



Kanyashree Prakalpa: A Key to Strengthen Girls' Education and Drive Women Empowerment

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Abstract

Background: Kanyashree Prakalpa is a scheme of Govt. Of West Bengal. It is a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme for girls students between the age of 13-18 years and those ages 18 and above and unmarried, who is enrolled in higher education. This scheme started in the year 2013, on 8th March, and its effect started on 1st October 2013.

Purpose: Kanyashree Prakalpa is one of the best schemes of Govt of West Bengal. The main purpose of this investigation is, to find out the attitudes of girl's students toward Kanyashree Prakalpa and the impact of this scheme.

Methods: In this investigation, investigators used the area sampling method. To investigate the attitudes of girls students towards Kanyashree Prakalp, the investigators used a Mixed Method research method/design. For the collection of Quantitative data investigators used a survey method and for the collection of qualitative data investigators used an interview technique.

Findings: For analyzing quantitative data investigators formulated three hypotheses. To analyze these hypotheses investigators used two different statistics, namely- t-test and ANOVA. All the hypotheses were not rejected, and qualitative analysis showed girls' students' attitudes towards Kanyashree Prakalpa are very positive.

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Keywords: Kanyashree Prakalpa, Women Empowerment, Child Marriage, Financial Support, Attitude

Introduction

In India, the literacy rate of male and female is 82.14 and 65.46 percent accordingly, and the literacy rate of male and female in West Bengal is 81.69 and 70.54 percent (<https://www.census2011.co.in/literacy.php>) ^[1]. It is crystal clear that all over the country women are educationally backward and women's literacy rate is significantly less than men. There are many reasons for this backwardness, such as many families think that a boy is better than a girl, a boy is more responsible and more powerful than a girl child, a boy is more productive than a girl child, etc. So, it is clear that there exists a huge difference. To reduce this difference between male and female the main key instrument is education (Sonowal, 2013 ^[2] & Das, 2021 ^[3]). Education is one of the most significant fundamental rights for every citizen of most countries. It helps everyone to make him/her a responsible, productive, skilled citizen, a conscious human being, and after all fully functioning individual. And, Education is the main key to empowering all of us.

To educate, increase the enrolment of girls, retain them in education, and also uplift their social and mental situation, reduce child marriage, and protect them from child labour-Kanyashree Prakalpa is one of the most famous and innovative initiatives for women students in West Bengal under Department of Women Development and Social Welfare (Biswas, 2021) ^[4]. This scheme started in the year 2013, on 8th March (Kanyashree Online 5.0) ^[5], and its effect started on 1st October 2013 (Bandyopadhyay, 2020) ^[6]. It is a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme for girls students between the age of 13-18 years and those ages 18 and above and unmarried, who is enrolled in higher education.

The scheme has two cash transfer schemes, that is K-1 and K-2 (Kanyashree Online 5.0 ^[5] & Parvin, 2018 ^[7]). K-1 is for 13-18 years old girls students (VII-XII) who are enrolled her name in any Government and Government-aided institution in West Bengal and K-2 is for 18 and above years old girls students who are enrolled her name in Government and Government-aided higher education institutes. In this scheme, the amount is increased to the needs of students from time to time. When the scheme was first implemented the incentive amount is 500, in the financial year 2015-16 the amount increased by the state government and the amount is 750, and in the year 2018-19, the amount increased by the state government, and the amount is 1000 (Kanyashree Online 5.0 ^[5] & Nandy & Nandi, 2019 ^[8]). One of the main criteria for this scheme is the income of parents is a maximum of 12000. Specially-abled girls, orphans, and girls who are in a juvenile home are considered in income criteria (Kanyashree Online 5.0) ^[5].

Review of Related Literature

A. Kanyashree Prakalpa, Education and Dropout

A household survey of the Jalangi Community Developmental Block, Murshidabad district, West Bengal conducted by Biswas & Deb (2019) ^[9], found that this is a poor and Muslim minority area. In this area education level of women is very low and also there is various problem related to women and their education, like early marriage, school dropout, child trafficking, child labour, etc. After the implementation of this scheme, school enrolment has increased and also the number of early marriages and child labour decreased. Biswas (2021) ^[4] organized a case study on Kanyashree Prakalpa and the Educational Progress of school going-girls in the Domkal area, Murshidabad, and found some eye-catching findings, like- the educational status of 13 to 18 years old girls students improved and the dropout rate very low. Mondal and Guha (2021) ^[10] conducted a descriptive survey and the result showed that 16 years and above the age of girls students attitude towards higher education is very high. Sen and Dutta's (2018) ^[11] investigation shows that the dropout is decreasing and attitude toward education is positive. Molla and Sarkar's (2020) ^[12] investigation showed that this scheme is increase enrolment, retention, and attendance.

B. Kanyashree Prakalpa and Child Marriage

Sen and Dutta's (2018) ^[11] study concludes that the attitude of adolescent girls regarding their early marriage is changed and, sometimes they make their own decision about their future. Ghara and Roy (2017) ^[13] conducted a district-wise analysis and they concluded that this scheme is not only limited to the improvement of educational status but also creates a positive impact on the prevention of early child marriage in the adolescent stage. Das, Shikdar, and Halder (2022) ^[14] conducted a descriptive survey in the area of Bankura district and their major findings are the implementation of this scheme is effective because it has been possible to prevent early child marriage of school-going adolescent girls. Mondal (2020) ^[15] conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study and the investigator found that the awareness percentage regarding child marriage and its negative impact on health is above average in the district of Burdwan and below average in the district of Birbhum.

C. Kanyashree Prakalpa and Women Empowerment

Bhattacharjee and Sau (2018) ^[16] studied the attitude of parents and teachers towards Kanyashree Prakalpa in Nadia district, they found this is a key scheme for women's empowerment through education. Sen and Dutta's (2018) ^[11] investigation shows that a greater consciousness added to women's attitude towards their early marriage and women empowerment.

D. Kanyashree Prakalpa and Financial Support

Mondal and Guha (2021) ^[10] study showed that the amount of incentives of this scheme is not sufficient for them and they are unhappy. Pahari and Sharma (2020) ^[17] surveyed five districts of West Bengal and collected data from 926 participants. Their findings are the financial support of this scheme is not sufficient to cover all types of educational expenses. After analyzing different types of primary and secondary data Saha (2015) ^[18] suggested that the annual financial incentive/scholarship is not sufficient for meritorious girl's students.

E. Kanyashree Prakalpa and Attitudes of Different Castes

Mondal and Guha (2021) ^[10] study showed that the attitude of beneficiaries' General and non- beneficiaries SC students towards Kanyashree Prakalpa is high and both the ST student's attitudes towards Kanyashree Prakalps are extremely low.

Objectives

Based on the relevant literature review cited before, the followings were the objectives of this study:

Objective 1: To estimate the attitudes of secondary and higher secondary level girl students towards Kanyashree Prakalpa regarding their- class, location, and caste.

Objective 2: To estimate the impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa on Child marriage.

Objective 3: To estimate the impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa on girls' student retention in school.

Hypotheses

Based on the stated objectives, the hypotheses that have been tested in this study are mentioned below:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between secondary and higher secondary level girl students' attitude towards Kanyashree Prakalpa concerning their Location (Panchayat and Municipality).

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between secondary and higher secondary level girls' attitude towards Kanyashree Prakalpa.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between secondary and higher secondary level girl students' attitude towards Kanyashree Prakalpa concerning their Caste (General, SC, ST, OBC).

Research Questions

Based on the stated objectives, the research questions are mentioned below:

RQ 1: How much have the girl students been benefited in academic life after the implementation of Kanyashree Prakalpa?

RQ 2: Is Kanyashree Prakalpa helpful for preventing child marriage?

Materials and Methods

I. Methodology/Design

The investigators used a mixed-method design for this specific work for collecting quantitative data investigators used the survey method, and to collect qualitative data investigators used a semi-structured questionnaire.

II. Variable

In this study, the investigators mainly focused on two types of variables. Those two variables were – Major variable and the Categorical variable. The major variable is the Attitudes of girls' students toward Kanyashree Prakalpa, and categorical variables are Class (IX and X), Location (Panchayet and Municipality), and Caste (General, OBC, SC, and ST).

III. Sample and Sampling techniques

In this investigation, the investigators used the area sampling method (Mangal & Mangal, 2021)¹⁹. The investigators collected 172 samples for this study from the North 24 Parganas and Murshidabad districts.

IV. Tools and techniques used for data collection

In this study, the investigators used a self-made questionnaire, namely- Attitudes of Girl Students towards Kanyashree Prakalpa (AGSTKP), and a semi-structured interview.

V. Software used

All collected data had been tabulated in Microsoft-2007 and were subsequently analyzed in Microsoft-2007, as per requirements.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

I. Quantitative Data Analysis and Interpretations

Test of H₀₁:

Table 1: Location-wise Descriptive Statistics and graphical representation

Levels	N	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Sample Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Panchayat	98	147.18	0.78	7.70	59.28	-0.14	-0.82
Municipality	74	146.32	0.88	7.55	57.01	0.05	-0.79

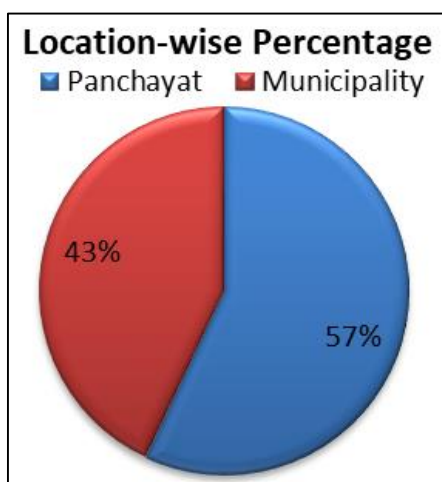


Fig 1: Pie chart of Location-wise percentage of Girl's students

It is observed from Table 1 that there exists a difference in the mean score of students between their locations. The mean

score of Panchayet areas students is 147.18 and Municipality area students' mean score is 146.32 and the percentage of both, Panchayat and Municipality areas students is 57% and 43% (Figure 1). To determine whether there exists any difference between these two scores the investigator used a t-test: Two samples assuming unequal variance. The result is mentioned below in Table 2.

Table 2: t-test: Two samples assuming unequal variance for Location-wise student attitudes

	Panchayat	Municipality
Mean	147.18	146.32
Variance	59.28	57.01
Df	159	
t Stat	0.73	
t Critical two-tail	1.97	

Interpretation

The result of Table 2 shows that in the case of the t-test: Two samples assuming unequal variance of Panchayat and Municipality students surveyed independently, the Variance value is 59.28 and 57.01. Table 2 also shows that the calculated t Stat is 0.73 and the t-Critical value is 1.97. The t-value is smaller than the t-critical value. So, based on statistical evidence it is said that the null hypothesis is not rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

Test of H₀₂:

Table 3: Class-wise Descriptive Statistics and graphical representation

Levels	N	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Sample Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
IX	94	147.05	0.79	7.73	59.77	-0.14	-0.61
XI	78	146.52	0.85	7.53	56.79	0.41	-1.08

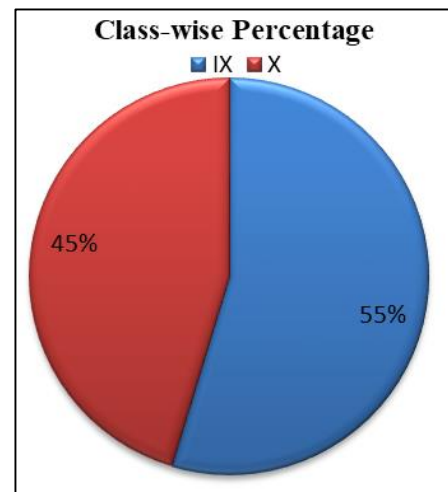


Fig 2: Pie chart of Class-wise percentage of Girl's students

It is observed from Table 3 that there exists a difference in the mean score of students between their classes. The mean score of Class IX students is 147.05 and Class XI students' mean score is 146.52 and the percentage of Class IX and XI students is 55% and 45% (Figure 2). To determine whether there exists any difference between these two scores the investigator used a t-test: Two samples assuming unequal variance. The result is mentioned below in Table 4.

Table 4: t-test: Two samples assuming unequal variance for Class-wise student attitudes

	IX	XI
Mean	147.05	146.52
Variance	59.77	56.79
Df	166	
t Stat	0.45	
t Critical two-tail	1.97	

Interpretation

The result of Table 4 shows that in the case of the t-test: Two samples assuming unequal variance of Class IX and XI students surveyed independently, the Variance value is 59.77 and 56.79. Table 4 also shows that the calculated t Stat is 0.45 and the t-Critical value is 1.97. The t-value is smaller than the t-critical value. So, based on statistical evidence it is said that the null hypothesis is not rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

Test of H₀₃:

Table 5: Caste-wise Descriptive Statistics and graphical representation

Level	N	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Sample Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
General	64	146.46	1.02	8.17	66.88	-0.12	-0.54
OBC	58	147.74	0.93	7.13	50.86	-0.10	-0.99
SC	41	146.75	1.77	7.54	56.88	0.10	-0.70
ST	9	143.55	2.36	7.09	50.277	0.42	0.43

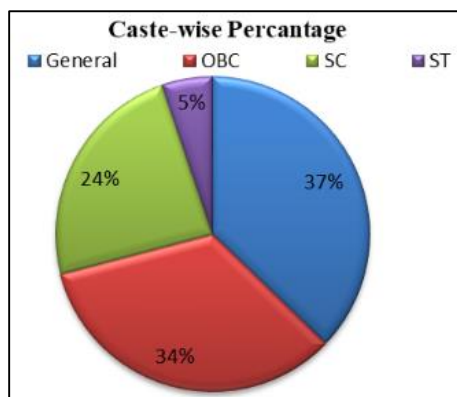


Fig 3: Pie chart of Caste-wise percentage of Girl’s students

It is observed from Table 5 that there exists a difference in the mean score of students among their castes. The mean score of General, OBC, SC and, ST students accordingly 146.46, 147.74, 146.75 and, 143.55 and, the percentage of these General, OBC, SC and, ST students is 37, 34, 24 and, 5 (Figure 3). To determine whether there exists any difference among these four groups, the investigators used an ANOVA: Single Factor. The result is mentioned below in Table 6.

Table 6: One-way ANOVA for Caste-wise- General, OBC, SC, and ST

Source of Variation	SS	df	F	F critical value
Between Groups	153.20	3	0.87	2.65
Within Groups	9790.84	168		
Total	9944.04	171		

Interpretation

After analyzing the ANOVA statistics, **Table-6** shows that

between groups variance is 153.20 and df is 3, and within the group, the variance is 9790.84 and df is 168. It also shows that the calculated F value is 0.87 and F critical value is 2.65. Based on the output it is said that the null hypothesis is not rejected, because the calculated F-value (0.87) is lower than the F-critical value (2.65). It would be fair to say that, there is no significant difference among General, OBC, Sc, and ST students' attitudes towards Kanyashree Prakalpa.

II. Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretations

RQ 1: How much have the girl students been benefited in academic life after the implementation of Kanyashree Prakalpa?

For answering this question the investigator interviewed 8 participants. All the participants’ response is very positive regarding this scheme. They said that, after receiving these financial incentives, they can meet their expenses such as school dresses, private tuition fees, etc. Some are depositing the received money in a bank account for the future.

RQ 2: Is Kanyashree Prakalpa helpful for preventing child marriage?

All of the participants’ responses are positive. They said that after receiving financial support from the government the families are optimistic about their daughter's future. Every institution organizes monthly or quarterly Kanyashree Awareness Camp for them. Several students also said that some of their friend's families pressurize them into marriage but the student and their friends inform their respective institution’s and the institution's authorities successfully stopped the marriage.

Discussion

After reviewing and analyzing all the quantitative and qualitative data it is clear that Kanyashree Prakalpa is helpful for women. In this section, the investigators discuss the different hypotheses-wise interpretations and different dimension-wise interpretations.

Various literature shows that in our education system, women are far way compared to men, and also the enrolment and retention rate is very low. For the improvement of their educational status education is the key. After the implementation of this scheme, the enrolment and retention rate increased rapidly and student results are far better than previous results.

After analyzing qualitative data and different dimensions it is clear that this scheme reduces the child marriage ratio. Financial crises of parents are one of the most important factors in child marriage. The state government incentivized all of the school-going girls for preventing the inhuman practice, like- child marriage. Based on the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, it can be said that the government’s objectives are almost successful.

One of the significant objectives of this scheme is women's empowerment. The investigators found that after the implementation of this scheme, women were independent in taking their own decisions. They used their money for their tuition, and to buy learning materials, and many of them save this money in the bank for future studies.

In this scheme, one of the big questions is whether the amount of money they received, is enough or not. maximum student response is not enough. Based on the response of students it can be said that increasing the amount of money is very necessary.

Conclusion

The present study discusses the attitudes of girls' students' attitude towards Kanyashree Prakalpa. The investigators identified different dimensions, like- Kanyashree Prakalpa, Education and Dropout, Kanyashree Prakalpa, and Child Marriage, Kanyashree Prakalpa and Women Empowerment, Kanyashree Prakalpa and Financial Support, and Kanyashree Prakalpa and Attitudes of Different Castes, and also used some categorical variables like Class (IX & XI), Location (Panchayat & Municipality), Caste (General, OBC, SC & ST). Based on the above-mentioned dimensions and categorical variables, the collected data was analyzed and the findings are positive. At the end of this study, it is said that this scheme is helpful for girls students and this scheme is a way to enroll and retain them in the education system, and also a key to empowering them.

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