes or demographic indicators without examining the interrelationship between policy interventions, communication strategies, legal measures, institutional mechanisms, and social outcomes. Consequently, there remains limited evidence regarding the extent to which the BBBP programme has functioned as a comprehensive crisis-response mechanism rather than merely a welfare initiative.

In addition, relatively few studies have critically synthesised evidence from government reports, policy documents, academic literature, and media sources to evaluate both the achievements and continuing challenges associated with the implementation of BBBP in Haryana. Given that Haryana was one of the first states where the programme was launched because of its adverse sex ratio and high incidence of gender-based discrimination, a comprehensive review of the state's response is both timely and academically significant.

The present study seeks to address these gaps by examining the Government of Haryana's response to gender-based violence through the lens of crisis communication and government public relations. By synthesising evidence from diverse secondary sources, the study provides a comprehensive assessment of the programme's communication strategies, institutional interventions, implementation challenges, and reported outcomes. In doing so, it contributes to the emerging literature on government crisis communication and offers a broader understanding of the role of public policy and communication in addressing complex social crises such as gender-based violence.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design based exclusively on the analysis of secondary data. It seeks to critically examine the Government of Haryana's response to the social crisis arising from gender-based violence through the implementation of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme. As the study is conceptual and exploratory in nature, it does not involve primary data collection; instead, it draws upon a systematic review and synthesis of relevant literature and documentary evidence.

Secondary data were obtained from a wide range of authoritative sources to ensure the comprehensiveness and reliability of the analysis. These included peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, government reports, policy documents, publications of the Ministry of Women and Child Development,

Government of India, reports issued by the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Haryana, National Family Health Survey (NFHS) reports, Census publications, reports of statutory and international organisations, parliamentary records, official websites, and selected newspaper articles. These sources provided information on the conceptual dimensions of gender-based violence, policy development, programme implementation, communication strategies, institutional responses, and the outcomes associated with the BBBP programme in Haryana.

The literature was selected using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Publications were included if they addressed one or more of the following areas: gender-based violence, crisis communication, government communication, public policy, women's empowerment, child sex ratio, girls' education, or the implementation and evaluation of the BBBP programme. Preference was accorded to recent peer-reviewed studies, official publications, and policy documents containing empirical evidence or substantive policy analysis. Sources that lacked methodological rigour, were not directly relevant to the research objectives, or provided insufficient contextual information were excluded from the review.

The selected literature was analysed using thematic content analysis, a qualitative technique that facilitates the systematic identification and interpretation of recurring themes within textual data. Information extracted from the selected sources was categorised into major thematic areas, including the conceptual understanding of crisis and gender-based violence, the evolution of the BBBP programme, government communication and public awareness initiatives, institutional and legal interventions, programme implementation, achievements, implementation challenges, and emerging policy issues. The thematic analysis enabled the identification of common patterns, areas of consensus and divergence, and gaps within the existing body of literature.

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was employed by comparing evidence obtained from multiple independent sources. Official statistics were examined alongside academic research, policy documents, and credible media reports to verify the consistency of findings and minimise source-specific bias. This process enhanced the credibility and dependability of the analysis by enabling a balanced interpretation of the available evidence. Rather than assessing individual studies in isolation, the review synthesises findings from diverse sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of government interventions in addressing gender-based violence in Haryana.

As the study is based entirely on publicly available secondary data and does not involve human participants, personal information, or direct field investigation, formal ethical approval was not required. Nevertheless, the research was conducted in accordance with established principles of academic integrity, transparency, and responsible scholarship. All sources have been appropriately acknowledged through citation, and every effort has been made to ensure the accurate representation and interpretation of the evidence reviewed.

Conceptual Framework

The present study is grounded in the concepts of crisis, crisis management, crisis communication, and gender-based violence, which together provide the theoretical framework for examining the Government of Haryana's response to the social challenges associated with gender-based violence through the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme.

Crisis

Seeger, Sellnow and Ulmer (as cited in Hagen, 2014) define a crisis as "a specific, unexpected, non-routine event or series of events that creates high levels of uncertainty and a significant or perceived threat to high priority goals" (p. 7). This definition highlights the unpredictable nature of crises and the uncertainty they generate for governments, organisations, and society. In the context of gender-based violence, persistent discrimination and violence against women and girls constitute an enduring social crisis that requires coordinated institutional and policy responses.

Crisis Management

According to Coombs (2007), **crisis management** comprises the strategies and actions undertaken to prevent, mitigate, and manage the adverse consequences of a crisis. He describes crisis management as "a set of factors designed to combat crisis and to lessen the actual damages inflicted" (p. 5), emphasising its role in protecting organisations, stakeholders, and society from harm. Applied to public governance, crisis management encompasses the formulation of policies, implementation of welfare programmes, legal interventions, and institutional mechanisms aimed at addressing complex social problems and reducing their long-term impact.

Crisis Communication

Crisis communication represents a specialised domain of public relations that supports effective crisis management by facilitating the timely dissemination of accurate information and fostering public confidence. Coombs (2010) defines crisis communication as the strategic management of information before, during, and after a crisis in order to reduce uncertainty, protect stakeholders, and maintain public trust (p. 20). In the context of government communication, effective crisis communication extends beyond the dissemination of information to include public awareness campaigns, community engagement, stakeholder participation, and behavioural change initiatives designed to address the underlying causes of social crises.

Gender Based Violence

The World Health Organization identifies gender-based violence as a preventable yet pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality. It adversely affects the physical, psychological, sexual, and social well-being of survivors while producing long-term consequences for families, communities, and society. According to the World Health Organization's 2013 report on intimate partner and non-partner violence against women (as cited in the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2015), nearly one-third of women who have been in an intimate relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner, while approximately 38 per cent of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners. These findings demonstrate the global scale and seriousness of gender-based violence and reinforce the need for sustained governmental intervention.

Relevance to Haryana

The issue assumes particular significance in Haryana, where gender-based violence has historically manifested in forms such as female foeticide, honour killings, sexual violence, domestic abuse, and gender discrimination. Media reports have highlighted several serious incidents that have drawn national attention to the state's gender-related challenges. For example, India.com (2018) reported the alleged gang rape of a married woman in the Morni area of Panchkula district, while National Crime Records Bureau statistics for 2016, cited by Sangwan (2018), indicated that Haryana recorded one of the highest numbers of gang rape cases in the country. Although crime statistics may be influenced by improvements in reporting and registration practices, such incidents underscore the continuing need for comprehensive policy measures, effective government communication, and sustained institutional responses to address gender-based violence.

Taken together, these concepts provide the analytical foundation for the present study. They facilitate an examination of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao programme not merely as a welfare initiative but as a component of the Government of Haryana's broader crisis management and crisis communication strategy aimed at preventing gender-based violence, promoting gender equality, and strengthening public confidence in governmental interventions.

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) constitutes one of the most pervasive violations of human rights and remains a significant impediment to achieving gender equality and sustainable social development. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognises that gender and violence are closely interconnected, with socially constructed gender roles and norms shaping unequal power relations between men and women. These inequalities often create conditions that facilitate discrimination, coercion, and violence against women and girls. Beyond its immediate physical consequences, gender-based violence has profound psychological, social, and economic implications, affecting survivors, their families, communities, and society at large.

Gender inequality is widely acknowledged as a major structural determinant of violence against women. Although intimate partner violence is the most frequently reported form, gender-based violence also encompasses a broad spectrum of harmful practices, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, trafficking for sexual exploitation, child marriage, dowry-related violence, honour killings, and abuse perpetrated by family members or other individuals. These manifestations reflect deeply embedded patriarchal norms and unequal power relations that continue to reinforce discrimination against women.

The global prevalence of gender-based violence further illustrates the magnitude of the problem. The World Health Organization's 2013 report on intimate partner and non-partner violence against women (as cited in the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2015) estimated that nearly one-third of women who have been in an intimate relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner at least once during their lifetime. The report also noted that approximately 38 per cent of all female homicides are committed by intimate partners, highlighting the serious and often fatal consequences of gender-based violence.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA, 2015) defines gender-based violence as any act that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, girls, men, or boys, where such violence is rooted in gender-based discrimination and unequal power relations. This definition emphasises that gender-based violence extends beyond physical abuse to include actions that undermine an individual's health, dignity, identity, and overall well-being.

Similarly, the United Nations (as cited in the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2015) conceptualises violence against women as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women. According to this perspective, violence functions as a mechanism through which discrimination and subordination are perpetuated, restricting women's full participation in social, economic, and political life. Consequently, addressing gender-based violence requires not only legal protection and institutional support but also sustained efforts to challenge discriminatory social norms, promote gender equality, and encourage long-term behavioural change.

Within the context of the present study, gender-based violence is viewed as a complex social crisis requiring a comprehensive governmental response. Measures such as legislative reforms, institutional interventions, public awareness campaigns, community participation, and strategic communication are essential components of an effective response. Accordingly, the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao programme is examined not merely as a welfare initiative but as part of a broader strategy to address the structural causes of gender-based violence and promote a more equitable social environment in Haryana.

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao: Policy Context

The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme was introduced in response to the persistent problem of gender discrimination and the declining child sex ratio in India. According to the Haryana State Action Plan on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (HSAPSGBV, n.d.), Census 2011 data revealed that there were only 918 girls for every 1,000 boys in the country, reflecting a deeply rooted pattern of gender bias and discriminatory social practices. Recognising the seriousness of this demographic imbalance, the Government of India launched the BBBP programme in 2015 as a multi-sectoral intervention aimed at improving the child sex ratio while promoting the survival, protection, and education of the girl child. Owing to its historically adverse sex-ratio indicators, Haryana emerged as one of the principal focus states during the initial phase of the programme.

The BBBP programme was formally launched by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, at Panipat, Haryana, on 22 January 2015. Initially, the programme was implemented in 100 districts across the country identified as having a low Child Sex Ratio (CSR), including 12 districts in Haryana. Conceived as a collaborative initiative, the programme has been implemented through the coordinated efforts of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (now the Ministry of Education). This inter-ministerial approach reflects the recognition that addressing gender discrimination requires coordinated action across multiple sectors, including health, education, welfare, and public administration.

The BBBP programme extends beyond welfare provision by integrating policy interventions with communication and community mobilisation strategies. In addition to strengthening the enforcement of existing legislation aimed at preventing sex-selective practices, the programme seeks to transform societal attitudes through public awareness campaigns, advocacy initiatives, stakeholder engagement, and community participation. These measures are intended to challenge entrenched gender stereotypes, encourage greater value for the girl child, and foster long-term behavioural change.

Despite these policy interventions, official records and media reports indicate that incidents of violence against women have continued to be reported across Haryana. While some scholars attribute the increase in reported cases to improved registration practices, enhanced public awareness, and greater willingness among survivors to report offences, others argue that the persistence of such incidents reflects the continuing influence of structural gender inequalities and patriarchal social norms. Consequently, improvements in reporting should not be interpreted solely as evidence of increasing crime but also as an indication of strengthened institutional responsiveness and greater public confidence in legal mechanisms.

The implementation of BBBP has also attracted critical academic attention regarding the utilisation of programme funds. Several studies have observed that a considerable proportion of the allocated budget was devoted to media advocacy and publicity activities, raising concerns about the balance between awareness generation and direct investment in education, healthcare, community development, and institutional strengthening. Critics contend that while communication campaigns are essential for influencing public attitudes, their effectiveness is likely to be enhanced when complemented by sustained investment in grassroots interventions, improved service delivery, and robust monitoring mechanisms.

Viewed within this broader policy context, the BBBP programme represents a significant governmental initiative that combines legislative action, institutional coordination, public communication, and community engagement to address gender discrimination. Its implementation in Haryana provides an important case for examining how government communication and crisis management strategies contribute to addressing the social crisis arising from gender-based violence and promoting gender equality.

Government Response Through BBBP

The Government of Haryana has adopted a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach under the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme to address gender-biased sex selection and promote the value, protection, and empowerment of the girl child (HSAPSGBV, n.d.). The programme integrates legal enforcement, public awareness, community participation, educational initiatives, financial incentives, and institutional support with the objective of addressing the underlying causes of gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

A key component of the government's strategy has been the stricter enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (PC&PNDT Act) and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act. To curb illegal sex determination and sex-selective practices, the Haryana Government has undertaken regular inspections of ultrasound centres and conducted enforcement drives under the supervision of Deputy Commissioners and Chief Medical Officers. These measures are intended to discourage violations of the law and improve regulatory compliance.

Financial support schemes have also formed an important element of the state's intervention strategy. The Apki Beti Humari Beti scheme was introduced to encourage positive attitudes towards the birth of girls and to provide financial assistance to eligible families. Under the scheme, ₹21,000 is deposited in the name of the first-born girl child belonging to Scheduled Caste families and families living below the poverty line. The same amount is also provided upon the birth of the second girl child in all eligible families. Subsequently, the scheme was extended to include the third girl child with effect from 24 August 2015. By 2018, more than 124,000 beneficiaries had been covered under the scheme, with budgetary allocations reflecting the Government's continued commitment to promoting the welfare of the girl child.

The Education Department has implemented several initiatives aimed at enhancing the social status of girls and encouraging their educational participation. Under the Betiyon Ka Salaam Rashtra Ke Naam

campaign, the most educated girl in a village or municipal ward is invited to hoist the National Flag at government schools on Independence Day, thereby recognising academic achievement and promoting positive role models. Similarly, the Tithi Bhojan initiative celebrates the birthdays of girl students in government schools by providing a special mid-day meal, symbolising social recognition and inclusion.

The Government has also employed symbolic communication strategies to challenge entrenched gender stereotypes. The BBBP logo has been displayed on government buildings, public offices, official vehicles, public transport, and school buses to reinforce public awareness of the programme. Traditional ceremonies such as Thali Bajao and Kua Pujan, historically associated with the birth of boys, have been adapted to celebrate the birth of girls, thereby encouraging greater social acceptance of the girl child and challenging son-preference within communities.

Recognising the importance of girls' education, several district-level innovations have been introduced. The District Administration of Sirsa launched the Career Counselling Guide initiative to assist girls in making informed educational and career choices. Likewise, the District Administration of Jhajjar introduced UMANG – Ek Pahal, which seeks to reduce school dropout among adolescent girls through menstrual health awareness programmes and the distribution of free sanitary napkins. These initiatives reflect efforts to address social and health-related barriers that often hinder girls' educational attainment.

Community mobilisation and public awareness have remained central to the implementation of BBBP. Up to November 2020, the Government of Haryana organised an extensive range of outreach activities, including awareness rallies, celebrations marking the birth of girl children, street plays, folk-art performances, puppet shows, signature campaigns, health camps, film screenings, Prabhat Pheries, and awareness programmes on the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The widespread use of community-based communication was intended to promote gender equality, encourage positive attitudes towards girls, and increase public awareness of women's rights and child protection.

Capacity-building initiatives have complemented these awareness campaigns. Sensitisation workshops on the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace were organised at both district and state levels for personnel employed in government and semi-government organisations. Such programmes sought to strengthen institutional capacity while promoting gender-sensitive workplace practices.

The Government has also introduced a range of measures to enhance women's safety in public spaces. Operation Durga, launched in 2017, involved the deployment of the Chief Minister's Flying Squads and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to prevent harassment of women and girls in public places (Sanyal, 2017). This initiative was further strengthened through the introduction of the Durga Shakti App, which enables women to seek immediate police assistance through the women's helpline (1091) during emergencies.

Additional welfare initiatives have focused on improving girls' access to education and strengthening legal protection. The Chhatra Parivahan Suraksha Yojana provides free transport facilities for girl students travelling on Haryana Roadways buses, thereby reducing barriers to educational access. Legislative reforms have also strengthened legal responses to sexual offences against children, including the provision of capital punishment for the rape of girls below the age of twelve years, a measure that was subsequently reflected in national legislation.

Institutional support for women has been expanded through the establishment of Women Police Stations across all districts and a gradual increase in the proportion of women within the state police force. The Government has also pursued the establishment of women's colleges to improve access to higher education by reducing travel distances for female students.

To provide integrated support for survivors of violence, One Stop Centres have been established in districts including Karnal, Gurugram, Faridabad, Hisar, Rewari, Bhiwani, and Narnaul. These centres offer medical assistance, legal aid, psychological counselling, and other support services through a single-window mechanism, enabling women affected by violence to access essential services in a coordinated manner.

The Government of India further complemented BBBP through the introduction of the Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme, which encourages long-term financial security for the girl child. The scheme

promotes savings for education and future welfare while reinforcing positive societal attitudes towards girls by providing families with a secure savings instrument.

More recently, the Haryana Government launched a dedicated helpline (18001800181) to facilitate the reporting of female foeticide. In August 2024, the Mahri Laddo radio programme was introduced from Panipat to strengthen community engagement and public awareness. Broadcast across Haryana through All India Radio, the programme has reached more than two lakh participants and addresses issues including nutrition, health, financial independence, leadership, and women's empowerment.

Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate that the Government of Haryana has adopted a multidimensional approach to addressing gender-based violence. By combining legislative enforcement, institutional reforms, financial incentives, educational initiatives, community participation, and strategic communication, the BBBP programme has evolved beyond a welfare scheme into a broader public policy framework aimed at promoting gender equality and responding to the social crisis arising from gender-based violence.

Critical Assessment Of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

The implementation of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme has been associated with measurable improvements in several indicators relating to the welfare and status of the girl child in Haryana. One of the most notable achievements has been the improvement in the **Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)**. Official data indicate that the SRB increased from 871 girls per 1,000 boys in 2014, prior to the launch of the programme, to 923 in 2019. Although a modest decline was recorded in subsequent years, the ratio remained substantially higher than the pre-programme level, reaching 916 in 2023 and 915 in 2025. These trends suggest that sustained policy interventions and public awareness initiatives may have contributed to improving societal attitudes towards the girl child.

Improvements have also been observed in maternal and child health indicators. Data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) demonstrate a significant increase in institutional deliveries, rising from 35.7 per cent in NFHS-3 (2005–06) to 94.9 per cent in NFHS-5 (2019–21). Similarly, the proportion of women receiving antenatal care (ANC) services increased from 51.4 per cent to 85.2 per cent during the same period. Although these improvements cannot be attributed exclusively to BBBP, they reflect broader progress in healthcare delivery, maternal welfare, and government efforts to improve access to essential health services.

The programme has also coincided with gradual improvements in girls' educational participation. Enrolment at the secondary school level increased from 385,624 students in 2015–16 to 400,736 students in 2023–24. This upward trend suggests increasing awareness of the importance of girls' education and may indicate the positive influence of awareness campaigns and supportive educational initiatives undertaken by the Government of Haryana.

The achievements of Haryana have received recognition at both the national and state levels. In acknowledgement of its progress in improving the Sex Ratio at Birth, the state received the **Nari Shakti Puraskar** from the Government of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 8 March 2016. Subsequently, Yamunanagar district was recognised on National Girl Child Day in 2017 for its contribution to promoting girls' education. In addition, the Deputy Commissioner of Sonapat was honoured by the Prime Minister for the effective implementation of the **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC&PNDT) Act** during the third anniversary celebrations of the BBBP programme held at Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, on 8 March 2018 (HSAPSGBV, n.d.). Further recognition followed in 2019, when Haryana received one state-level award and three district-level awards under the BBBP programme for achievements relating to programme implementation, girls' education, enforcement of the PC&PNDT Act, and community participation (PNS, 2019).

Despite these encouraging developments, the effectiveness of BBBP warrants a balanced and critical assessment. While improvements in demographic, health, and educational indicators are evident, establishing a direct causal relationship between these outcomes and the BBBP programme remains challenging. During the period under review, several complementary government initiatives, welfare schemes, legislative reforms, and

broader socio-economic changes were implemented concurrently. Consequently, the observed improvements are likely to reflect the combined influence of multiple interventions rather than the isolated impact of BBBP alone.

Moreover, previous studies have questioned the programme's implementation and expenditure patterns, particularly the substantial allocation of funds towards media advocacy and publicity. Although communication campaigns play an important role in promoting behavioural change and increasing public awareness, concerns have been raised regarding the comparatively limited investment in grassroots implementation, educational infrastructure, healthcare services, and institutional capacity. These observations suggest that the long-term effectiveness of BBBP depends not only on awareness generation but also on sustained investment in service delivery, monitoring mechanisms, and community-based interventions.

Overall, the available evidence indicates that the BBBP programme has contributed to improving awareness regarding the value of the girl child and has been associated with positive changes in selected demographic, educational, and health indicators. Nevertheless, persistent gender inequalities and continuing incidents of violence against women suggest that behavioural and structural transformation requires sustained policy commitment, stronger institutional coordination, and effective implementation of legal and social interventions. Accordingly, BBBP should be viewed as an important component of a broader governmental strategy to address gender discrimination rather than as a standalone solution to the complex challenge of gender-based violence.

Findings

The literature reviewed indicates that the *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (BBBP) programme has contributed to improvements in several demographic, educational, and awareness-related indicators in Haryana. Notable progress has been observed in the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB), girls' educational enrolment, institutional deliveries, and public awareness regarding the value of the girl child. These developments suggest that the programme has played an important role in promoting gender-sensitive policies and encouraging greater societal recognition of girls' rights and welfare.

However, the findings also reveal that gender-based violence continues to pose a significant challenge in the state. Despite sustained government interventions, available crime statistics indicate that offences against women remain a matter of serious concern. While the increase in reported cases may partly reflect improved awareness, greater willingness among survivors to report offences, and more effective registration procedures, it also suggests that the underlying structural causes of gender inequality have not been fully addressed.

Evidence presented during the Winter Session of the Haryana Vidhan Sabha, as reported by *Indiatimes* (2018), showed that Gurugram and Faridabad recorded some of the highest numbers of crimes against women in the state between August 2014 and September 2018. During this period, 3,768 cases of sexual assault were reported in Gurugram and 3,440 in Faridabad. The corresponding number of rape cases stood at 555 and 352 respectively, while a total of 37,161 cases of crimes against women were registered across Haryana. These figures illustrate that, notwithstanding the implementation of several policy initiatives, violence against women continued to represent a significant public policy challenge.

At the same time, the increase in registered cases should be interpreted with caution. The Director General of Police attributed the rise in reported offences to improvements in complaint registration, the establishment of Women Police Stations across the state, and the implementation of Supreme Court directives mandating the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs). These institutional reforms may have encouraged greater reporting of offences that had previously remained unreported, thereby contributing to higher recorded crime statistics without necessarily indicating a proportional increase in the actual incidence of violence.

Overall, the literature suggests that the BBBP programme has achieved measurable progress in promoting awareness, improving selected demographic indicators, and strengthening institutional responses to gender discrimination. Nevertheless, the persistence of gender-based violence demonstrates that improvements in social indicators alone are insufficient to eliminate deeply embedded patriarchal norms and structural

inequalities. Sustainable progress will require continued policy commitment, effective implementation of legal safeguards, stronger institutional coordination, community participation, and long-term behavioural change. The findings therefore indicate that, although BBBP has emerged as an important component of the Government of Haryana's response to gender-based violence, substantial challenges remain in achieving its broader objective of creating a safe, equitable, and gender-inclusive society.

Conclusion

The present literature review demonstrates that, despite the implementation of a range of policy initiatives, legal reforms, and institutional interventions, gender-based violence continues to pose a significant social and governance challenge in Haryana. The *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (BBBP) programme has made a positive contribution towards improving the status of the girl child, particularly through improvements in the Sex Ratio at Birth, increased awareness of gender equality, enhanced educational participation, and greater public engagement with issues affecting women and girls. These achievements indicate that coordinated policy measures, strategic communication, and community-based interventions can contribute to positive social change.

However, the review also reveals that the programme has only partially achieved its broader objective of addressing the structural causes of gender inequality and reducing gender-based violence. Persistent implementation gaps, uneven monitoring mechanisms, and concerns regarding the allocation and utilisation of programme resources have constrained its overall effectiveness. Furthermore, the continued incidence of violence against women suggests that improvements in demographic and educational indicators do not necessarily translate into sustained behavioural and societal transformation.

The findings emphasise that financial investment alone is insufficient to achieve meaningful and lasting change. The success of government initiatives depends equally upon transparent governance, effective interdepartmental coordination, robust monitoring and evaluation systems, institutional accountability, and active community participation. Communication campaigns are most effective when integrated with legal enforcement, accessible support services, educational opportunities, and sustained grassroots engagement aimed at challenging deeply entrenched patriarchal norms.

The review also highlights the importance of viewing the BBBP programme not merely as a welfare initiative but as a broader governmental response to a complex social crisis. From the perspective of crisis communication and government public relations, the programme illustrates how strategic communication, public awareness, policy coordination, and stakeholder engagement can contribute to addressing gender-based violence while strengthening public confidence in governmental institutions.

As this study is based exclusively on secondary sources, its conclusions are necessarily limited by the availability and scope of existing literature and official data. Future research could build upon these findings by employing primary data collection, comparative analyses across states, or longitudinal studies to examine the long-term impact of government communication strategies and policy interventions on reducing gender-based violence.

In conclusion, achieving sustainable gender equality requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that extends beyond awareness campaigns and welfare schemes. Long-term progress will depend upon effective policy implementation, institutional responsiveness, community participation, and continuous behavioural change. Strengthening these dimensions will not only enhance the effectiveness of the *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* programme but also contribute to developing a more inclusive, equitable, and violence-free society in Haryana.

Recommendations

- Accountability mechanisms should be strengthened by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of national, state, and district-level task forces responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (BBBP) programme. Regular performance reviews and transparent reporting systems would enhance institutional effectiveness and improve programme outcomes.

- Greater emphasis should be placed on improving girls' education through the recruitment of qualified women teachers, increased community participation, and the provision of adequate educational infrastructure, particularly safe sanitation facilities and other gender-sensitive amenities. Such measures would contribute to higher enrolment, improved retention, and better educational outcomes for girls.
- Grievance redressal mechanisms for survivors of gender-based violence should be further strengthened by improving access to legal aid, counselling services, and victim support systems. At the same time, greater transparency and accountability should be ensured in the allocation and utilisation of funds designated for women's safety, education, and empowerment to maximise the effectiveness and sustainability of government interventions.
- Public awareness and behaviour change communication should be sustained beyond short-term campaigns through continuous community engagement, school-based programmes, media advocacy, and partnerships with civil society organisations. Such initiatives are essential for challenging discriminatory social norms and promoting long-term gender equality.
- Future policy interventions should adopt a more integrated approach by strengthening coordination among government departments, law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and community organisations. A collaborative and evidence-based framework would enhance the effectiveness of government responses to gender-based violence and contribute to sustainable social change in Haryana.

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