

**PERFORMANCE OF KANYASHREE PRAKALPA IN WEST BENGAL: AN OVER
VIEW**

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Abstract

According to Census Report 2011, nearly 50 per cent of the population of our country is women. They have a great contribution in the society. Therefore, we cannot deny their importance. In spite of great contribution of the women, they are less empowered in every field of the society. They are still considered to be a burden of society in various fields. Even as young children, girls are often discriminated against and deprived of access to nutrition, education and many other basic entitlements. They are often expected to carry out household work at the cost of their schooling. Without an adequate education, girls are often forced into early marriage and may become victims of abuse and trafficking. If this scenario does not change, there will be little or no progress in society. Under the circumstances, the government of West Bengal introduced Kanyashree Prakalpa on October 1, 2013. The main objective of this article is to analysis the growth performance of Kanyashree Prakalpa in West Bengal. The second objective of this study is to explain district wise performance of Kanyashree Prakalpa in the state during the period 2013 to 2017. This paper is mainly based on secondary data collected from difference sources like different articles, Women and Child Development Department, Government of West Bengal and kanyashree related website. Simple percentage and figure have been used to analysis the data. It is observed that all districts of the state have not been able to make well performance for enrollment of the adolescent girls. Some districts especially southern districts of the state except Kolkata have been able to make good performance regarding enrolment of the adolescent girls. From the results and discussion it can be concluded that Kanyashree Prakalpa is no doubt a wonderful scheme and a model of good governance. This scheme has been able to bring a drastic change in socio-economic condition of the poor people in rural as well as urban areas. The scheme has enrolled more than nine million adolescent girls during the period 2013 to 2017. Today, due to introduction of this scheme the number of dropouts and out of school children have reduced considerably in West Bengal. It has been able to improve the life and the status of the girls by helping economically backward families with cash. Child marriage and school drop-outs reduce considerably after receiving the financial benefit from this scheme.

1. Introduction

According to Census Report 2011, nearly 50 per cent of the population of our country is women. They have a great contribution in society. For example, women are the primary caretakers of children and elders in every country of the world. International studies demonstrate that when the economy and political organization of a society change, women take the lead in helping the family adjust to new realities and challenges. They are likely to be the prime initiator of outside assistance and play an important role in changes in family life. Rural women play a key role in supporting their households and communities in achieving food and nutrition security, generating income, and improving rural livelihoods and overall well-being. Today, the median female share of the global workforce is 45.4 percent. Women's formal and informal labour can transform a community from a relatively autonomous society to a participant in the national economy. Despite significant obstacles, by joining microfinance programme women's small business in rural developing communities not only extended family's lifeline, but also formed a network of economic foundation for future generations. The role of women in the urban and rural workforce has expanded exponentially in recent decades.

Therefore, we cannot deny the importance of them. In spite of great contribution in the society, the women are less empowered in every field of the society. They are still considered as a burden of the society. Their cycle of deprivation takes many different forms. Even as young children, girls are often discriminated against and deprived of access to nutrition, education and many other basic entitlements. They are often expected to carry out household work at the cost of their schooling. Their overall growth and development are considered secondary to the male children in the household. Without an adequate education, girls are often forced into early marriage and may become victims of abuse and trafficking. If this scenario does not change, there will be little or no progress in society.

Women's education leads to significant social development. Some of the most notable social benefits include decreased fertility rates and lower infant mortality rates, and lower maternal mortality rates. Education increases gender equality and ensures equal rights and opportunities in the society. Women's education has cognitive benefits for women as well. Improved cognitive abilities increase the quality of life for women and also lead to other benefits. One example of this is the fact that educated women are better able to make decisions related to health, both for themselves and their children. Cognitive abilities also translate to increased political participation

among women. Educated women are more likely to engage in civic participation and attend political meetings, and there are several instances in which educated women in the developing world were able to secure benefits for themselves through political movement.

Under the circumstances, the government of West Bengal thought about the scheme of Kanyashree Prakalpa. This scheme announced by the Department of Women Development and Social Welfare of the Government of West Bengal in 2013 provides an unprecedented opportunity to girls to complete their education and become self-reliant. The scheme aims to empower girls by facilitating the completion of their education and promote skill development. Girls will no longer have to discontinue their studies due to the lack of financial support. The scheme will allow girl to complete their secondary and higher secondary education and pursue a college degree. The scheme will also cover those girls who are enrolled in vocational or support training institutes as well as those who are inmates of juvenile Homes. Girls with disability will also be able to access the scheme.

2. Background

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%). Although more pervasive in rural areas, statistics revealed than even in non-slum areas of Kolkata, more than a quarter of girls are married before they reach adulthood.

Child marriage is a gendered practice, affecting far more girls than boys. It is perhaps the most prevalent form of sexual abuse of minor girls, and has a negative impact on their health and the health of their children, leaves them financially and socially disempowered, and vulnerable to child labour, trafficking and other forms of exploitation. In fact, the districts with the highest incidence of child marriage in West Bengal are also those where trafficking is rampant.

Child marriage and school drop-out go hand in hand. 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 (NFHS III, 2005-06). After the implementation of free and universal elementary education in India, progress in enrollment and completion of elementary school has been noticed, however, the transition from elementary to secondary school remains a concern. Secondary education is

not free, and many impoverished parents, failing to see the economic rationale for investing in their daughters' education, marry them off at this age in the belief that this will enhance the girls and the family's security. This step however, condemns the girls to a life of financial and social insecurity. Field studies show that most women have to take up some economic activity in later years, and that their lack of qualifications and work experience makes them ill-equipped for the labour market, and therefore susceptible to poverty and exploitation throughout life. As a result, poverty, a factor that fuels child marriage, in turn perpetuates the feminization of poverty.

After the enactment of the PCMA 2006, the Department of Women Development and Social Welfare and Child Development (DWD) implemented anti-child marriage campaigns spreading the message of prevention, and endorsing enforcement of the law and its penal provisions for adults aiding and abetting child marriage. However, it quickly became evident that legal prohibition and social messaging are largely ineffective in addressing child marriage. For one, India's multiplicity of formal and religious laws complicates the issue of what constitutes the appropriate age of marriage for girls. Secondly, because the practice is ascribed to time-honoured tradition and is justified from a patriarchal perspective as essential for protection of girls from the evils of society, eradicating it requires tangible drivers of social change that can transform victims made vulnerable by their age and gender into actors determining their own lives.

3. Objectives and Methodology

Objectives

Kanyashree Prakalpa seeks to improve the status and well being of girls, specifically those from socio-economically disadvantaged families through conditional cash transfers by (i) incentivizing them to continue in education for a longer period of and complete secondary or higher secondary education, or equivalent in technical or vocational streams, thereby giving them a better footing in both the economic and social spheres (ii) disincentivizing 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. In my study, the main objectives of this paper are:

1. To analysis the performance of Kanyashree Prakalpa in West Bengal;
2. To explain district wise variation of the performance of Kanyashree Prakalpa;

Methodology

This paper is mainly based on secondary data collected from different sources like different articles, Women and Child Development Department, Government of West Bengal, and Kanyashree related website. Simple percentage and figure have been used to analyze the data.

4. Components of the Scheme

The scheme undertaken by the government of West Bengal has three components:

- (i) Annual Scholarship of Rs. 750/- (Rupees seven hundred fifty only). The revised amount of Annual Scholarship will be Rs. 1000/-. This scholarship amount had been given from the financial year 2018-19. The Annual Scholarship is for unmarried girls aged 13-18 years enrolled in classes VIII-XII in government recognized regular or equivalent open school or equivalent vocational/technical training course.
- (ii) One time Grant of Rs. 25,000/- (Rupees Twenty-five thousand only). This grant is given to the age group of more than 18 years but less than 19 years of girls enrolled in government recognized regular or open school/college or pursuing vocational/technical training or sports activity.

Both the benefits under the scheme will be granted to girls who belong to families with annual family income not more than Rs. 1, 20,000/- (Rupees One Lakh and twenty thousand only). The bar for family is not applicable if the girl has lost both parents, is physically challenged (40% disability) or is inmate of J.J. Home. In case of K3 there is no age limit.

- (iii) On July 28th, 2017 the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamta Banerjee announced that Kanyashree K3 also start for the girl students who are currently studying at any University. This scholarship will help the girl students to their Higher Studies. Kanyashree Prakalpa received the national and international recognition for its design governance feature.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Performance of Kanyashree Prakalpa in West Bengal

Kanyashree Prakalpa started in West Bengal on 1st October, 2013. This scheme has been working for five years in the state. During the period 2013-17, this scheme has been able to bring more than nine million adolescent girls in the state. Year wise performance of this scheme has been shown in the following table 1. From the table it is found that since inception to the year

2017, this scheme has been able to bring total 9028364 adolescent girls. During the year 2013-17, annual scholarship (K1) has been granted more than 7.98 million. As far as one time grant is concerned, it is found that during the period 2013-17 more than 10.46 lakh girls are benefited by this scheme. If we compare between K1 and K2, it is found that K2 grant is more than K1. So far as year wise performance is concerned, it is found that in the year 2015-16 highest number of girls has been brought under the scheme.

Table:1
Performance of Kanyashree Prakalpa in West Bengal during 2013-17

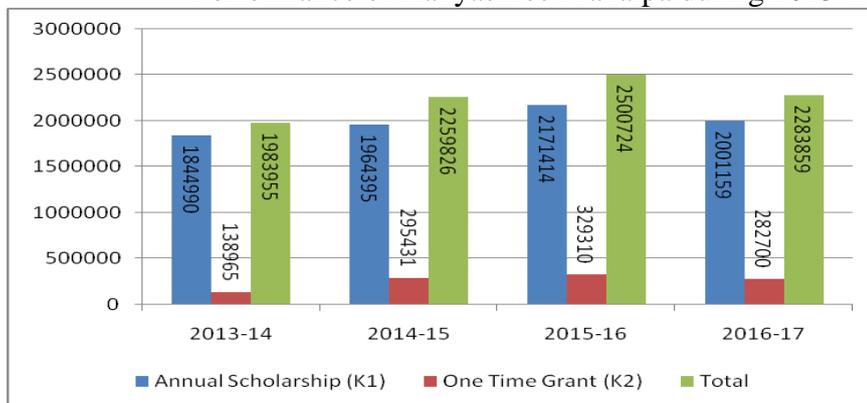
Scheme Type	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Till Date
Annual Scholarship (K1)	1844990	759472	595138	567270	3766870
Renewal (K1)	-	1204923	1576276	1433889	4215088
One Time Grant (K2)	138965	46126	32675	11390	229156
Up gradation (K2)	-	249305	296635	271310	817250
Total	1983955	2259826	2500724	2283859	9028364

Source: Department of Women Development & Social Welfare, Govt. of West Bengal, 05-09-2017

The performance of Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme has been shown in the following figure 1.

Figure:1

Performance of Kanyashree Prakalpa during 2013-17



From the figure it is found that annual scholarship (K1) as well as one time grant (K2) both are highest in the year 2015-16.

From the figure it is also found that in the year 2015-16 highest numbers of girls was benefited by the scheme. There is an increasing trend found in annual scholarship as well as one time grant.

Growth of Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme has been shown in the following table 2. From the table it is found that in the year 2014-15, growth rate was 13.91 per cent. However, this rate decreased in the year 2015-16 and stood at 10.66 per cent. Again, in the year 2016-

17, this rate stands at 8.67 per cent. Thus it is found that although the number of adolescent girls increases in the successive years, the rate of growth year wise decreases.

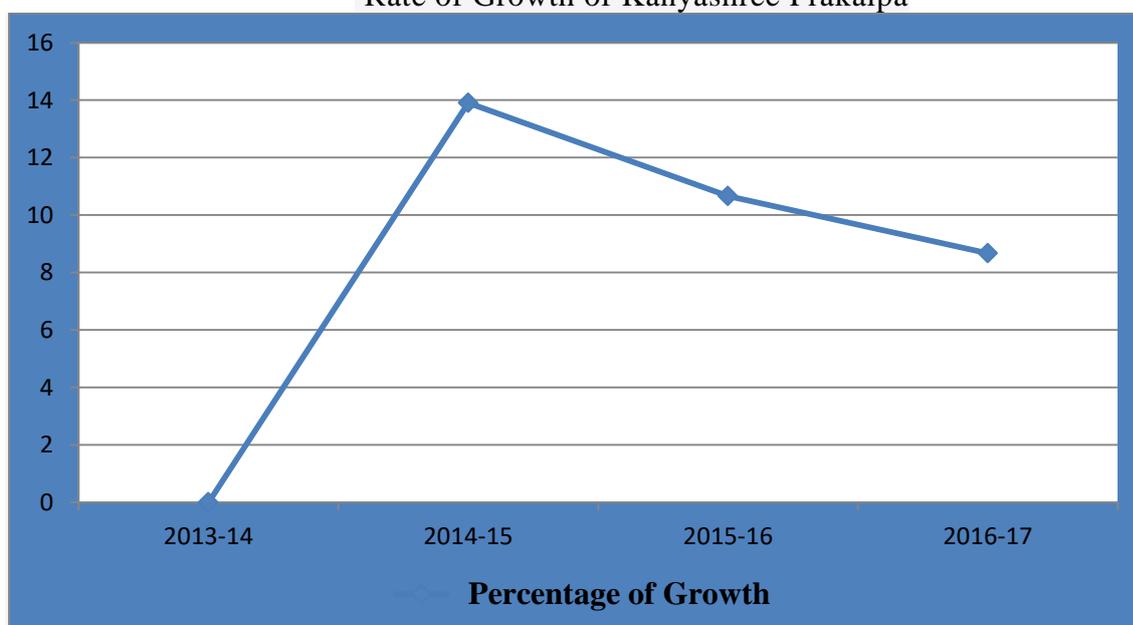
Table:2
Growth of Kanyashree Prakalpa during 2013-17

Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Total No. of Adolescent Girl	1983955	2259826	2500724	2283859
Percentage of Growth	-	13.91	10.66	-8.67

Source: Department of Women Development & Social Welfare, Govt. of West Bengal, 05-09-2017

Growth of the scheme has been shown in the following figure 2. From the figure one can see that in the year 2014-15 maximum number of girls is benefited by the scheme. After that period, growth rate decreases.

Figure: 2
Rate of Growth of Kanyashree Prakalpa



5.2 District wise Performance of Kanyashree Prakalpa Scheme during 2013 to 2017

There are 21 districts in West Bengal. In all over the state, Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme was launched on 1st October 2013. In all districts, this prakalpa has been working for five years. It is found that this prakalpa has not worked equally in all district of the state. Now, I try to point out the district wise performance of this scheme in the state during the period 2013 to 2017. District wise performance of the scheme has been shown in the following table 3. From the table it is observed that all districts of the state have not been able to make well performance for enrollment of the adolescent girls. Some districts especially southern districts of the state except Kolkata have been able to make good performance regarding enrolment of the adolescent girls.

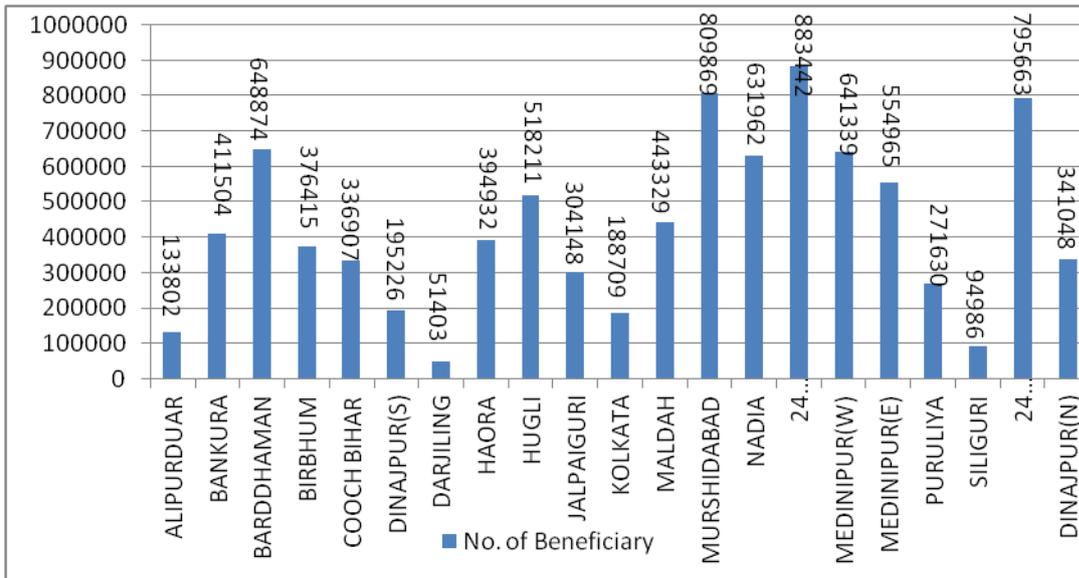
These districts are North 24 Parganas, Bardhaman, Murshidabad, West Medinipur, East Medinipur, South 24 parganas, Hugli and Nadia. Data showed that North 24 Parganas district occupies 1st position against the total beneficiary in the state since inception to the year 2017. The percentage share of this district is 9.97 against the total beneficiary in the state. Similarly, Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas, Bardhaman, West Medinipur, Nadia, East Medinipur and Hugli occupy 2nd position (8.97%), 3rd position (8.81%), 4th position (7.19%), 5th position (7.10%), 6th position (7.00%), 7th position (6.15%) and 8th position (5.74%) in the state regarding enrollment of the girl students respectively.

Table:3
District wise Performance of the Scheme during 2013-17

Sl No.	District	No. of Beneficiary	Percentage	Rank
1	ALIPURDUAR	133802	1.48	19
2	BANKURA	411504	4.56	10
3	BARDDHAMAN	648874	7.19	4
4	BIRBHUM	376415	4.17	12
5	COOCH BIHAR	336907	3.73	14
6	DINAJPUR(S)	195226	2.16	17
7	DARJILING	51403	0.57	21
8	HAORA	394932	4.37	11
9	HUGLI	518211	5.74	8
10	JALPAIGURI	304148	3.37	15
11	KOLKATA	188709	2.09	18
12	MALDAH	443329	4.91	9
13	MURSHIDABAD	809869	8.97	2
14	NADIA	631962	7.00	6
15	24 PARGANA(N)	883442	9.79	1
16	MEDINIPUR(W)	641339	7.10	5
17	MEDINIPUR(E)	554965	6.15	7
18	PURULIYA	271630	3.01	16
19	SILIGURI	94986	1.05	20
20	24 PARGANA(S)	795663	8.81	3
21	DINAJPUR(N)	341048	3.78	13
Total		9028364	100.00	-

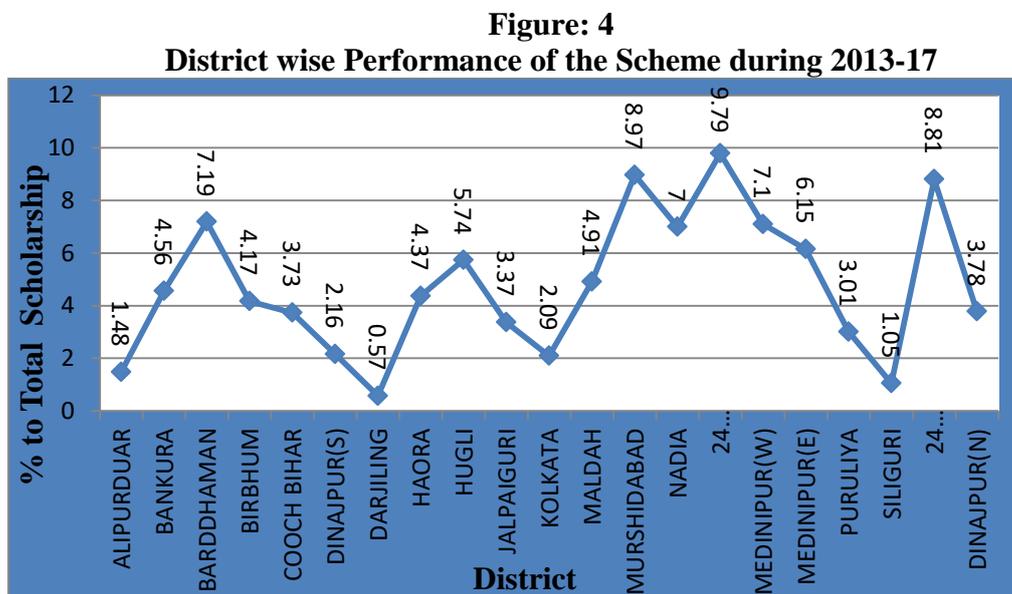
Source: Department of Women Development & Social Welfare, Govt. of West Bengal, 2013-17

Figure: 3
District wise Performance of Kanyashree Prakalpa during 2013-17



On the other hand, northern districts of the state have not been able to good perform enrollment of the adolescent girls such as Alipurduar, South Dinajpur, North Dinajpur Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Siligury. The Lowest performance district is Darjeeling which occupies 21st rank in the state and share of beneficiary is 0.57%.

District wise variation of the scheme is revealed skewed over the state. This is shown in the following figure.



6.0 Conclusion

Kanyashree Prakalpa is no doubt a wonderful scheme and a model of good governance. This scheme has been able to bring a drastic change in socio-economic condition of the poor people in rural as well as urban areas. The scheme has enrolled more than nine million

adolescent girls during the period 2013 to 2017. Today, due to introduction of this scheme the number of dropouts and out of school children have reduced considerably in West Bengal. There was a substantial improvement in enrolment of girls by which gender disparity reduced. It has been able to improve the life and the status of the girls by helping economically backward families with cash. Child marriage and school drop-outs reduce considerably after receiving the financial benefit from this scheme. Adolescent girls today have established themselves as champions in every field. That is why, this scheme has been able to receive a significant attention at national as well as international level. Kanyashree of Bengal now becomes Kanyashree of the world. The United Nations, on the occasion of UN Public Service Day on June 23, 2017, awarded the United Nations Public Services first-place winner award to the Government of West Bengal for Kanyashree, out of 552 nominations from 62 countries. From the above results and discussion it can be concluded that Kanyashree Prakalpa plays an important role to change the attitude of the parents in West Bengal Society and thus it is, indeed, a wonderful model in West Bengal as well as all over the country.

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