

Role of Kanyashree Prakalpa as a Developmental Project to improve the Socio-Economic Status of Girls from Economically Backward Families in West Bengal, Special Reference to South 24 Parganas District

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Abstract : *Feminist theory and geography of gender mainly focus on the gender inequality in order to focus on gender politics, power relations and sexualities. Themes related to development include the inequality between genders, the disproportionate amount of work performed by women, and yet the absence of women in development policy or group decision making - in general, all of these being attributed to the subordinate of women. On this content, it can be mentioned that a section of the girls from very poor family and sometimes economically marginal families in West Bengal is an important focus group in the study of development and marginalization. The objective of this paper is, to analyse the socio-economic status of girls who and how the "Kanyashree Prakalpa "a social development project of the Government of West Bengal, has been acting as a helping tool for girls, to combat against child marriage, maternal health, school drop-outs and girl child trafficking.*

The work is based on various reports of the Government of India and State Government of West Bengal, important data delivered by Woman and Child Development, and Social Welfare Department of Govt. of West Bengal and on primary survey done on more than one thousand Kanyashree Beneficiaries and interview of local people on this project. It is found that Murshidabad, Maldah, Birbhum, Purulia, Bankura, Dakshin Dinajpur, South 24 Parganas, Nadia and Coochbehar districts are the most vulnerable districts in terms of child marriage and school drop-out amongst the others in the state. Special emphasis in study given to South 24 Parganas District to understand the status of girls by their number of enrolment in this project. According to the DLHS-3, published in 2007-08 the percentage of child brides were 54.7, which has reduced to 32.1 in the year 2012-13 mainly due to the implementation of the Kanyashree Project. The school drop-out rate has also reduced significantly in these districts. According to the Annual State of Education Report (ASER) 2020, the school dropout rate in the state declined from 3.3 per cent to 1.5 per cent while it went up from 4 per cent to 5.5 per

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cent at the national level and West Bengal occupies the top position in the decline of dropout rate among school students during 2018-2020.

Keywords : *Development, economically backward, Kanyashree Project, child marriage, girl child trafficking, gender inequality.*

Introduction

In course of gender geography feminist theory of development plays a vital role to understand the position of women in our society. Feminism is made up of several diverse social theories, political movements, and philosophies. Most of these adopt a critical stand toward existing social and gender relations, its looks at the origins, characteristics, and forms of gender inequality in order to focus on gender politics (Dreze, 2013). In Indian society from ancient time women are discriminated from their rights in every hemisphere. Indian women are subjected under men and a group of women are denied little or large from all basic amenities of society. A group of female of our country and state are not enjoying the right of liberty, independence and equal opportunity in working place like their counterpart male. Some socially excluded women have bound to be “missing women” (Sen, 1999). These socially excluded women have died before their life expectancy of birth. In present time democratic development is the most required process to fight against all type of discrimination. In the course of democratic development the most important point is consider development as social transformation process, this is high time to understand that development is not confined within profit oriented motive but it also associated with sustainability, social safety nets, greater participation, poverty reduction and equal gender rights within the country and in the mind of people (Hartwick, 2009). Kanyashree is a social welfare scheme taken by Government of West Bengal for the adolescence girls to help them in acquiring education which may give them social and financial freedom and restricted them to become child bride by conditional cash transfer. The goal of Kanyashree is clear and focused improvement in the status of girls and women in West Bengal through the prevention of child marriage and increase in educational attainment of girls till at least age 18 years. The word “Kanyashree” actually consists of two words first “Kanya” means girl and “Shree” means resource, that express girls are resource of the society. This is the dream project of honourable Chief Minister, Government of West Bengal to educate the girls of economically backward family to make then mentally strong and economically independent as they can take their own decisions and free to make choice in their life.

Study Area and Background Study of Kanyashree Project

“Kanyashree” is a Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme of the State Government to develop the socio-economic status of adolescence girls from economically

backward families throughout the state. So, the State of West Bengal which located eastern side of India and sharing her boundary with neighbouring country Bangladesh is the study area of this paper and special reference is also given to the South 24 Parganas district as it's a boarder district of state and according to various surveys done by state and central government agencies poverty, early marriage of girls, child trafficking and school dropout rate is high in this district compare to the others.

Kanyashree Prakalpa was implemented in October, 2013 in West Bengal, in 2014 a base line survey had been conducted by Government of West Bengal with collaboration of UNICEF because the main objective of this projects was to improve the status of the girl child in this state. Though a number of Acts and Regulations are implemented after globalisation to prevent child marriage in India but child marriage continue to remain one of the most serious violations of children's rights in the present era. A nexus of multiple socio-economic factors contribute to the persistence of the phenomenon; gender norms and expectations, traditional practices around marriage, safety concerns and family honour, poverty, limited educational and livelihood opportunities. Significantly this practice challenges children's right to health, education, protection and development. Though child marriage affects both adolescent boys and girls, the impact and intensity on girls is undoubtedly more pronounced. Further the strong correlation between child marriage and the increased female school drop-out rates in India and West Bengal, girl child trafficking, infant and maternal mortality rates is also an established fact (Baseline Survey, 2014).

Under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA) in India, 18 years is the legal age of marriage for girls, and 21 for boys. Despite several years of existence of this Act, 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 into the prevalence of child marriage (54.7 per cent). 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 (Domestic Level Household Survey-3, 2007-08).

According to DLHS-4 2012-13, the percentage of girls aged 18 years currently getting married before 18 years was 32.1 per cent (36.3 per cent in rural areas, and 21.3 per cent in urban areas). Bankura, Murshidabad, Purba Midnapore, Bardhaman, Birbhum, Dakshin Dinajpur, Cooch Behar, Nadia and Purulia were identified as the districts with the highest incidence of child marriage in the State (Domestic Level Household Survey-4, 2012-13).

According to the Census 2011, the percentage of women married below the age of 18 is almost 40.24 per cent of its 27.45 million ever-married women, as compared to the national average of 30.21 per cent (Census, 2011).As per Rapid

Survey on Children (2013-2014), 44.47 per cent of women aged 20-24 were married before age of 18. Child marriage is a most important factor which causes ill maternal and child health and low nutritional status of some children of West Bengal and also increases school dropouts, early pregnancy and girl child trafficking in our state.

According to the DISE Flash Statistics 2013-14, while the dropout rate among adolescent boys (6.3 per cent) at the upper primary level is more than that of the girls (4.2 per cent), at the secondary and higher secondary levels more adolescent girls drop out of school. However, at the secondary level this trend is reversed, with nearly of 15 per cent of adolescent boys and 19.4 per cent of adolescent girls in West Bengal dropping out of school (Rapid Assessment of Kanyashree Prakalpa, 2015)

Secondary education is not free, and many impoverished parents, failing to see the economic rationale for investing in their daughter's 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, one of the factors that fuels child marriage, in turn perpetuates the feminization of poverty (Anderson, 1998). West Bengal is one of those states in India which had done worse performance in prevention of child marriage. The baseline survey has been conducted with female adult members of the household, un-married girls (in the age group of 12 – 19 years), mothers and fathers /other caregivers for those girls and all ever-married women aged 15-49 years in the targeted households. The information regarding all the members of the households, socio-economic characteristics of the household has been captured in the household section, while the survey with the unmarried girl children and their parents helps gather an understanding of the current social norms as well as their attitude, behaviour and awareness on the issue of child marriage (such as the legal age of marriage, consequences of child marriage etc.) and about the Kanyashree Prakalpa introduced by the Government of West Bengal (Roy, 2017).

Kanyashree base level survey was conducted on 23423 households among them 14158 households were rural and 9265 households were urban, 20752 unmarried girls of 12-19 years old were surveyed among them 12660 girls were rural and 8092 girls were urban. After this survey two very important perceptions came forward that consciousness of early marriage perceived by percentage of girl children of this age group and decision regarding marriage of girl child in percentage of household.

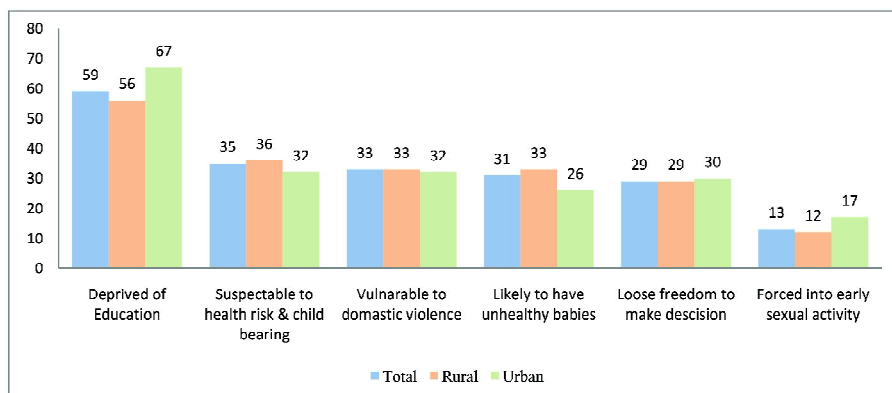


Fig: 1- Consequences of early marriage as perceived by girl children (12-19 years) (per cent)

Data Source: Baseline survey for Socio-Economic indicators in West Bengal, 2014

Many girl children have no perception or not complete and correct perception on consequences of child marriage (Fig.1). So in time of marriage many of them have no idea about their future status. So this is one of the major reasons of child marriage, which have multiple negative effects towards the society.

Another survey done on targeted population regarding decision of early marriage of girls in the households (per cent).

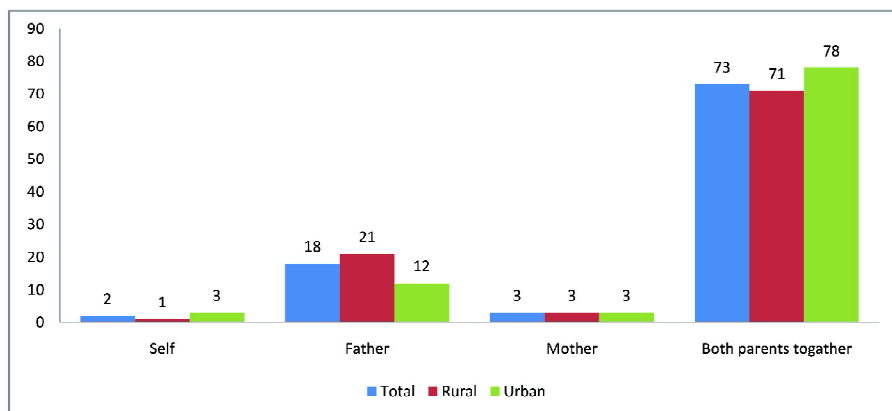


Fig: 2-Decision Regarding Marriage in Households(per cent)

Data Source: Baseline survey for Socio-Economic indicators in West Bengal, 2014

In Fig:2 we can see the decisions regarding early marriage of girl children in our state, survey expressed that in maximum case guardians are take decision to marry their girl children due to poverty, lack of education and sometimes also for greed.

From the above discussion we try to establish the fact that how extent Kanyashree Project is important to stop child marriage helps the girl children of the society to improve their socio-economic and educational status.

Brief About Kanyashree Prakalpa and its Beneficiaries

“Kanyashree Prakalpa” is the conditional cash transfer scheme to the girl children of the state who belongs to the family, which earned annually Rs. 1, 20,000 or less, remain unmarried and obviously continue her education and enlisted as a student of any Govt. and Govt. aided educational institute, vocational training institute or sports academy up to at least the age of 18. According to a survey conducted by World Bank conditional cash transfer programmes are used as a social safety nets and this also creates a behavioural change in an area where high incidence of child marriage and school drop out of adolescence girls occurred and due to this scheme retention of girls mainly 12-19 years in education increase. As long as the girls from poor families are acquiring education they are benefitted from various sides, like they can develop their identity, preparing themselves for adulthood and responsibilities, concern about their legal rights and duties, acquiring economic and social identity, concern about their health. Overall education decreases tendency of marriage among adolescence girls and this is the main objectives of Kanyashree Prakalpa.

Primarily the scheme has two conditional cash transfer segments:-

- The first is K1, an annual scholarship of Rs. 750/- transferred annually to the girls' bank account that are remaining unmarried and in education at the same time.
- The second is K2, a one-time grant of Rs. 25000/- to be transferred to the girl who turned to 18 and pursuing any academic, vocational training course or sports training course and are unmarried at the same time.
- The third is K3, a monthly scheme (also known as Swami Vivekananda merit cum scholarship) of Rs. 2500 (science stream) and Rs. 2000 (arts stream) to the post-graduate students who are already K2 scheme beneficiary and score at least 45 per cent marks in under-graduate course. This segment of Kanyashree scheme announced by Honourable CM in the year 2017. Due to this scholarship a girl from economically backward family can pursue higher study.

Another very important side of this scheme is create the financial inclusion of adolescence girls in banking sector, this tool empowers girls and allow them to utilise their own money for their own need. The impact of the Scheme is proposed to be further strengthened through 'Kanyashree Plus', strategy. Kanyashree Plus is being designed to ensure stronger inclusion of out-of-school adolescent girls in the Kanyashree CCT component, and facilitation of beneficiaries' transition from

secondary education into tertiary education so that they may graduate into sustainable livelihoods and employment. In this scheme re admission of out-of-school girls into education through non-formal education or bridge education and livelihoods support, career counselling and coaching to girls enrolled in Kanyashree starting at age 16

With life skills education (consisting of rights education, soft skills development, health and nutrition and financial literacy) delivered to girls to generate support and empowerment.

Kanyashree Project is a tool to fight against gender inequalities which have fundamental impacts through creating constraints in their achievement of a number of development goals mainly discuss in sustainable development agenda. Studies have shown that gender inequality in education and access to resources may hamper the process of reduction of child mortality and lowering of fertility, which in turn impacts the expansion of education for the next generation. So as much as large number of girls is enrolled in this scheme impact of this scheme spreads out to nooks and corner of the society. So number of beneficiaries is the important part of this scheme and the fact is that the annual family income is decided Rs 1.20, 000/- per annum which is well above the national status of lower income group. In West Bengal the annual income more than 90 per cent families are lower than the income which is stipulated in the scheme. It results that a large number of girls would come under the purview of Kanyashree Prakalpa and able to continue their study with the help of this scheme. The effectiveness of the Prakalpa immediately appears just after the implementation of Kanyashree Prakalpa-2013 across the state. The number of girls almost 26 lakhs have been registered in the Prakalpa (including both K1 and K2) and presently it is 67, 49,555 on 4.12.2020, among them 64, 71,031 girls

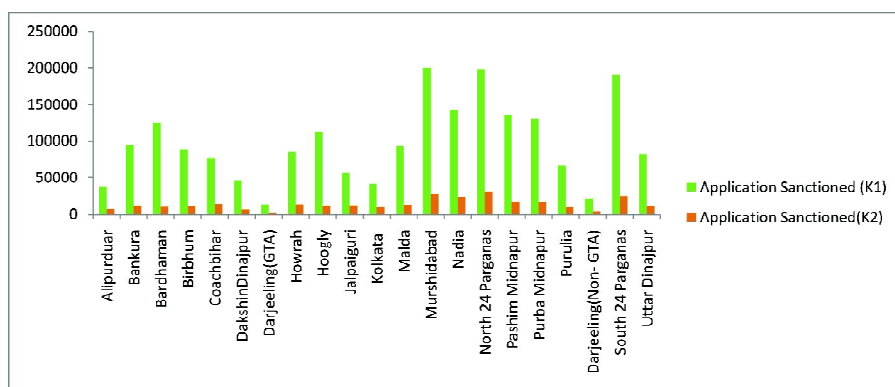


Fig:3- Numer of Sanctioned Application of K1 & K2 Scheme of Kanyashree Prakalpa, 2015-16

Data Source: - Annual Report of Kanyashree Prakalpa 2015-2016, published by Dept. of WCD & SW. Govt. of West Bengal

enrolled in K1 scheme and 29, 33,287 girls enrolled in K2 scheme are studying through this state Government scheme. It obviously reduces the tendency of girls in weaker section to discontinue the study and drop out from school.

In Fig: 3 represented sanctioned applications of girls enrolled themselves them in K1 and K2 Prakalpa in twenty-one districts of West Bengal;it's clearly shown the disparities are present within the districts. In some districts Kanyashree beneficiaries are in large number like South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, and Murshidabad. In these districts poverty is high comparatively to other districts and this is the reason of high rate of school dropout, child marriage and girl trafficking prevailing. So Kanyashree Prakalpa is a tool to fight against these negative aspects of human society.

Objectives

- Asses Kanyashree as a developmental project and identify the population who are benefited by this scheme and how this scheme helps them in improving their standard of living.
- Some parameters are selected like annual income of families, educational status of girls, cultural activities and health status and number of child marriage, school dropout, rate of girl trafficking, infant and maternal mortality rateof the focus groups of people to understand the change of their socio-economic status or standard of living after implementation of this project.
- Explain how this project integrated many goals of sustainable development and helps to foundations of democratic development to reduce regional disparities and to overall improvement the life of adolescence girls which also have a long term impact on society and civilization.

Database and Methodology

This thesis primarily adopts a mix of quantitative and qualitative research design with partial primary data collection, key informants interview, focus group discussion, and quantitative data mining and qualitative research. The theoretical research came from exploring archival records, quantitative and qualitative data collected from various libraries, published sources, texts, talks, images, films, etc.

- The quantitative data came from the Annual Report of Kanyashree Prakalpa of different years, Baseline Survey on Kanyashree Prakalpa, UNICEF Report, National Family Health Survey, UNDP Report, NCRB Reports, Kanyashree portal published by Government of West Bengal, block-wise Kanyashree enrolment data given by Department of Woman and Child Development and Social Welfare, Govt. of WB and data from different NGO's working in my study area.

- Cartographic and statistical applications to analyse and represent the data to establish an analysis of different dimensions and aspects of this project and its long term implication towards society.

Child marriage and its negative impacts on society

According to UNICEF motherhood among teenagers is nine times more among girls with no schooling than among woman with 12 or more years of education. 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 position for adults. Human rights research shows that the greatest obstacles to girls' education are child marriage and subsequently pregnancy and other domestic chores. The Constitution of India by its article guarantees to all Indian women equal status with men, by article 16 guarantees equality of opportunity and guarantees equal pay for equal work by Article 39(d). In addition, it allows special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women and children (Article 15(3)), renounces practice derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief. (Article 42) (Warth, 2012, Khan, 2008). Naturally to ensure that girls stay in school would be an effective protective measure against child marriage. And in order to do in an effective way what the state needs a government sponsored social welfare scheme for girls that directly helps and motivates students to continue study. The present Government of West Bengal, just after coming in to the power in the year 2012 under the leadership of Smt. Mamata Banerjee, has taken special initiative for compulsory female education and in order to support it under the supervision of the Department of women Development and Social Welfare, West Bengal (DWSW) introduced in the year 2013 the Kanyashree Prakalpa – a conditional cash transfer scheme with the aim of improving the status and well-being of the girl child in West Bengal by incentivizing schooling of all teenage girls and delaying their marriages until the age of 18, the legal age of marriage.

Negative impacts of child marriage are-

Female school dropout: Child marriage leads to girls dropping out school, which limits their scope of future development. The Selected Education Statistics (2010-11) published by MoHRD, Government of India shows that for the state of West Bengal the gross enrolment ratio of girls gradually decrease from 88 per cent at elementary level to 59 per cent in high school level and 33.3 per cent at higher secondary level, so the dropout rates between class I-X was found to be as high as 47.9 per cent by the same report. Higher secondary education is not free so poverty-stricken parents choose to invest their money to marry their girls rather than their education. As a result, poverty plays a vital role that fuels child marriage, in turn perpetuates feminization of poverty. West Bengal occupies the top position

in the decline of dropout rate among school students during 2018-2020. In Annual Status of Education Report published in an esteemed daily “Ai Samay”, according to this report number of enrolled girl students within the age group of 14 – 18 are more than boy students of the same age group (Niyogi, 2018). A survey done in 2017 expressed 56.9 per cent boys are enrolled in the age group of 16-18 whereas percentage of girls is 70.7 per cent which is 14 per cent more than boys. This scheme is expected to bring about measurable improved outcomes for the education, health (especially infant and maternal mortality) and empowerment of the state’s girls. According to the Annual State of Education Report (ASER) 2020, the school dropout rate in the state declined from 3.3 per cent to 1.5 per cent while it went up from four per cent to 5.5 per cent at the national level, the statement said (Business Standard Report, 2020)

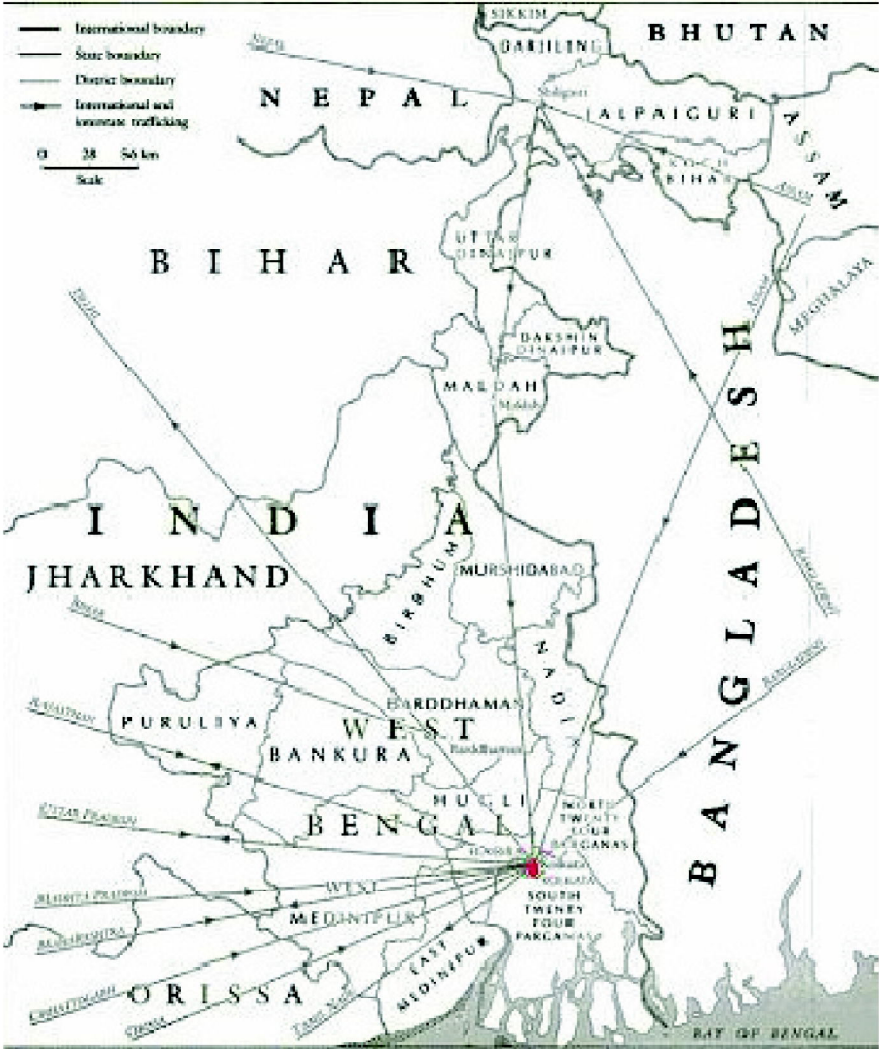
Trafficking

Child marriage is one of the lures that the human exploitation rackets often use to entice poor parents. There is no concrete date of how many numbers of young girls who have gone missing because of child marriages. Simply because such marriages are arranged by fraudulent means and there is no data of it. West Bengal accounted for 25 per cent of India’s trafficking cases between 2010 and 2016 (Bhattacharyya, 2011). It is significant to note that the districts which rank the highest amongst all districts in the state for child marriages, namely, South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Murshidabad and Malda, are also considered the most vulnerable to trafficking because these districts share a border with Bangladesh. In many cases girls who drop out of school are sent away by parents to earn their dowries by working as child labour in various metropolitan cities within India and sometimes outside India, which also makes them vulnerable to traffickers.

In above map it is clear that how girl trafficking is speeded as a curse in our state and mainly affected poor to economically marginal families of the society. The scheme Kanyashree engaged girls of adolescence age group in education and they have to be registered students of any of academic and training institute which actually decrease the risk of trafficking, another important point is poor parents need not to spend money for their girls education and girls are become aware of these negative aspects and process of trafficking and also able to protest against this crime.

Maternal ill health and mortality

Child marriage is one of the deterrent factors which affect the progress of maternal and child health and improvements in the nutritional status of children in West Bengal. Child marriages result in early pregnancies, which in turn lead to high maternal and infant deaths, and are also a leading cause for malnutrition among children. Owing to the marriage at early stage girls becoming mothers at that period when they are not out of childhood themselves. After implementation of Kanyashree



Map: 1 Centers and Direction of Trafficking of Girls to Different States & Country
Map Source: National Crime Records Bureau

Prakalpa certain improvement can be noticed regarding total fertility rate and infant mortality rate. In 2014 birth rate in West Bengal were 15.6, which reduced to 15.5 in 2015, where as in national level this rate was 21.0 and 20.8 in 2014 and 2015. National level infant mortality rate was 37 and in West Bengal it was 26 in 2015, total fertility rate was 1.6 in state level which was 2.3 in national level and West Bengal ranks last in this indicator among the other states in 2015 (Health on the March, West Bengal 2015-2016).

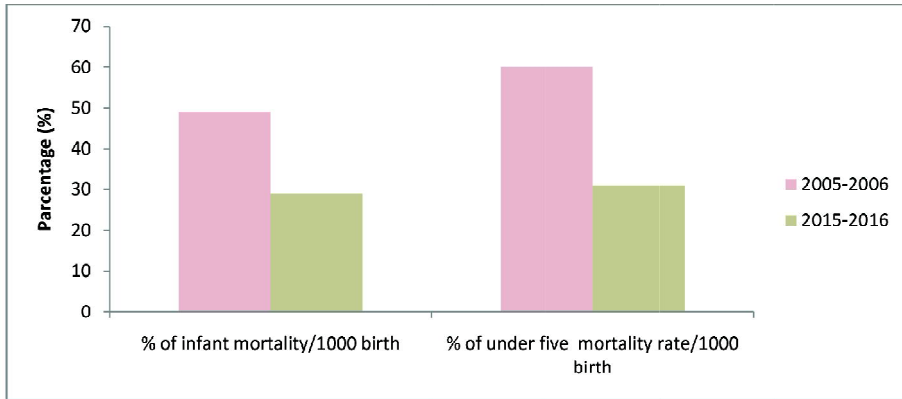


Fig:4-Infant and under 5 mortality rate Status after effectiveness of Kanyashree

*Data Source:-State Bureau of Health Intelligence
Directorate Of Health Services 2015-2016*

Psychosocial disadvantage

The loss of adolescence, the forced sexual relations, and the denial of freedom and personal development attendant on early marriage have profound psychological and emotional consequences. The impact can be subtle and insidious and the damage hard to assess.

So, in this point we can say that West Bengal government's Kanyashree project that has gained enormous success and fame as born out of data and not perception. The government looked at data relating to age of marriage in different districts, enrolment rates and drop-out rates and discovered that while more girls enrolled into schools at lower classes, the dropout rate of girls was higher as they reached adolescence. Thus, a conditional cash transfer scheme was introduced that incentivized education till at least 18 and discouraged early marriage (Niyogi, 2017).

Integration of Kanyashree Prakalpa with the Sustainable DevelopmentGoals

Initially we can say that Kanyashree Prakalpa implemented in West Bengal to improve the status of adolescence girls but in deep this projects has an objective to achieve numerous goals of Sustainable Development. This projects directly contribute to goal 1 (No Poverty), 3 (Good Health & Well Being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth) & 10 (Reduced inequalities) and e-governance, convergence and partnership contribute to 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institution) and 17 (Partnerships for the goals) of Sustainable Development Goals.

Officially this project is under Department of Woman Development & Child Welfare, but it's also integrating different departments like School Education, Higher

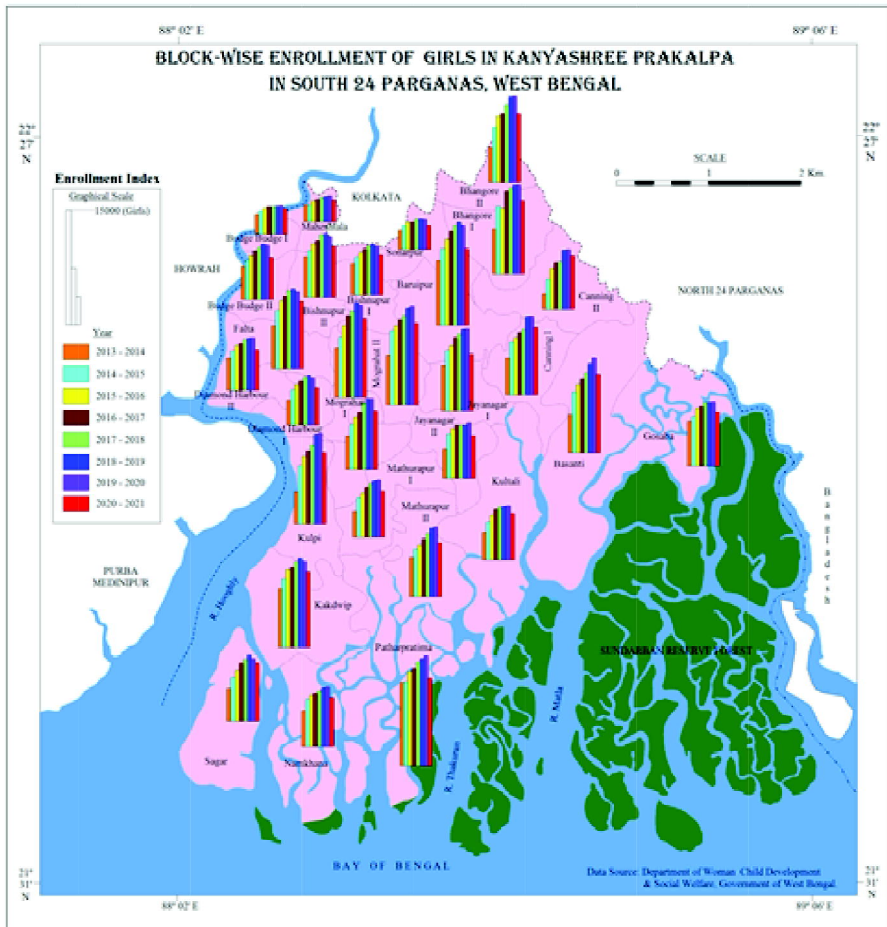
Education, Technical Education, Training & Skill Development, Minority Affairs and Madrasa Education, Sports affairs and Youth Services. Supporting Departments in this project are Department of Health & Family Affairs, Backward Classes Welfare, Municipal Affairs, Panchayats & Rural Affairs, Mass Education and Information and Cultural Affairs. Finance and Banking sector is also the part of this project and technical partner of this project is UNICE (Annual Report of Kanyashree 2015-16)

Status of Kanyashree Prakalpa in South 24 Parganas District in 2013-14 to 2020-2012

South 24 Parganas is an important district of West Bengal, this district is composed of 29 CD Blocks and 7 Municipality among them 13 blocks are under the Sundarban Region and share its boarder with Bangladesh. Population of this district increasing constantly from 1911, and present total population of this district are 8161961(6074188 are rural & 2087773 are urban) persons which shares 8.94 per cent of State's population ranks second regarding total population after North 24 Parganas, decadal growth rate is 18.17 per cent, Density of population 817/sq.km. and sex ratio is 956, 30.2 per cent population of this district is SC and only 1.2 per cent ST population, literacy rate is 77.51 per cent (Male 83.35 per cent & Female 71.40 per cent) in this district (Census of India, 2011). Due to large population and high poverty and South 24 Parganas is become one of the focal point of girl trafficking discuss earlier in this paper because West Bengal has emerged as base of activity for sex trafficking of children for brothel-based prostitution in India (Deb et al. 2011; Hameeda et al. 2010; Sen 2004). The trafficking of children in brothel-based prostitution has assumed serious proportions in the state of West Bengal (India) at the interstate as well as intrastate level and across the porous international borders (Pandey, 2014) The districts of South and North 24 Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad, Malda, Darjeeling, Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri and Uttar Dinajpur, Howrah, Midnapore, and Birbhum have been identified as potential supply centres of ST in Bengal (Chakraborty 2006). West Bengal is generally considered to be a comparatively safe state in the all-India context. In 2001, for example, the number of cognizable crimes per one lakh population in West Bengal (76.7) was less than half of the all India average (172.3), with only Meghalaya and Mizoram reporting a lower rate (Karmakar, 2013) But here the chief concern is one crucial component of the total security scenario in any civilized society; violence against women and in South 24 Parganas recorded highest cases (1214) in crime against woman compare to other district of the State (Human Development Report, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, 2009).

So researcher choose this district to analysis the number of enrolment of girls in Kanyashree Prakalpa as this project is able to influence in different aspects of the life of adolescence girls.

In this map enrolment of girls in Kanyashree Project from 2013-14 to 2020-21 in different blocks of South 24 Parganas Districts are represented by multiple bar.



Map-2 : Block-wise Enrollment of Girls in Kanyashree Peakalpa in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal

Data Source: -Department of WCD & SW, Govt. of WB, Map computed by Author.

This is clear that each and every block have a large number of beneficiaries that means a large number of girls are registered in any of the above mentioned institutes and it's obvious that these girls are not affected by early marriage and negative impact of this curse. In the year 2018-19 and 2019-20 maximum number of girl are engaged in this project. But regional disparities are also clear by this map, maximum enrolment of girls are found in Patharpratima block (Total number- 100648) and minimum enrolment found in Budge Budge I (Total number- 3361), mainly enrolment is higher in rural blocks than urban blocks, the adolescence girls of urban region of the districts are also benefitted by this project.

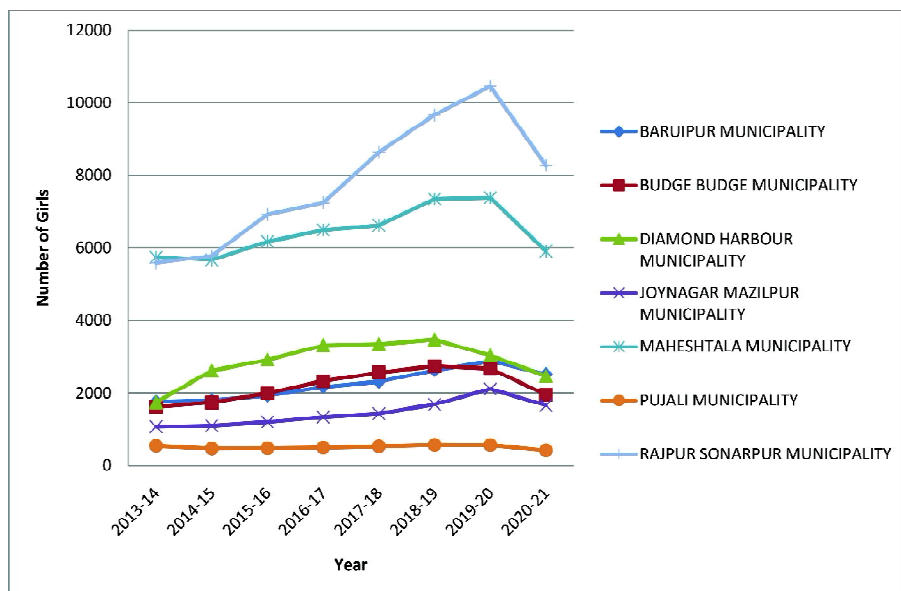


Fig:5-Municipality-Wise Enrolment of Girls in Kanyashree Prakalpa in 2013-14 to 2020-2021

Data Source: -- Department of WCD & SW, Govt. of WB, Map computed by Author

In Figure 5 it's clearly explicit that Municipalities of urban fringe area like Sonarpur- Raipur, Mahestala have higher enrolment than Pujali and Joynagar Mazilpur Municipality because in urban fringe area we can find slum area where a large number of beneficiaries of this project reside.

Overall we can say that Kanyashree Prakalpa touches a large number of girls from economically backward families in our state and improve their status of life by help them to be educated.

Conclusion

India is a country having long history of women struggle for education, equity, rights and respect. Our state West Bengal is blessed as a working place of some great pioneers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidhyasagar, Rabindranath Thakur and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain whose contribution towards woman and girls education is unforgettable. The great monk Swami Vivekananda worshipped a girl as "Kumari" in Kumari Puja was not only a religious venture but he wanted to establish the rights, respect and status of girls in the society. But unfortunately there are various social problems but most vital problem is poverty and poverty is the root issue of many other problems which affects society as a whole or in a large part. Sometime social problems change with changing phase of time but early

marriage is typical type of problem which affected society from ancient time to present time. Time has come to change ideology of patriarchy and those ancient values which commoditise girls in front of social system called marriage. Kanyashree Prakalpa is a scheme which helps girls of under privileged family to be educate and financially independent, a quote of Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai can be add here that “Extremist have shown what frightens them most: a girl with book.” The goal of Kanyashree Prakalpa is clear and focused: improvement in the status of girls and women in West Bengal through the prevention of child marriage and increase in educational attainment of girls till at least age 18. These outcomes are likely to impact nine SDGs (mentioned in the paper). The scheme has been appreciated by United Nation awarded Kanyashree Prakalpa as the best scheme for public service in 2017, West Bengal Chief Minister Award for Empowerment of Girls, 2014, Manthan Award for Digital Inclusion for Development (South Asia & Asia Pacific) 2014 under the category of E-Women and Empowerment and many more awards and national and international recognition achieved by this scheme. 14 th day August of every year celebrated as Kanyashree Day through our the state in all levels. So true development is possible only when girls are free from fear and their minds are full of hope and confidence. So this paper can be conclude with the quote of great poet and Nobel laureate Kavi Guru Rabindranath Thakur in his poem “Sabala” in beginning of nineteen century that,

“Why, O Lord, women are not entrusted to outshine their own fate?”

Presently Kanyashree is a new ray of hope for the girls of Bengal.

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