

Femininity Complex in Indian Society and the Role of NEP in Gender Parity

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ABSTRACT

In 2015, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao was launched in India, witnessing the alarming drop in the country's child-sex ratio due to rising female infanticide and dowry cases, encouraging families to change their tabooed mindset towards the existence of girl-child. This study was undertaken to understand the perspective and experience of female students towards education and the requirement of the New Education Policy based on the critical feedback received from an in-depth semi-structured interview of 20 female students (18-28 years) of MGCGV, Chitrakoot, Satna, M.P. The study aimed to shed light on how education provides existential value, exploring the connection between the education sector and the BBBP scheme, and elaborating on the core reasons for the ineffectiveness of the policy from a psycho-socio-cultural perspective. The interview results have been divided into five sections which yielded the perception of female students towards the quality of education, failure of the Utilitarian model of education, psychological gaps in the BBBP campaign due to the Masculinity- Femininity complex in Indian society and the potential benefits of NEP in evolving the collective consciousness of Indian society's psyche through integrative value-based education. In conclusion, the study has aimed to study the femininity complex in Indian society which requires a culturally and spiritually rich educational rectification to eradicate the violence based upon sexism and sow seeds for a society that recognizes the value of a woman for who she is in her mind and soul, free from crisis based structures that encourage symbolical death of her femininity for survival, providing generous space for her to use her potential, and contribute her part in the development of society fearlessly.

Keywords: *Femininity complex, New Education Policy, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Feminine Psychology, Gender Education*

India, a nation culturally conceived upon the concept of the Divine feminine, often gets locked in matters of controversy for subjecting the status of its female population to atrocities of infanticide, dowry, violence and subjugation of basic human rights through physical and mental abuse, reflecting a problematic present status of Indian society which has an access to education and judiciary. It is suggested that education is the key to every woman's liberation, but what is the right parameter to measure this liberation? Is it attaining

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financial independence to respond to life's challenges or empowering them to break traditional roles and create new ones? And foremost, in a democratic country, what is still binding a woman that she seeks liberation from?

Beti Bachao. Beti Padhao 2015

“The true measure of progress is the status of women in society.

- Savitribai Phule

On 22nd January 2015, BBBP (Save the daughter, Educate the daughter) was launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi witnessing the alarming drop in the country's child-sex ratio. BBBP is a joint initiative launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Education to prevent rising female infanticide, and dowry cases, increase the sex ratio of women in the national population of India by raising awareness towards saving Girl Child and encouraging families to change their tabooed mindset towards the existence of girl child and promote education and well-being. (PMO website, 2015). BBBP's showed effectiveness in preventing female infanticide concerning enforcement of the Preconception and Prenatal Diagnostic Technique (PC-PNDT) and Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Acts, and social mobilisation resulted in improved sex ratio at birth (SRB), implying the success of system-led strictness and law enforcement to create conscience and values in the population. (Gupta, et.al, 2018) Yet on the grassroots level, it has failed due to proper implementation, allocation of funds and monitoring due to a lack of community meetings at state and district levels, and participation of trained personnel such as psychologists and social workers who can provide gender sensitisation and guidance counselling at frontline level. (Arora, 2022) The campaign has shown major effective results due to strict laws that prevent sex disclosure, rather than the educational contribution which has only contributed to the 'acknowledgement' and 'need of measures' to end evils of gender inequality and pre-natal gender selection, focusing on the further need to work upon appreciation and respect towards women at large, especially concerning the maintaining psychological factors of gender bias. (Parman, Sharma, 2020) The burden of a girl child due to her being a social and economic liability was the core reason which has contributed to the rising female infanticide, symbolically representing the psyche of a society which considers women valueless and undeserving of respect as men who are 'contributing gender' of the society. (Verma, Dhaka et.al, 2018)

The campaign's objective has been channelled to milk the 'masculinity complex' and potential of women in terms of their productivity in the masculine economic sector basing respect for women through their achievements and contributions in fields of sports, politics, competitive exams etc., but has yet not acknowledged the feminine existence and traits that she is innately born with due to patriarchal standards. (Horney, 1967)

To understand this blocked mindset & misogynistic collective consciousness of a literate country that still supports sexism, suppression and violence against women, the quality of education was explored, exploring the psyche of a society that has still not transformed after almost a decade of this campaign that aims to save the girl child through the power of knowledge.

The psycho-social gaps in the National Policy of Education 1986, 1992

The older education structure based upon the National Policy on Education 1986 aimed towards making education accessible to the masses of India as a fundamental right,

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implementing access and equity in 1992's updated version. This post-independence educational interest dwelled around science and technological development, lacking less deliberation in social sciences which are the foundational basis for a collective social and economic change. The teachers have been given 'fundamental' exposure to psychology, sociology, history and art, with no idealistic, practical and research-oriented training in the same fields to become role models and mould the young minds of the country. These foundational disciplines required for Teacher Education programmes are based upon a specific branch of psychology that draws heavily from the behaviourist and learning theory movements of the American educational psychology paradigm. Regardless of the student's choice to pursue postgraduate study and research or become a school teacher, the disciplinary knowledge provided in these programmes is grievously inadequate for fostering the development of a critical or socially aware perception of an educated mind. (Mathur, 1985) This utilitarian agenda-based education system to cater to the global capitalist economy has damaged the progressive and lucid perspective of social sciences and humanities, desperately needed to fully prove education's potential as an instrument for psycho-social change and constitutional justice. (Farida Abdulla Khan, 2021)

Principles of the New Education Policy, 2020

The NEP begins in its opening pages with its inspiration from ancient and eternal Indian culture, with emphasis on nurturing the creative potential of every individual based upon developing not only the foundational capacities of literacy, but higher cognitive capacities such as critical thinking, problem-solving, social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions. It emphasizes the key parameters of quality education such as better enrolment in higher education, teaching-learning outcomes and skills-oriented education for the youth. It provides a comprehensive framework for the Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones, 2020[5] and prevalent policies like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, focusing towards building a gender-equal public education system in India, which the previous education policies as a whole have failed to provide. (Chaudhary, 2022) The freedom to be authentically feminine rooted within her power and not an external structure is an aim that pushes the woman to aspire for independence (Zweig, 1990), something that the education aims to provide. Thus, the study has aimed to understand the need for feminization of the Indian psyche through the approach of NEP, 2020.

METHODOLOGY

The study is undertaken to understand the perspective of female students towards education concerning their educational motivation, educational experience and the requirement of the New Education Policy based on the critical feedback received from an in-depth semi-structured interview of 20 female students (18-28 years) of the Arts and Science stream from Mahatma Gandhi Chitrakoot Gramodaya Vishwavidyalaya, Chitrakoot, Satna, M.P. Thematic Analysis has been used to shed light on how education contributes existential value in terms of self-identity and social acceptance, exploring the connection between the education sector and the BBBP scheme, and elaborating on the core reasons for the ineffectiveness of the policy from a socio-cultural and psychological perspective.

DISCUSSION

“Devatas (gods) reside where women are respected (worshipped). Where women are disrespected, all actions and dharma come to naught (do not bear fruits). “Manusmriti – 3.56

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The discussion has been divided into five sections:

The first and second sections represent the themes of motivational values aiding the perception of students towards education, and understanding the failure of the old utilitarian theory of education in developing a quality academic and intellectual atmosphere. The third section elucidates the psycho-social and cultural gaps in the BBBP campaign's potential to transform the patriarchal Indian psyche from the derived themes and its connection with the theory of the Femininity complex, along with the lack of skills & value-based approach in the Indian education system. The fourth and fifth section explores the potential benefits of NEP in evolving the collective consciousness of Indian society's psyche concerning empathy, values and moral development with conclusive suggestions that can help reform the implementation of NEP and BBBP from the perspective of the field of humanities and feminine psychology.

I. Educational value satiates the Personal and Societal Existential Crisis

In Indian society, the value of education is based on its utility in contributing to financial aid and social status. Any field of education that can provide the highest form of benefits in these two segments is deemed prestigious. Other than these, the intellectual, creative and spiritual pillars of development associated with education are not considered important enough which has created a utilitarian and materialistic perception towards education, instead of an academic one. The female students who have studied in this atmosphere have been moulded with similar perspectives and have shared the following themes describing the personal and societal existential crisis which is satiated by education.

Family Pride and Social Status

In Indian society, where the birth of a male child is celebrated with enthusiasm, deeming them as pride and future of the clan's legacy, the study revealed that the primary motivational value of education for female students is rooted in the desire stemming from 'masculinity complex' (Horney, 1926), to become the family pride and enhance the social value of female gender identity by fulfilling the family desires, happiness and dreams using their education to crack competitive exams, being employed and providing monetary and social benefits in their community. (Yarkova,2015)

Financial independence aids personal and family needs

Their perspective towards being educated is heavily associated with being financially independent, which is a source of power to fuel identity, self-confidence and esteem. This motivation derived from education gives them hope and moulds the perspective that their opinions and emotions shall be appreciated and valued seriously by their family, community and society at large if they are educated and can become resourceful using education for employment.

Gateway to Freedom

Education institutes also become a common gathering ground of peer groups, fun-filled experiences that provide an escape from family restrictions and access to live a free life, concluding that education is valued on a lucrative and liberating tangent over the academic arena for Indian female students.

II. The quality of Education is inadequate in developing a humane civilisation

After a decade since the launch of BBBP, the country still has a sexist conscience supporting active cases of dowry and female atrocities as the women are unable to use their education and rights due to a lack of support from the system and society. To understand the failure of

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this scheme from a psychological perspective, the second half of the interview asked the girls to give their feedback on the quality of education, their unfulfilled expectations from their personal education experience and the changes needed for a healthy society.

Inaccessible Quality Education and skill-oriented learning

The female students further shared that even though they have been provided with basic educational benefits, the educational institutes that fulfil their expectations are not available in their hometowns and the opportunity to go to other places for education is not permissible due to reasons of convenience and personal security in the 'unsafe crowd'. This hints towards the obsolete structure of accessible, quality-based and diverse education everywhere and also marks the presence of an immoral section of society which has been unaffected by education that still perpetuates the threat to females in society. The collective education experience of the female students confabulated that they lacked the availability of academic diversity, skill-oriented learning, guidance concerning the subjects, their career approach and practical application of the fields they are studying. Many girls are still uncertain about the daily utility of the education they have received, as they are dependent upon the saturated and exhaustive pathway of securing a seat in limited avenues of institutes and the job market.

The girls further emphasized developing a positive and quality academic atmosphere, where teachers are genuinely focused on in-depth subject training and a skill-oriented education model which is beyond the theoretical structure of result-based learning and prepares them to lead the life they wish for. The students presented their disappointment with the sincerity and commitment of the teaching faculty based upon a healthy and friendly teacher-student bond that understands the psychological requirements in terms of aptitude and the emotional needs of students. Due to this, most of the students, have taken support from the internet and coaching classes to clear their doubts and exams, suppressing their expectations of getting teachers as idol role models of knowledge, noble character and a mentor. A recent introduction of Teacher Value Training through the values of Bhagavad Gita sparked a row at Delhi University's Ramanujan College showing disinterest to enrol in this course as it had no subject-oriented 'useful contribution', raising questions about the need for mandatory enrolment of non-teaching and teaching staff. The teachers revealed that they enrolled for the sake of being promoted to permanent seats, but none showed interest in investing and sensitising themselves to value-based personal and spiritual development to become role models for society. (TOI, 2023) The Indian education system is in dire need of developing a School Psychology council, concerning the requirement of school psychologists, including psychological development-oriented academic well-being and policies supporting the same. (P. Ramalingam, Yogini Nath, 2012)

De-valuing Humanities and Arts as an academic field

The students revealed their educational expectation of specialising in the chosen stream to cater for their academic interests that could enhance their intellectual, emotional and creative potential, develop new life skills which are pragmatic and spiritual, upgrade social and networking skills, and overcome personal complexes and lacunas through personality development. Many students confessed how they would have preferred to study art, history, culture, dance and music if they had support. These educational expectations are fulfilled in the Arts, Humanities and Social sciences departments which are deemed insignificant due to society's preference towards science and utilitarian-based degrees which are masculine in terms of economic productivity, whereas pure arts are deemed feminine, lack 'educational value' as it is not apt for bread-earning professions. Science is considered more prestigious

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and 'intellectual', especially by parents, for its scope in bagging jobs, putting humanities in the last for its academic contribution in developing the human consciousness holds no power in elevating financial and social status until it is used for cracking government jobs. It is within this masculine civilisation that is based upon 'productivity culture' predominantly represented through science and economics at the education front, that the literary, creative and philosophical preferences of women based upon their anatomy and their psyche have no place, leading to the development of a 'masculinity complex'. (Karen Horney, 1967)

III. Understanding 'Femininity Complex' in Indian Society & Education Model

Indian Society is run by a Masculine psyche that values an objective approach to life, measured in economic productivity, devaluing feminine strengths and roles. The in-depth investigation concludes that the present education sector is patriarchal and driven to create industrial workers with no significant contribution in moulding the society's psyche in life skills, ethics, morals, artistic, cultural, philosophical and spiritual segments. The girls shared that their educational background stays ineffective in eradicating the societal evils against women due to the masculine cultural and identity values associated with the dowry system where families assure societal respect and security of their daughters after marriage at their in-laws. This chauvinistic societal notion considers women an inferior gender and insignificant in terms of men regardless of their potential and achievements, till they add monetary & status benefits. The lack of intention to invest and support the female child's existence pushes her to take up masculine professions or is driven by economic empowerment, still depreciating the feminine impulse of her true nature by letting go of her interest in art, music, dance, cooking or simply being a stay-at-home mother.

This psychological crisis can be well understood by the theory of the 'Masculinity - Femininity Complex' by Karen Horney. Her clinical research yielded a theory of 'femininity complex' in men concerning motherhood, which is rationalized in the form of depreciation of a woman's body for undergoing a motherhood burden that they don't have to go through. Their lack in these strength arenas of women tends to be manifested as productivity, intellectualization and objectivity, an act of overcompensation for their femininity complex. Whereas, the masculinity complex in women is transmuted into the desire to have a husband, a child and presently a job that yields freedom like men. The fiction of behaving as a man acts as an escape for women from the dogma of burden and inferiority associated with womanhood, for she is made to feel inadequate. It was also found that the female psyche is still capable of tolerating this torment over the guilt associated with her feminine attitude, highlighting a major existential crisis associated with being a woman in her true nature. Often this leads to identification with the father to adopt his masculine attitude, which was reflected in this study where the girls wanted to be recognised and make their fathers proud by fulfilling their dreams, becoming financially successful to be valued and leading a free life 'like a man' on her terms. (Karen Horney, 1967)

IV. The role of NEP in the moral evolution of Indian Psyche

The psychological crisis in Indian culture has pushed people to chase identity and respect for self-preservation. The colonisation of education has deteriorated the quality education model of India which once focused on brilliance as a standard of mind, body and soul development. This distortion and disintegration of the standard development has restricted the value of existence within the utilitarian economic model of money and titles; aspects which presently dominate the driving force behind being educated where a degree is just a tool. This collective societal psyche is aimed to be transformed through NEP's intention towards creating an atmosphere of knowledge (Jnan), wisdom (Pragyaa), and truth (Satya) based

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upon Indian thought and philosophy as the highest human goal. The findings and feedback of the study are included in the objective of the New Education Policy, which aims for diverse skills-based learning and a quality academic atmosphere catering for the financial, lifestyle, social, societal, psychological and spiritual development at large. Students who wish to get educated for employment needs shall be trained in diverse ways at the basic academic level itself, cutting their dependence upon saturated fields of employment and cutting the stereotypic preference for collared jobs to satiate psychological crises. The NEP has the potential to provide holistic development that caters to both the existential crisis and academic thirst which persists in the female population despite being educated, through a welcoming and caring educational atmosphere. (NEP,2020)

V. Suggestive psychological measures for effective results of BBBP through NEP

Inclusion of gender-sensitive and socio-cultural-moral education in the curriculum that can teach female students about their basic feminine anatomy, psychology, human rights and legal measures they can take for their development and protection.

The study revealed a lack of faith in the masculine community's generous intentions and actions on an emotional and financial level. Psychologists play a crucial role in building a positive psyche of the country as a whole and such complexes can be best handled by them. The academia requires a community of female counsellors and social workers to help educate and heal the trauma wounds, and existential complexes of female students and encourage them to stand up for their own mental and emotional well-being. Counsellors are also needed to educate the family members within education premises through frequent PTM and gender awareness workshops where they explain the degrading side of the culture based upon collective complexes, prejudices, lack of morals and identity crisis that still devalues a girl even if she is educated.

The education curriculum needs to be inclusive of subjects of arts, spirituality, and humanities at all institutional stages to develop a qualitative, gentle, free-flowing, humane, feminine and divine approach to academia, balancing the damage done by a hyper-focus towards utilitarian patriarchal, positivist, scientific approaches to academia. Indian, Cultural and Social Psychologists along with Historians and Political science majors are needed to group, study and work on policies that can initiate the moral evolution of the conscience of Indian society that once worshipped women for their wisdom and the role they played in society.

CONCLUSION

As conclusive remarks, the study has aimed to study the femininity complex in Indian society which requires a culturally and spiritually rich educational rectification to eradicate the violence based upon sexism and sow seeds for a society that recognizes the value of a woman for who she is in her mind and soul, free from crisis based structures that encourage symbolical death of her femininity for survival, providing generous space for her to use her potential, and contribute her part in the development of society fearlessly. In the words of Savitribai Phule, "Let knowledge be the beacon that dispels the darkness of ignorance."

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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