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**Visual Politics of the  
State's Image Making  
Through Children: An  
Analysis of the  
Conceptions of Childhood  
in the Indian Government  
Schemes on the Girl Child**

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## **Visual Politics of the State’s Image Making Through Children: An Analysis of the Conceptions of Childhood in the Indian Government Schemes on the Girl Child**

### **I. Introduction: Whose Song?**

“Ouaka a bakin mey ita, tahi dadi – A song sounds sweeter from the author’s mouth.”<sup>1</sup>

This Hausa proverb was shared by several participants in Save the Children’s research on image making in Niger.<sup>2</sup> They used it to express their preference for visual communication where children spoke for themselves. Save the Children also found similar support for participatory image making from across diverse jurisdictions.<sup>3</sup> However, the ‘song’ among extant realities is far from sweet, often even bitter when appropriated by adults with State power. One such instance that exemplify such bitterness is the use of children’s images in government schemes which are rooted in non-participation and non-rights-based conceptions of childhood.

Although ostensibly benevolent, these schemes exclude children’s participation and tend to perpetuate property and welfare-based conceptions of childhood in various forms including through visual representations of the schemes. In contemporary post-colonial States particularly, there is evidence to suggest that this visual politics enables an extension of a political populism that situates the State as a ‘civilising’ actor that protects children.<sup>4</sup> Although many post-colonial States have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter, the CRC), such practices are inconsistent with their international law obligations and its rights-based conceptions of childhood.<sup>5</sup> Hence, this essay will look at one such scheme and unpack its image making. Good intro

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<sup>1</sup> Sioban Warrington and Jess Crombie, *The People in the Pictures: Vital Perspectives on Save the Children’s Image Making* (Save the Children, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Shahid Perwez, *Female Infanticide and the Civilising Mission in Postcolonial India: A Case Study From Tamil Nadu c. 1980–200’* (Anthem Press, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> *Convention on the Rights of Child 1989* (United Nations).

The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (trans: Save the daughter, educate the daughter) (hereinafter, the BBBP) scheme was launched by the Union Government of India in 2015.<sup>6</sup> The purported objectives of the BBBP were to combat female foeticides and gender discrimination against girl children in India.<sup>7</sup> While the scheme initially focussed on 100 districts in North India, it has over the years incrementally expanded to cover all the districts of the country. Despite this rapid expansion and the rhetoric of rights surrounding the scheme which was introduced to the public on the International Day of the Girl Child by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, I argue that it has been continually rooted in welfare and even property-based conceptions of childhood. This is apparent from several features of the BBBP including its name, programmes, etc.<sup>8</sup> However, this essay will examine the BBBP's image making — logo, photographs and advertisements — which has been a significant part of the scheme.

In 2021, it was reported that 80% of the BBBP funds were spent on advertisements.<sup>9</sup> Yet, even a cursory look at the images and advertisements used in and for the BBBP will make evident its visual politics.<sup>10</sup> It portrays the government as the protector of the stereotypically vulnerable girl children. This raises concerns that the scheme, in substance, is not as much about children as it is about the populist image making of the Modi government.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, despite India having ratified the CRC, the BBBP's image making is symptomatic of the State's failure to adopt rights-based and participatory schemes on and for children. Rather, it has appropriated the language to rights to build, strengthen, and reinforce the 'political asceticism' of Modi.<sup>12</sup> This begs the question, beyond the sweetness of the song, is the song even the authors' anymore? Or are children's rights and their discrimination being appropriated by the post-colonial State to sing a vastly different and dangerous tune?

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<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India, *Logo Design Competition for Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Competition* (2014) <[https://web.archive.org/web/20141105190442/http://wcd.nic.in/tender/Beti\\_bachao\\_beti\\_padhao\\_campaign\\_24072014.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20141105190442/http://wcd.nic.in/tender/Beti_bachao_beti_padhao_campaign_24072014.pdf)>; Ministry of Women and Child Development, *Warning Against Spurious Schemes being Floated in the Name of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (2014) <<https://wcd.nic.in/bbbp-schemes>>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Jagriti Chandra, 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao: 80% of Funds Spent on Media Campaigns, says Parliamentary Committee', *The Hindu* (online, 10 December 2021) <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/beti-bachao-beti-padhao-whopping-80-of-funds-spent-on-media-campaigns-says-parliamentary-committee/article37922778.ece>>.

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Women and Child Development (n 6).

<sup>11</sup> Prama Ray Chaudhury, 'The Political Asceticism of Mamata Banerjee: Female Populist Leadership in Contemporary India' (2021) 18 *Politics & Gender* 942.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

Therefore, the thesis of this essay is that the post-colonial government schemes in India on the girl child appropriate the rhetoric of rights, while they are deep-seated in property and welfare-based conceptions of childhood. Accordingly, such a conception helps construct and strengthen the populist visual politics of the Modi government, as exemplified by BBBP's image making. The essay will contain a five-part structure. First, I will briefly describe the necessary legal, policy and social background of the BBBP that will help better understand the analysis in the following sections. Second, I will engage with the colonial State's policies on the girl child in India. As much as the uncritically property and welfare-based approaches of the contemporary State policies on the girl child stem from the extant socio-political realities, they are also remnants of the colonial legal policies from pre-independent India. This is why I propose to take this chronological approach to my essay, going from understanding the colonial state to postcolonial state policy, as the two are closely connected. Third, I will unpack the post-colonial and contemporary State approach toward girl children in policy making. I will analyse the image making of the BBBP in the context of my thesis and discuss its conceptions of childhood and its implications for political populism through the imagery of girl children. Fourth, I will discuss the relevance of the methodology provided by Article 12 of the CRC on children's right to participation in image making of the BBBP. This provides important insights that will serve as a segway into tying in the discussions and learnings from the preceding sections to advance my thesis that I will elaborate upon. Lastly, I will provide a conclusion to the essay. I will reiterate key points, address limitations and articulate some incidental questions that are not within the scope of this essay but are nevertheless critical in understanding conceptions of childhood in post-colonial States' legal policies such as the BBBP in India. Needs some editing but still very strong

## **II. Background: Symbolism of the State's Daughters**

Right from the outset of the BBBP, a figure who has dominated its discursive trajectories is Modi. In 2014, during the International Day of the Girl Child, Modi first teased the idea of the scheme to the public.<sup>13</sup> He called for a pledge to secure equality for girl children, eradicate female foeticides and celebrate daughters in India.<sup>14</sup> But this seemingly benevolent emergence of the BBBP was in reality entrenched in propriety-based conceptions of the girl child. This was evident from

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<sup>13</sup>PM Narendra Modi Invites Ideas on "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao", *DNA India* (online, 11 October 2014) <<https://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-pm-narendra-modi-invites-ideas-on-beti-bachao-beti-padhao-2025163>>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Modi's 2014 address and the name his government chose for the scheme. The emphasis was on the girl child as the daughter. This bolsters the heteronormative relational identity of the girl child in the Indian social climate.<sup>15</sup> Here, men define the household, society and nation.<sup>16</sup> Women and girls are viewed as purely relational objects — as daughters, wives and mothers of men.<sup>17</sup>

Historically, such relations of vassalage have also dominated legal conceptions of childhood, remnants of which are present to date.<sup>18</sup> Children are seen as incompetent chattels of their parents, particularly fathers. This patria potestas principle is typically only breached when circumstances justify parens patriae intervention of the State.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, the intersectionality of being female and a child imposes a double vassalage of the girl child.<sup>20</sup> As a child, she is viewed as property and as a girl, she is defined in her capacity as a daughter. This forecloses the possibility of imagining girl children as rights-bearing persons beyond narrow relational identities and fails to upload an emancipatory conception of childhood.

Moreover, what is also noteworthy is that the BBBP allows for both patria potestas and parens patriae to operate simultaneously. Not only is the girl child defined as a daughter to her family, but is also seen as requiring the welfarism of the State. This is portrayed as in the best interests of the girl child who needs to be saved from harmful family practices such as female foeticide and gender discrimination. The family-state nexus is then used to reinforce the daughter's double vassalage. This is exemplified by Modi continually referring to girl children as "India's daughters" while discussing the BBBP in another one of his innovations, a monthly visually enriched radio address called Mann ki Baat (trans: Inner Thoughts).<sup>21</sup> This sets the scene for the saving the girl child program to create an evocative symbolism of benevolence for patriarchal

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<sup>15</sup> Huma Ahmed-Ghosh, 'Chattels of Society: Domestic Violence in India' (2004) 10(1) *Violence Against Women* 94.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Vintage Classic, 2015).

<sup>18</sup> *Re Agar-Ellis (judgment)* (UK House of Lords, (1883) 24 ChD 317 CA, 24 July 1883); *Re Woolley; Ex Parte Applicants* [2004] HCA 49; *Shafin Jahan v Asokan KM (judgment)* (The Supreme Court of India, 2018 SCC OnLine Sc 201, 8 March 2018).

<sup>19</sup> *Shafin Jahan v Asokan KM* (n 18).

<sup>20</sup> See Hankivsky, Olena, Renée Cormier and Diego De Merich, *Intersectionality: Moving Women's Health Research and Policy Forward* (Women's Health Research Network, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> 'Mann Ki Baat', *PMIndia* <<https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/mann-ki-baat/>>.

families and the State. Modi's ability to capitalise on this imagery demonstrates his 'unprecedented form of visual populism' in India.

In January 2015, Modi officially launched the BBBP from Haryana, a state in North India.<sup>22</sup> It was designated as a national initiative on tackling the declining child sex ratio in India, jointly run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Education. It stated that it will adopt a methodology of multi-sectoral action and in 2018, the scheme was expanded to cover all the districts of the country. Yet, the BBBP has consistently remained lacking with regard to the involvement of children in the scheme, although it is a matter that affects them. Its top-down approach leaves much to be desired in terms of India fulfilling its international law obligations under Article 12 of the CRC, of which it is a signatory.<sup>23</sup> It also spotlights the fault lines in the appropriation of the rhetoric of rights by State parties, particularly in non-Western and post-colonial contexts. While it is misleading to argue that the CRC largely caters to Western cultures, there exist difficulties in implementing it in varied cultures, as accounted for in CRC itself.<sup>24</sup> Hence, it is important to study the modalities of policy initiatives such as the BBBP that will provide insights relevant to both domestic and international children's right-based discourses.

### III. Colonial Approach: Poetics and Politics of State Policies

Gender discrimination against the girl child, with a facile emphasis on female infanticide, has persistently garnered the attention of colonial and contemporary governments and society in India.<sup>25</sup> There are several reasons for this. Historically, there has been a high incidence of female infanticide in the country.<sup>26</sup> However, the British colonial State's approach prior to India's independence in 1947, has had a considerable influence in shaping the legal and policy discourse on the subject matter. It has been argued that contemporary government policies on the girl child in

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<sup>22</sup>'PM to Launch Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Programme From Haryana), Indian Express (online, 31 December 2014) <<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/PM-to-Taunch-Beti-Bachao-Beti-Padhao-Programme-from-Haryana/2014/12/31/article2597270.ece>>.

<sup>23</sup>See Didier Reynaert et al 'Introduction' in Vandenhoe et al (eds) *Routledge Handbook on Children's Rights Studies* (2015) 1-11.

<sup>24</sup>Indigenous children and their rights under the Convention, CRC/C/GC/11 (12 February 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Padma Anagol, 'Languages of Injustice: The Culture of 'Prize-Giving' and Information Gathering on Female Infanticide in Nineteenth-Century India' (2017) 14 *Cultural and Social History* 429 .

<sup>26</sup> See Barbara D Miller, 'Female-Selective Abortion in Asia: Patterns, Policies, and Debates' (2001) 103 *American Anthropologist* 1083.



postcolonial South Asia continue to mimic the colonial rhetoric of the European civilising mission of the non-European world.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, unlike in many Western experiences, it is insufficient to study policies on the girl child in South Asia without discussing the impact of colonial State policies on the issue.



Figure 1: *Illustration of Infanticide, c1891*



Figure 2: *Embroidery of Girls' Education, c1988*

I will use two images to explain my argument. First, *Figure 1* is an illustration by James Grant, a British newspaper editor.<sup>28</sup> It is a part of his book which contains a series of illustrations that provide an account of the economic, socio-cultural and political narratives from colonial India. *Figure 1* is said to depict an infanticide on the banks of the Yamuna River in North India. It demonstrates how European travellers like Grant and the East India Company used paintings, photographs and postcards as visual productions of the empire.<sup>29</sup> They differentiated and exoticised the colonised, particularly women.<sup>30</sup> The illustration shows three women draped in sarees, an Indian garment, in the midst of abandoning a girl child in the river. The colonial bureaucracy often used the saree to symbolise the trope of the customs and traditions of India's peoples as identified on

<sup>27</sup> Perwez (n 4).

<sup>28</sup> James Grant, *Cassell's Illustrated History of India* (Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1978).

<sup>29</sup> Tracy Rizzo and Steven Gerontakis (2017) *Intimate empires: Body, race, and gender in the modern world* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>30</sup> Saloni Mathur, *India by design: Colonial history and cultural display* (New Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 2011)



women's bodies.<sup>31</sup> The emphasis on bodily markers also served to portray women in relational capacities — as wives or daughters whose external appearance indicated the caste, class and religion of their husbands or fathers.<sup>32</sup> Hence, the illustration reduces women from the colony to objects that signify and are the victims of the realities that the colonial State claimed were present only in non-European civilisations.

The civilisational otherness relied upon by the colonial State itself is fallacious for several reasons including the existence of comparable infanticide cases in England and Wales which will be discussed later on. However, the Orientalisation of Indian women and girls' issues in visual sources facilitated the empire's 'anthropological project of fixing people in a given space-time' and as performing anachronism. Hence, Grant's illustration exemplifies the framing and exhibiting of the issue of infanticide in a manner that supported the language of 'rescue' of the girl child.<sup>33</sup> This was instrumental in furthering the discourse of the civilising mission, used by the colonial State to self-legitimise its rule. Consequently, girl children were used to justify the presence of colonialism as it purportedly saved them from harmful indigenous practices such as infanticide. This was portrayed as a welfarist approach, requiring the State's *parens patriae* intervention in the best interests of girl children. Thus, the visual and discursive articulation of the project to save the girl child is entrenched in the colonial history of India, much before its re-emergence in policies such as the BBBP.

It is then useful to compare Grant's illustration to *Figure 2* which is an embroidery of girls' education by rural Indian women.<sup>34</sup> It is called *kantha* embroidery which is a centuries-old practice of embroidering quilts by rural women in the Bengali regions of colonial India — now Eastern India and Bangladesh.<sup>35</sup> Although this particular quilt was commissioned in the late 1990s, i.e., post India's independence, the craft itself dates back to the eighteenth century. As can be ascertained from the secondary literature, *Figure 2* is comparable to other works of the folk art including those

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<sup>31</sup> Aarti Kawlra, 'Sari and the narrative of nation in 20th-century India', *Global Textile Encounters* 213–226.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Perwez (n 4).

<sup>34</sup> Molly E. Aitken, *The Narrative Thread: Women's Embroidery from Rural India* (National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

produced during the colonial period.<sup>36</sup> Kanthas have been viewed as a site of knowledge production and social commentary as they provided visual narratives of the impact of caste, colonialism and patriarchy on women and girls.<sup>37</sup>

The stories of girl children the kanthas depict range from female infanticides and gender discrimination to girls' education and empowerment.<sup>38</sup> In effect, they not only offer stories of need but also stories of hope — the visual space for which is foreclosed in the colonial civilising mission framework. For instance, many kanthas in the exhibit curated by Molly Aitken of which *Figure 2* is also a part of, depicted problems encountered by girl children.<sup>39</sup> However, unlike Grant's illustration which employed a 'shocking image' to present stereotypical narratives, the women embroidering the kanthas visualise the girl child in several different ways.<sup>40</sup> While they also embroidered female infanticides, their imagination and portrayal of the issues faced by the girl child was not limited as objects of charity or sympathy. Instead, they used techniques of dynamic storytelling to represent the daily lives of girl children and their aspirations for their imagined future.<sup>41</sup>

While there existed and continue to exist barriers to girl children's education in India, the women embroidering *Figure 2* depict the issue by showcasing the possibilities of a women's panchayat (trans: local self-government for rural areas) surrounded by girls meeting and learning. While Aitken recommended a circular composition of the kantha, the women chose to organise the scenes of girls' education in a rectangular composition around the circular depiction of the panchayat.<sup>42</sup> This exemplifies the rich engagement that participatory image making can elicit. Another example of this is the kanthas that represent the employment of women to counter the

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<sup>36</sup> Debarati Sarkar, 'Glimpses of comfort: Embroideries of self in the imagined worlds of Kantha textiles from late-colonial Bengal' 20(2) *TEXTILE* 2021 252–273.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Aitken (n 34).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> See Abhishek Bhati and Angela M Eikenberry, 'Faces of the needy: The portrayal of Destitute Children in the fundraising campaigns of ngos in India', 21(1) *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 21(1) 2015 31–42.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Aitken (n 34).

viewing of girl children as financial liabilities due to future dowry demands.<sup>43</sup> Hence, beyond the objectification and eroticisation of women and girls in colonial image making, such kanthas balance the tensions between portraying the girl child in a good light, conveying her story correctly and expressing the need for intervention, where required.<sup>44</sup> They help generate awareness about a spectrum of issues including but not limited to female infanticide. Kanthas have documented, albeit through various expressions, social issues such as child marriage, domestic violence, dowry demands, and the lack of education for girl children, among others things.<sup>45</sup>

While the image making in *Figure 2* is more participatory and thereby closer to a rights-based approach than the welfarism of colonial image making, a critical analysis of it also provides another important insight into conceptualisation of the girl child in colonial policy. Kanthas are primarily works of adult women. However, it is difficult to dismiss their image making as a top-down approach to children's rights as intuitively understood in Western contexts.<sup>46</sup> This is because a combination of discourses of both the coloniser and the colonised worked to construct the historical figure of the girl-child by only ever positioning her as a woman in the future tense.<sup>47</sup> Simultaneously, adult women were also infantilised, viewed as compulsorily heterosexual and their personhood was bound to men — fathers and husbands.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, despite 'colonial patriarchy' talking incessantly about saving women and girl children, it unhelpfully conceived the 'compound figure of the girl child/woman'.<sup>49</sup> Such a problematic innovation is bound to have profound implications on State policies on the girl child, its conceptions of childhood and understanding children's right to participation in colonial and post-colonial India. This will become evident from the discussions that follow.

Naturally, the anxieties of the civilising mission and the figure of the girl child/woman guided the colonial legal and policy approach towards the girl child. For the colonial State,

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Bhati and Eikenbeery (n 40).

<sup>45</sup> Sarkar (n 36).

<sup>46</sup> See Reynaert (n 23).

<sup>47</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The nationalist resolution of the women's question* (Calcutta, 1987).

<sup>48</sup> Ruby Lal, 'Recasting the women's question', 10(3) *Interventions* 2008 321–339.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

addressing female infanticide was a core facet of the civilising mission.<sup>50</sup> It initially adopted measures such as informally pressurising communities and petitioning with nationalist leaders.<sup>51</sup> The East India Company also resorted to policy measures including some contextually unusual schemes such as conferring an essay prize to Indian writings against female infanticides.<sup>52</sup> However, none of these measures significantly impacted the continuation of female infanticides and other forms of gender discrimination faced by girl children.<sup>53</sup> In fact, historical evidence and secondary literature prove that it was nearly impossible to even judge the extent to which the crime was prevalent.<sup>54</sup> Yet, these shortcomings did not off-put the British civilising mission's focus on female infanticides. On the contrary, the initiation of the colonial overhauling of the Indian legal system in the second half of the 1800s caused more attention to be paid to female infanticides within a punitive criminal law framework.<sup>55</sup>

Colonial legislation in India sought to put in place seemingly tough measures against female foeticides. Like the criminal code in the United Kingdom at the time, infanticides in India were to be prosecuted under the general homicide provisions of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (hereinafter, the IPC).<sup>56</sup> However, the colonial State made deliberate efforts while drafting the IPC to differentiate certain procedural elements pertaining to child murder prosecutions in the colony from those in the metropole. Sections 299 to 318 of the IPC were drafted in a manner that both infanticides and foeticides could be prosecuted under it.<sup>57</sup> This meant that the IPC was designed to not be limited to covering only murder prosecutions for the death of children post birth like in the United Kingdom, but also the deaths that occur during or prior to childbirth. This set a higher threshold for child homicide prosecutions in India by expanding the scope of the instances that the penal provisions on infanticide covered.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Chatterjee (n 47).

<sup>52</sup> Anagol (n 25).

<sup>53</sup> Daniel J.R. Grey, 'it is impossible to judge the extent to which the crime is prevalent': Infanticide and the law in India, 1870–1926' 2020 *Women's History Review*, 30(6), 1028–1046.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> *Indian Penal Code 1860 (India)*.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Notably, several Western jurisdictions provide for diminished criminal responsibility in cases of infanticide so as to structure a practical and humanitarian provision that accounts for the social context in which infanticides occur.<sup>58</sup> In India, as opposed to providing for such a partial legal defence, the IPC acts as a purely punitive legislation with regard to infanticides. It was ideologically conceptualised to criminalise infanticides, with some of the general homicide provisions in the IPC expressly stating that acts of infanticide can be prosecuted under them.<sup>59</sup> However, despite the IPC's seeming deviation from the humanitarian approach of the Western infanticide laws, conviction rates in cases of infanticides remained negligible in colonial India.<sup>60</sup>

One important reason for this was the civilising mission's portrayal of women committing infanticides as 'passive objects of care and charity'.<sup>61</sup> British reports on infanticides indicate that women were rarely mentioned in cases of infanticide and when they were, they were portrayed sympathetically as 'submissive to the point of mindlessness'.<sup>62</sup> This patriarchalism contributed to reinforcing the coloniser and colonised's propriety-based conceptions of the girl child/woman. Accordingly, the colonial bureaucracy viewed the colony's men and their 'savage family' as orchestrating the infanticides.<sup>63</sup> It even introduced specific legislation beyond the IPC, such as the Female Infanticide (Prevention) Act, 1870 to surveil the family unit.<sup>64</sup> Yet, given the practical difficulties associated with proving the crime of infanticide in Indian society, the results of the misconceived colonial policy and legal interventions were nothing significant.<sup>65</sup>

But considerations of efficacy were largely irrelevant as the 'colonial obsession' with infanticides was hardly about social reform than it was to further the logic of the civilising mission

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<sup>58</sup> Rosanna Langer, 'Mother of Sorrows: Post-Partum Mental Disorder and the Law across Five Jurisdictions' 19(3) *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law* 2012 358.

<sup>59</sup> *IPC* (n 56).

<sup>60</sup> Grey (n 53).

<sup>61</sup> See UNICEF *Policy Guidance on AI for Children* Draft 1.0 (online, September 2020) <<https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/reports/policy-guidance-ai-children>>.

<sup>62</sup> Grey (n 53).

<sup>63</sup> Savage family: Colonialism and female infanticide in Nineteenth-Century India. Sen, Satadru. *Journal of Women's History*; Autumn 2002; 14, 3; ProQuest pg. 53

<sup>64</sup> *The Female Infanticide (Prevention) Act, 1870* (India).

<sup>65</sup> 'It is impossible to judge the extent to which the crime is prevalent': Infanticide and the law in India, 1870-1926 Daniel J.R. Grey

by differentiating the colony as an infanticidal society.<sup>66</sup> This was despite the fact that there was evidence to suggest that infanticides were not ‘special to the East’ and highlighted the colonial State’s discomfort with acknowledging infanticides back home.<sup>67</sup> Hence, the disproportionate emphasis on the differentiation between the colony and metropole with regard to infanticides by the colonial State was more imagined than real. This imagined differentiation enabled and sustained the British performative benevolence of saving the girl child/women figure. The poetics surrounding this performance — colonising ‘areas of darkness’ — was used to legitimise the civilising mission.<sup>68</sup> However, the politics of such ill-formed State policies leave behind a dangerous legacy that is bound to influence post-colonial legal regimes on infanticide in India as will become evident in the next subsection.

#### **IV. Post-Colonial and Contemporary State Approach: Decoding the Spectacle of the BBBP**

The preoccupations of the State in colonial India with regard to the stereotyping and policing of specific groups such as women and children made it an ‘enumerative Raj’.<sup>69</sup> This colonial innovation of enumerating and demarcating vulnerable groups was essential to the imperial regime and its control over the colony.<sup>70</sup> This has had far-reaching consequences for the post-colonial Indian legal and policy regime. Seventy-five years after India’s independence, the country is still far from independent of the rhetoric and practise of the colonial civilising mission.<sup>71</sup> Perturbingly, the potency for self-legitimation the approach presents has meant that the contemporary State power continues to reproduce the logic of the civilising mission for populist considerations. This is evident from the host of legislations — Medical Termination of Pregnancies Act, 1971, Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and the IPC — that are deep-seated in propriety and welfarist conceptions of the girl child. This fetishism of the law in the

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<sup>66</sup> Satadru Sen, ‘The Savage family: Colonialism and female infanticide in nineteenth-century India’, 14(3) *Journal of Women’s History* 2002 53–79.

<sup>67</sup> Grey (n 53).

<sup>68</sup> Sen (n 66).

<sup>69</sup> Radhika Singha, ‘Providential Circumstances: The Thuggee Campaign of the 1830s and Legal Innovation’, 27(1) *Modern Asian Studies* 2020 83- 92.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

postcolony often creates cartographies of disorders.<sup>72</sup> It is in this context and disorders that the BBBP as a scheme emerges and operates in.

In this subsection, I will examine three aspects of the BBBP's image making, the conceptions of childhood they extend and children's participation in them. First, I will unpack the logo of the BBBP as a signifier of the State's saving mission. Second, I will examine the technology-drive visual populism of the Modi Government as employed in the BBBP campaign. Lastly, I will discuss the limited participation of girl children in the BBBP, as passive recipients of prizes, a remnant of the colonial prize cultures. Together, these themes will help us grapple with the underlying visual politics of the BBBP's image making.

### A. Logo as Signifier: Narrative Control, Conceptual Ambiguity and the Saving Mission



*Figure 3: Poster for the BBBP's Logo Design Competition, 2014*

One of the earliest avenues for public participation in the BBBP was the logo design competition announced in August 2014. Figure 3 was the poster issued by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to invite entries for the competition.<sup>73</sup> While the BBBP is jointly run by

<sup>72</sup> Jean Comaroff & John Comaroff, *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1—56.

<sup>73</sup> Ministry of Women and Child Development (n 6).



three ministries of the Government of India, the poster mentioning only the Ministry of Women and Child Development is telling. It sets the tone for the post-colonial State's re-establishment of the girl child/woman as a subject of its saving mission. The compounding of the girl child and women is evident from the name of the ministry and its logo on the top right-hand side of the poster which shows the girl child as a woman in the future tense. Much like the colonial State's focus, the poster anchors the schemes in the twin issues of female infanticides and girls' education — two increasingly uncontroversial subjects to the general public in India.<sup>74</sup>

Although the poster called for the engagement of the general public in the BBBP, the participation was only ostensible. There are two reasons to substantiate my claim. First, the invitation only sought limited public involvement in the BBBP through logo designing. Moreover, even this was strictly regulated by the State. The four page guidelines accompanying the poster set out the parameters the participants must adhere to.<sup>75</sup> Among other things, it entailed broad ranging 'evaluation criteria' such as the 'artwork must not contain any provocative, objectionable or inappropriate content'.<sup>76</sup> The guidelines did not elaborate upon what qualified as a provocation and what objectionable or inappropriate content entailed. Instead, the State granted itself free rein in judging that and deciding the winning logo. This allowed it to control the visual narrative of the BBBP from its very inception.

Second, the entire process was adult-centric.<sup>77</sup> Despite the BBBP being a scheme on and affecting the girl child, it is entrenched in the non-participation of children.<sup>78</sup> The poster was designed and issued by adults — Ministry of Women and Child Development. The ministry also set the agenda for it. Its guidelines spotlight the colonial-like emphasis on female infanticides and education as the key issues affecting the girl child and referred to the girl child in her relational role as a daughter and in the future tense as a woman.<sup>79</sup> This relegated the girl child/woman to a

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<sup>74</sup> Ronojoy Sen, 'Narendra Modi's makeover and the politics of symbolism' 9(2) *Journal of Asian Public Policy* 2016 98-111.

<sup>75</sup> Ministry of Women and Child Development (n 6).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> John Tobin, *The UN Convention on the rights of the child: A commentary* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

<sup>78</sup> *Convention on the Rights of Child 1989* (United Nations).

<sup>79</sup> Ministry of Women and Child Development (n 6).



Figure 4: Logo of the BBBP

mindless object of the BBBP's saving mission. Although unfortunate, it is unsurprising that the winning logo was also designed by an adult.<sup>80</sup> amazing but perhaps not surprising

Figure 4 is the winning design and now-logo of the BBBP. It was designed A J Radhuvendra, a university student from Hyderabad, India. He felicitated and the logo was unveiled by the then-Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, during a press conference in September 2014.<sup>81</sup> All things considered, it was an entirely adult affair. **Children were neither involved in the making of the logo nor were they present in the images that emerged from the press conference.**<sup>82</sup> I think you probably need a bit more about what a RBA requires

Accordingly, the logo itself can at best be viewed as a top-down approach to addressing issues affecting children. However, it is not difficult to infer from the press conference and make an argument that the image making of the BBBP was scarcely about children. As evident from *Figure 4*, the logo is curiously ambiguous. Beginning from the bright red hair of the girl child, it is unclear what it is supposed to depict and how it is to resonate with girl children in India with predominantly

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

darker hair colours. Designed by an adult and under close State regulation, the logo does not accurately and/or empoweringly visualise the girl child. It says little about her personhood. Instead, it locates her with a book, albeit passively, furthering the State's purported emphasis on girls' education. The emphasis is on the scheme and not the persons whom it concerns, with the imagery of the girl child as a mere object of the scheme.

Moreover, the red of the girl child's hair in *Figure 4* matches the outer red circle which carries the name of the scheme, propelling it into prominence. Interestingly, the title of the scheme is in Hindi and is depicted in the vernacular script within the logo. This is despite the fact that it is neither the national language of the country nor is it spoken throughout all districts that the BBBP now covers. This once again causes the scheme to be removed from girl children in various parts of India and is similar to the fallacious colonial adjudication of female infanticides as more likely to occur in North India where Hindi is predominately spoken.<sup>83</sup>

This image making is purposely distant by not resonating with the girl child herself, possibly to skirt controversy.<sup>84</sup> It helps negotiate the State's welfare-based *parens patriae* intervention on behalf of the girl child without challenging the propriety-based *propatria potestas* powers of the male figures in the lives of the girl children/women. This allows for both the State and the family to co-share and sustain propriety and welfarist control over the girl child.<sup>85</sup> However, they do so under the grab of the rhetoric of rights, repeatedly emphasising that the BBBP is about the rights of the girl child.<sup>86</sup> Hence, there exist multiple and contradictory conceptions of childhood in the scheme. The visual politics of the renewed stereotypical portrayal of the girl child in the BBBP — learning and submissive — strengthens its deliberate conceptual ambiguity with regard to its conceptions of childhood. The BBBP's logo then is meant to act as a signifier portraying the State and family as championing girls' rights by appropriating the rhetoric of rights, while in actuality they do not commit to the practice of those rights. This is at the heart of the post-colonial and contemporary civilising mission with regard to the girl child, the saving mission.

## **B. High-Tech Populism: #SelfieWithDaughter and Instruments to Save Brand Modi**

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<sup>83</sup> Chatterjee (n 47).

<sup>84</sup> Sen (n 74).

<sup>85</sup> Chatterjee (n 47).

<sup>86</sup> Ministry of Women and Child Development (n 6).

The Modi government's campaign strategy for the BBBP, right from its inception, has entailed the use of technology as a means for 'reaching out to the billion plus population' of India.<sup>87</sup> An example that exemplifies this was the carefully scripted promotion of the use of the #SelfWithDaughter by Modi himself. It started with his mention on Mann ki Baat, a novel monthly visually enriched All India Radio and telecasted address hosted by Modi, of Sunil Jaglan who had posted a selfie with his daughter Nandini Jaglan on Facebook with the #SelfieWithDaughter.<sup>88</sup> Jaglan was then a Sarpanch (trans: village head) from Haryana, India and *Figure 5* is the selfie he had posted. Modi praised him for his initiative and encouraged more fathers to post selfies with their girl child on social media using the hashtag.<sup>89</sup>



*Figure 5: Sunil Jaglan with Nandini Jaglan, 2015*



*Figure 6: BJP Leader Devendra Fadnavis and Daughter, 2015*

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Vijay Sabharwal, 'Selfie with daughters: Haryana village head hailed by PM was suspended for irregularities' (2015) *Hindustan Times*.

<sup>89</sup> Rohini Mohan, 'How PM Modi's Beti Bachao, Selfie Banao campaign became a rage to rewrite gender-skewed script in Haryana' (2015) *The Economic Times*.

Not only did Modi's astute request endorse sharenting, it yet again affirmed the relational status quo of the girl child as the property of her father. Modi's unprecedented employment of high-tech populism led to the #SelfieWithDaughter to trend on social media the world over.<sup>90</sup> *Figure 6* is an example of this. It shows the then-Chief Minister of Maharashtra, a member of the Indian political party BJP that Modi also belongs to, sharing a selfie with his daughter on Twitter with the #SelfieWithDaughter and #BetiBachaoBetiPadhao. The non-controversial nature of the BBBP to India's growing urban middle class propelled such social media trends and even enabled the Modi government to rope in a number of Indian celebrities to partake in such campaigns.<sup>91</sup>

While celebrities might otherwise be wary of associating with government policies, the symbolic value of the BBBP's image making allowed a number of Indian sports and film personalities to engage with it — through social media promotions, acting as ambassadors and filling advertisements for the campaign.<sup>92</sup> The resultant gain in popularity caused the Modi government to prematurely declare the BBBP as a success, much like the hasty colonial celebrations of policies on the girl child.<sup>93</sup> Such policies are positioned as straight forward successes plainly because they are a part of the State's civilising/saving mission, regardless of the difficulties in ascertaining the actual outcomes.<sup>94</sup>



*Figure 7: Modi, Political Leaders and Celebrities at the BBBP's Launch Event, 2015*

<sup>90</sup> See Christophe Jaffrelot, 'Narendra Modi and the Power of Television in Gujarat' (2015) 16(4) *Sage Journals*.

<sup>91</sup> Ronojoy Sen, 'Narendra Modi's makeover and the politics of symbolism' 9(2) *Journal of Asian Public Policy* 98-111.

<sup>92</sup> See 'Education: Her Dream, Her Right, Our Responsibility' Youtube <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8G0Ql-tHf64>>.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Lalita Panigrahi, 'British Social Policy and female infanticide in India' (1972) 155-90.



Figure 8: The BBBP's Launch Event, 2015



Figure 9: The BBBP's Launch Event, 2015

Figure 7 shows Modi, ministers and governors from his government and the Indian actress Madhuri Dixit Nene at the BBBP's launch event in January 2015 in Haryana, India. Figures 8 and 9 show Modi waving to the audience at the same event, with his and the then-Minister for Women and Child Development's photographs displayed in the background. Given the well-known aversion Modi has for the press, his image making at such events along with his direct communication with the general public through social media and Mann ki Baat, is instrumental to his making of a brand based on 'narcissism' and a specific sense of visual communication.<sup>95</sup> The focal point of Figures 7, 8 and 9 is Modi and the BBBP. In fact, Modi's physical image has been 'a systematic basis for BJP propaganda and the state government's communication'.<sup>96</sup> Hence, the imagery of the girl child in the BBBP is only an object for furthering Modi's 'non-discursive populist mode of political communication'.<sup>97</sup> Such an approach is deep-seated in the propriety-based and instrumentalist conception of childhood, looking at the girl child as a means to a political end that has little to do with addressing her problems.

This meticulously coordinated and choreographed image making of the Modi government is a part of its efforts to use de-radicalised government schemes to give Modi a political makeover.<sup>98</sup> This allows him to use 'antidemocratic populism' to reinvest himself from the taints of his involvement in weaponising ethnoreligious divisions in the 2002 Gujarat Riots, a move that once led to him being banned from entering countries such as the United States.<sup>99</sup> Modi's adept use of

<sup>95</sup> See Jaffrelet (n 95).

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Catarina Kinnvall, 'Populism, ontological insecurity and Hindutva: Modi and the masculinization of Indian politics', 32(3) *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 2018 283–302.

<sup>99</sup> Julius Maximilian Rogenhofer & Ayala Panievsky, 'Antidemocratic populism in power: comparing Erdoğan's Turkey with Modi's India and Netanyahu's Israel' (2020) 27(8) *Democratization* 1394–1412.



images, symbols and sentiments has meant that he has been able to use the BBBP to superimpose his image on the scheme as in *Figures 10* and *11* below — physically and narratively. Notably, year after year, the scheme reports increased spending on advertisements, with nearly 80% of the BBBP funds in 2021 spent on advertising.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, as *Figures 10* and *11* announce, the scheme has now been expanded to include all the districts of the country within its scope. Yet, the superimposition of the figure of Modi remains consistent, the rapid expansion of the BBBP saving his populism and not the girl child.



Figure 10: Poster Announcing the Expansion of the BBBP, 2015



Figure 9: Poster Announcing the Expansion of the BBBP, 2019

### C. Prize Culture: Prize for the Girl Child, Participation for the Adult

Given all the attention the BBBP has garnered since 2014 and the political spectacle made out of it, one may wonder what truly is the role of the girl child in this scheme. Apart from her calculated appearances in media campaigns and posters, where is the girl child — animate and living? The official websites and photographs predominately physically locate the girl child in the

<sup>100</sup> Jagriti Chandra, 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao | 80% of funds spent on media campaigns, says Parliamentary Committee' (2021) *The Hindu*.



BBBP events in one role — as the receipt of a prize like in *Figure 10*. Like the vast majority of the BBBP's symbolisms, the culture of prize-giving is not free from colonial influences.<sup>101</sup>



*Figure 10: Minister Smriti Irani Felicitating a Girl Child at the BBBP Launch Event, 2015*

The East India Company instituted prize cultures in the nineteenth century in India, particularly focussing on the issue of female infanticides.<sup>102</sup> This indicated a shift in the colonial approach, from coercive to palliative, to its civilising mission.<sup>103</sup> Given that the BBBP is a palliative policy initiative, the prize-giving naturally fits its framework. As seen in *Figure 10*, prize-giving instrumentally positions the girl child as a passive recipient and not an active participant. The Modi government is depicted as in charge and rewarding the ‘right type’ of girl child.<sup>104</sup> Such prize cultures can easily be used as public relations enterprises, much like how the colonial State also used prize-giving as a way to build the ‘right kind of allies’ and reward persons mirroring the values

<sup>101</sup> Anagol (n 25).

<sup>102</sup> James F. English, *The economy of prestige: Prizes, awards, and the circulation of cultural value* (Harvard University Press, 2005).

<sup>103</sup> Anagol (n 25).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

of the civilising mission.<sup>105</sup> Hence, the prize cultures reflect the welfare state nationalism inherent in the design of the BBBP, thereby foreclosing children's right to effective participation.<sup>106</sup>



*Figure 11: Participants in the National Thematic Workshop on the BBBP, 2015*



*Figure 12: A School Student Being Felicitated at the National Thematic Workshop on the BBBP, 2015*



*Figure 13: Participants in the National Thematic Workshop on the BBBP, 2015*

requires some elaboration Disregarding the obligations the CRC imposes on India as a signatory to ensure the realisation of the child's right to be heard,<sup>107</sup> the BBBP allow adopts a wholly adult-centric model of participation. Moreover, even this participation is minimal and mediated by the State. The images from the National Thematic Workshop on the BBBP in Panipat, India exemplify this. Organised by the Union Government of India, *Figures 11* and *13* spotlight how all participants in the workshop were adults. The BBBP's webpage captioned the images as '[p]articipants engaging and participating during the workshop'. However, this is not visible in *Figures 11* and *13*. Furthermore, the only image of a girl that emerged from the workshop is *Figure 12*. It yet again reinforces the positing of the girl child as a beneficiary of the State's prize culture. The prize-giving was also for

<sup>105</sup> English (n 103).

<sup>106</sup> Tobin (n 77).

<sup>107</sup> CRC Committee in 2009 of General Comment No. 12: The Right of the Child to be Heard, CRC/C/GC/12.

winning a competition organised as a part of the BBBP, thereby allowing the State to regulate all the sites of participation in the scheme.

## V. Children’s Right to Participation: International Law Informing Visual Studies

While the BBBP falls short of India’s obligations under the CRC in many respects, I will focus on the non-participation of children in the BBBP’s image making here. Children’s right to participation is one of the four guiding principles of the CRC, encompassing verbal and non-verbal communication.<sup>108</sup> The Indian State then has an obligation to ensure the girl child has opportunities to meaningfully participate in all aspects of the BBBP including its image making which plays a significant role in the scheme’s campaign as evident in the above analyses. While I mentioned the CRC and participatory image making briefly in the preceding sub-sections, I will attempt to engage with the possibilities they hold to guide the post-colonial States’ image making on children in this sub-section. This will entail discussing the relevance of international children’s rights and visual studies adopting its right-based approach to image making in the postcolony.



*Figure 14: An Image Chosen By Most Children Participating In A Study As The Photo They Liked Most*

Although the BBBP does not officially use ‘shocking images’ like *Figure 1* containing Grant’s illustration, its image making still entails a stereotypical portrayal of the girl child as an

<sup>108</sup> General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CRC/GC/2003/5 2003, par 12.  
1358660 | LAWS70120 | International Law And Children’s Rights | 8240 Words

object of the State.<sup>109</sup> However, studies on participatory image making with children in India have highlighted children's desire to move beyond such myopic narratives.<sup>110</sup> They convey a preference for images that show children in a good light while also expressing their needs correctly. *Figure 14* is an example of such an image. It was chosen by children participating in a focus group studying image making as the image they liked the most among a number of photographs.<sup>111</sup> The fact that it was a happy picture and conveyed the need for girl children's education appealed to them. The use of meaningful quotes, in contrast to superimposition of the Modi's image in the BBBP, better conveys the need for girls' education than the BBBP.

Hence, the BBBP ought to borrow from the rights-based approach of contemporary visual studies to reinvent its image making. Informed by international law on children's rights, these visual studies highlight the need to consult with children as the core of production efforts. Children's active and consensual involvement in photographing as well as the presentation and interpretation of the photographs allows image making narratives to become 'a participatory site for wider storytelling spurring community members'.<sup>112</sup> Such an approach will help distance the BBBP from its present propriety and welfare-based conceptions of childhood whereby it views the girl child in the future tense, i.e., as 'human becoming'.<sup>113</sup>

While the post-colonial State in India self-proclaims that the BBBP is a rights-based scheme, committing to the practice of Article 12 and the package of other participatory rights in the CRC would require the scheme to discard its presumption the girl child is an incompetent object who requires the State and family's saving.<sup>114</sup> The BBBP grossly falls short of this. In order to then design better policies and provide better governance, the contemporary Indian State ought to decolonise the BBBP and actively assure girl children's partition in the scheme.<sup>115</sup> International law informing visual studies offers a possible way to decolonise the post-colonial State's engagement

<sup>109</sup> Bhati and Eikenbeery (n 40).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Arvind Singhal and Kanta Devi, 'Visual voices in participatory communication', 38(2) *Communicator* 2003.

<sup>113</sup> Noam Peleg 'International Children's Rights Law: General Principles' in Ursula Kilkelly and Ton Liefwaard (eds) *The International Human Rights of Children* (Springer 2019) 139-150.

<sup>114</sup> Tobin (n 77).

<sup>115</sup> John Tobin, 'Understanding a Rights Based Approach to Matters Involving Children: Conceptual Foundations and Strategic Considerations' in A Invernizzi and J Williams (eds) *The Human Rights of Children* (2012) 13-22.

with the girl child. This could require a revamping of the entire scheme which is outdated and requires revisiting in consultation with children, starting right from its name and the areas of its focus which sets the tone of the BBBP's unimaginative and populist image making.

## **VI. Conclusion: The Field and/or Context**

Through a critical analysis of the visual politics of post-colonial India's image making through children, this essay sought to understand the conceptions of childhood in the government schemes on the girl child. The symbolism of the State's daughter was used by both the colonial and post-colonial bureaucracies to co-share the family's propriety and welfare-based control over the girl child. While the contemporary State borrowed from the poetics and politics of the colonial State policies, it also innovated new optics such as the use of high-tech populism to sustain its populist image making through the objectification of the girl child. While the international law on children's rights offers a methodology to reimagine the photo voice of the girl child in the BBBP, the conceptual ambiguity of the BBBP needs resolving to give way to its rights-based approach.

It is also important to address the limitations of this essay. My research largely relied on images from the BBBP available on the internet. However, a project of this nature could benefit from fieldwork and capturing the image making of the BBBP at the ground level. In my experiences of working on government schemes for women and girls in rural Haryana, India, as a part of my work with the JGLS Legal Aid Clinic, made it obvious that the government's physical image making off the internet is often more crudely stereotypical. It also directly affects the general public's interaction, reception and imagination of government schemes. Hence, investing in listening and learning from the field is a worthwhile exercise in such studies.

However, as is evident from the essay, even the images used from the internet do not paint a good picture of the BBBP. Furthermore, with the public authorities to duty to maintain a record of their initiatives as per the Right to Information Act, 2005, the images on the internet warrant a closer scrutiny and it is fair to assume that the images used are by and large representative of the BBBP. Therefore, although field notes would further enrich the study, the critical engagement provided in the essay is sufficient to hold its own.

An important incident question that arises from the essay is how do we contextualise participatory image making effectively. While this is not within the scope of this essay, it requires further study and is critical to understand conceptions of childhood in government schemes across diverse jurisdictions. As Arvind Singhal and Kanta Devi have argued, photos are constructed in particular social contexts and are thereby socially produced artefacts.<sup>116</sup> This means that while we adopt a participatory image making methodology that a rights-based approach would demand for engaging with children, that cannot be the be-all and end-all of the commitment to the Right to Participation. Rather, other modes as decided upon in consultation with children ought to be used to gauge the full extent of the impact of the social contexts on image making and storytelling. There has been an exponential increase in the non-participatory and paternalistic government policies for children in India, the most recent being the 2021 PMCare for Children scheme focussed on children who lost their parents or guardians to Covid-19. This calls for careful and contextual engagement with this area, dynamically re-articulating the fault lines, in order to decolonise government schemes for children and make them consistent with their rights entitlements.

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<sup>116</sup> Singhal and Devi (n 113).

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