

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF KANYASHREE PRAKALPA IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS OF PASCHIM BARDHAMAN DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Kanyasree project is also an innovative project of government of West Bengal. It is conditional cash transfer scheme, which is designed by the Department of Women Development of Social Welfare (DWSW) of West Bengal in August 2013, with the aim of improving the status and well-being of girl child in West Bengal by encouraging all schools teenage girls and delaying their marriage until the girl reach the age of 18 years. The main aim of this project is to improving the status and well-being of girl child in West Bengal.

This paper aims to find the problems & prospects of Kanyasree Project on the academic development of girl students, in two selected schools of Paschim district in West Bengal by taking the views of Students, Teachers and Parents about Kanyasree Project. This Study is based on both Primary and secondary data. The secondary data collected by different reputed governmental website and the primary data has been collected from selected students, parents/ guardians of student (N=200) ,headmasters of two government aided schools of paschim burdwan district of West Bengal. A self made structured questionnaire used for data collection regarding different problems & prospects of this project.

Key words: Problems, Prospects, Kanyashree prakalpa, Government schools etc

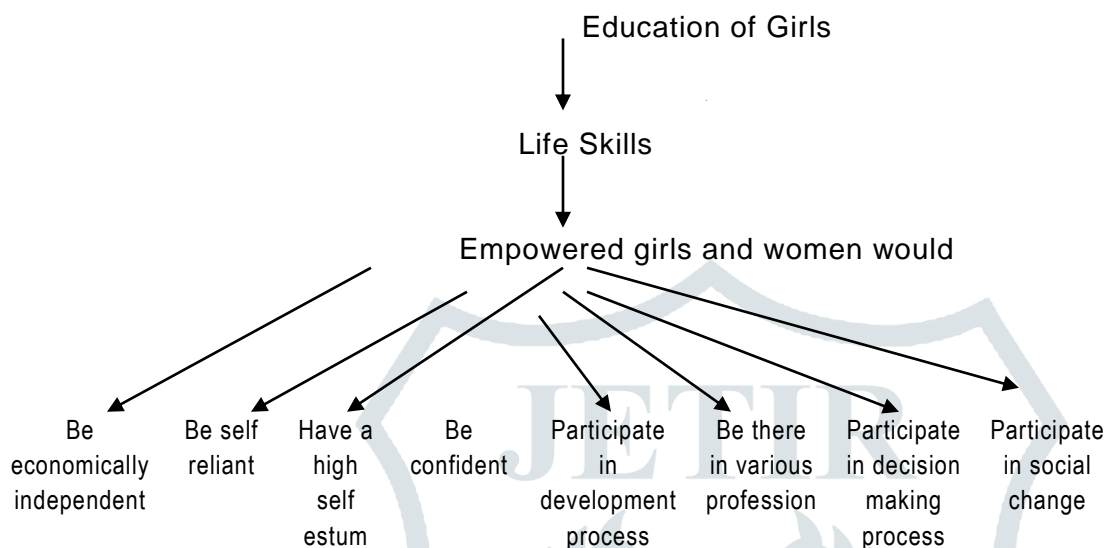
Introduction

**“You educate a man; you educate a man, You educate a women ;you educate a generation”-
Bringham Young**

It is well said that education of women plays a pivotal role in the development of any society. Education has become a universal human right all around the world. Education according to Nelson Mandela is the most powerful weapon which you use to change the world”. Statistics show that the emerging picture of women education in West Bengal is in backstage. This poor scenario of women education is noticeable mostly in rural area. There women have to face several socio-cultural hurdles to acquire education. Among the serious obstacles to women education, or dropping out from schools are child marriage, societal gender stereotypical perspective, Patriarchal social culture, school environment etc. Enabling girls to complete their education is to invest in future progress of the society. Girls must be educated, for it is the Girls who mould the next generation and hence the destiny of the country. But present scenario is different girls are consist with 58.65% of the total population but the literacy rate of the girls is 65.5% where as the boys literacy rate is 82.1% (Census Report, 2011) and annual average dropout rate of girls in primary level is 4.14% and in upper primary level is 4.49% (DISE Data, 2014-15). Annual average dropout rate of girls in Higher Secondary level is 17.79% and in higher Higher Secondary level is 1.61% (U-DISE Data, 2014-15).

Although Government has taken many initiatives to promote girls' education in our country, "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme was launched in 2015 with the noble purpose to educate girls. 'Sukanya Samridhi Yojana' scheme was launched in 2015 to meet the expense of the Girl child's higher education and marriage" (Ministry of Women and Child Development Report, 2015).

The importance of Girls education can be shown by this chart :-



Girls Education in West Bengal (Status 2011)

Statistics shows that the emerging picture of women education of in west Bengal is in backstage. This poor scenario of women education is noticeable mostly in rural areas. Their women have to face several socio-cultural hurdles to acquire education. Among the serious obstacles to women education or dropping out from schools are child marriage, societal stereotypical perspective, patriarchal societal cultural, school environment etc. Enabling girls to complete their education is to invest in future progress of the society. As per census of 2001, the female literacy in West Bengal was 59.61% while the census of 2011 shows the female literacy rate 70.54% which is much below the National Literacy Rate.

Child marriage - a concern for West Bengal

Under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA), 18 is the legal age of marriage for girls, and 21 for boys in India. Despite several years of this Act being in existence, the early marriage of children continues to be practiced in West Bengal. According to DLHS -3, 2007-08, the state ranked fifth highest in the country when it came to the prevalence of child marriage, with almost every second girl a child bride (54.7%). According to the Census 2011, the percentage of women married below the age of 18 is almost 40.24% of its 27.45 million ever-married women, as compared to the national average of 30.21% As per Rapid Survey On Children (2013-2014), 44.47% of women aged 20-24 were married before age 18.

Therefore Child marriage is a major factor which leads to dropping out of girls from school. In West Bengal, attendance of girls in school drops from 85% in the age-group 6-10 years to a mere 33% in the age group 15-17 years. The Selected Educational Statistics (2010-11) published by MoHRD, Government of India shows that for the state of West Bengal, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for girls gradually decrease from 88% at Higher Secondary level(VI-VIII) to 59% at high school level (IX-X) and 33.3% at higher Higher Secondary level (XI-XII). It means that more girls are leaving school in the adolescent age group. The drop-out rates between Class I-X was found to be as high as 47.9% by the same report.

In order to overcome such barriers the government of west bengal implemented several Central Government-sponsored schemes especially targeted towards women like Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG), Balika Samridhi Yojna (BSY), Sukanya Scheme, Swalamban, Swayamsidha, Support to training & employment programme for women (STEP). Besides these, like Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) are also there. The state adopted Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), where in collaboration with Unicef and NGO such as Ramkrishna Mission etc. government lays special emphasis on building separate toilets for girls in school premises (Mukherjee, 2004)

Kanyashree project is also an innovative project of government of West Bengal. It is conditional cash transfer scheme, which is designed by the Department of Women Development of Social Welfare (DWSW) of West Bengal in August 2013, with the aim of improving the status and well-being of girl child in West Bengal by encouraging all schools teenage girls and delaying their marriage until the girl reaches the age of 18 years.

Objectives of the Scheme

Kanyashree Prakalpa seeks to improve the status and wellbeing of girls, specifically those from socio-economically disadvantaged families through Conditional Cash Transfers by:

- Incentivizing them to continue in education for a longer period of time, and complete Higher Secondary or higher Higher Secondary education, or equivalent in technical or vocational streams, thereby giving them a better footing in both the economic and social spheres.
- Disincentivising marriage till at least the age of 18, the legal age of marriage, thereby reducing the risks of early pregnancies, associated risks of maternal and child mortality, and other debilitating health conditions, including those of malnutrition.
- It was also decided that the Scheme should confer more than just monetary support; it should be a means of financial inclusion and a tool of empowerment for adolescent girls.
- To reinforce the positive impact of increased education and delayed marriages, the scheme also works to enhance the social power and self-esteem of girls through a targeted behaviour change communication strategy.

The scheme has three cash transfer components:

Kanyashree 1 (K-1): Annual scholarship of INR 750 to unmarried girls aged 13-18 years enrolled in Grades VIII-XII or equivalent from August 2018 .

Kanyashree 2 (K-2) : One-time grant of INR 25,000 to unmarried girls aged 18 years pursuing education, vocational / technical training / sports

Kanyashree 3 (K-3) : 'Kanyashree girls', whether single or married, for financial assistance for pursuing PG studies under the Swami Vivekananda Merit cum Means Scholarship Scheme, with a nominal condition of at least 45% marks in Graduation and pursuing Post Graduate courses in **the State of West Bengal** . For pursuing Arts and Commerce, each K-3 beneficiary will receive Rs.2000 /- p.m. and for pursuing Post Graduate studies in Science, each K-3 beneficiary will get Rs.2500 /- p.m. Alike K-1 and K-2, even the married incumbent are also eligible to enjoy the benefit.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the views of Girl learners regarding different components of this scheme.
2. To study the effect of this scheme on the study of students and to know whether or not this programme helps in reduction of dropout rates.

3. To know different types of problem faced by students in this scheme.
4. To study the views of Headmasters, parents/guardians of the girl students regarding Kanyashree Prakalpa.

Methodology of the Study

Descriptive survey method was taken up, using different tools (self made questionnaire), data collected for the study. percentage & graphical representation is used to analyse the data.

Sample of the Study :

The sample of the study constitute randomly selected 50 girls students, & purposively selected 30 parents/guardians & 2 headmasters from two government aided schools under WBBSE of Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal due to paucity of time

Finding of the Study

All students knew about kanyashree prakalpa & they heard about the scheme form their Teachers ,some from peers ,few students heard through Mass Media. Most of the students expressed their views by saying that this programme will certainly help in delaying of early girls marriages. All 50 (100%) students replied that they were happy to be a kanyashree girl and they feel confident & could take their own decision regarding their marriage and education after implementation of this project .Several students stated that they could object the offer of early marriage and discontinuation of education as a result of Kanyashree Prakalpa.

Regarding Use of fund by students of Kanyasree project it was found that 42 (84%) students stated that they invested their scholarship money to continue their study 8 (16%) students told that they did not withdraw their scholarship grant from their bank account. All the 50 (100%) students were in favour of continuation of this scheme as it is like a financial help and that they want to continue their study with the scholarship money as their future plan

Regarding Problems face by students related to KP it was found that 30 (60%) student stated that they faced problems of difficulty for apply for the annual scholarship for kanyashree Prakalpa ,inadequate supply of application forms , irregular disbursement of Scholarship grant & few have difficulty in receiving the money in their bank account. Most of the students said that they have no problems in operating through bank account.

Effect of this scheme clearly showed that the scheme has positive effect on the increase of students enrolment & decrease in dropout rates. 47 (94%) students expressed their views that they were more interested in their study after introduction of KP. students also said that this programme encouraged them to go to school for their education & helped in their study .48 (96%) students opined that this programme certainly helped in the improvement of enrollment in schools while (4%) students could not say anything regarding this query .44 (88%) students expressed their views that this scheme helped in decreasing the dropout of students at secondary level. While 6 (12%) students could not say anything.

Regarding Grievances of Kanyashree Prakalpa it was found that students have grievance redresses mechanism in their school and they expressed their grievances regarding inadequate supply of application forms and irregular disbursement of Scholarship grant KP but several students stated that they don't have any grievance .

Regarding Suggestions for improving the scheme ,students appealed for online application form for KP and demanded for adequate supply of Application form. students gave suggestion to govt. for online Application for kanyashree prakalpa and their should be adequate time to apply for the scheme while some suggested for regular disbursement of scholarship amount.

Regarding the views of parents & headmasters of the schools it was found that 98% of parents & headmaster of schools have opinioned that after introduction of this project the students become more

interested in their study. Obviously it has a positive impact on decrease in dropout of student, increased students enrolment, interest and motivation, reading- writing skills of the students. This Programme also motivated the parents to send their daughter to the schools as school cost is going to free due to kanyashree which was earlier not possible for them due to poverty. They said it is the best ornament for their life. 98% of parents opined that this programme also encouraging the students in their study.

Conclusion

After carefully analyzing the data it was found that the scheme has been proved very successful and the students especially the poor girl students are very motivated to continue their study. This scheme generated a greater inspirational effect among girls also among the parents. This scheme has made the girl students self-dependent and motivated to acquire higher education also and build their prosperous career. This scheme has been proved very instrumental in removing gender inequality and have good positive social impact. This scheme is like a blessing for the girls whose parents did not want to spend money on their education and they are burden to them. Therefore this scheme is inevitable effort of West Bengal Government for girls, particularly for those poor talented girls, from rural areas, & for those who are unable to receive education due to lack of sufficient money.

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