

Impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa – Districtwise Analysis

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ABSTRACT: Kanyashree Prakalpa is a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Scheme that concentrates on girls currently most at-risk for dropping out of school and for child marriage: adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18. The effectiveness of the Prakalpa immediately appears just after the implementation of Kanyashree Prakalpa-2013 across the state. The districts do not have uniformity in effectiveness. The districts have been compared over the years on their effectiveness.

Keywords: *Kanyashree Prakalpa, Conditional Cash Transfer, effectiveness, cluster analysis, Principal Component Analysis, ranking*

I. INTRODUCTION

Under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA), 18 years is the legal age of marriage for girls, and 21 for boys in India [1]. 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%) [3][4]. 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.
- According to DLHS-4 2012-13, the percentage of girls aged 18 years currently getting married before 18 years was 32.1% (36.3% in rural areas, and 21.3% 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 [1].
- 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% [4].
- As per Rapid Survey On Children (2013-2014), 44.47% of women aged 20-24 were married before age 18[5]

According to the DISE Flash Statistics 2013-14, while the dropout rate among adolescent boys (6.3%) at the upper primary level is more than that of the girls (4.2%), 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% of adolescent boys and 19.4 % of adolescent girls in West Bengal dropping out of school.

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 families' 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.

Child marriage is one of the factors which is limiting 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.

Primary Objective of the Project

Kanyashree Prakalpa is a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Scheme that concentrates on girls currently most at-risk for dropping out of school and for child marriage: adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18. The CCT component of the scheme is supported by a multipronged communication strategy addressing key stakeholders' attitudes and practices towards female adolescents in families and communities and other key stakeholders from state to institution levels [6][10][11].

The scheme has two benefit components. The first is a cash benefit to be paid annually to the girls in the target age group for every year that they remain in education, provided they are unmarried at the time. The second benefit is a one-time grant to be paid to a girl between the age of 18 and 19, provided that she is enrolled in an educational institution and is unmarried at that time.

The term 'education' encompasses secondary, higher secondary and higher education, as well as the various vocational, technical and sports courses available for this age group. Girls must be enrolled and regularly attending educational institutions located in West Bengal that are recognized by the government. To ensure an equity focus, the scheme is open only to girls from families below a certain income ceiling. For girls with special needs, orphans and for girls currently residing in registered Juvenile Justice Homes, this criterion is waived.

Features of Conditional Cash Transfers

By making financial benefits conditional upon the receiver's actions, CCT programs negotiate a behavioural change in an area of developmental concern. In this case, the behavioural areas of concern are the high incidence of child marriage and the low attendance and retention of adolescent girls in education. Kanyashree Prakalpa therefore seeks to empower girls, specifically girls from socio-economically disadvantaged families by:

- Incentivizing them to continue in education for a longer period of time, and complete secondary, higher secondary, higher education, or equivalent in technical, vocational or sports 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.
- The Scheme lays the foundation for the financial inclusion of girls by mandating that its financial benefits are paid into bank accounts where the Kanyashree beneficiary herself is the account holder.
- To ensure that the scheme's conditional cash transfers go beyond a mere compliance of the PCMA 2006, the Scheme has a communication strategy based on public advocacy and behaviour change communication methods designed to bring about changes in attitudes, perceptions and behaviour of adolescent girls, their families and other significant stakeholders in their lives.
- The Scheme's Communication Strategy is designed to create influence on three levels:
- The cultural-environmental level where, through institutional and mass media, society at large is informed of the negative impact of child marriage, the law against child marriage, the options offered by Kanyashree Prakalpa and the objectives of the Scheme.
- Inter-personal social influence level, where families, peer groups, community and other immediate social networks that support the education of young girls with the long-term objective of their economic independence, rather than perpetuate the expectation of early marriage for them.
- Intra-Personal Influences – create a sense of self, personal capacity and well-being in adolescent girls

The impact of the Scheme is proposed to be further strengthened through Kanyashree Plus, its graduation 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. Under consideration are the following activities:

1. Reintegration of out-of-school girls into education through non-formal education or bridge education and livelihoods support
2. Career counselling and coaching to girls enrolled in Kanyashree starting at age 16
3. Life skills education (consisting of rights education, soft skills development, health and nutrition and financial literacy) delivered to girls
4. Facilitate each Kanyashree beneficiary's access to tertiary education and employment/ business services, enabled by performance-based contracts with qualified providers
5. Conduct outreach and public education activities to parents, caregivers and young men to generate support of young women's socio-economic empowerment

After independence in 1947 under supervision of some eminent Indian scholars and personalities the Constitution of India had been formed. A special attention is given in the constitution to prevent gender discrimination and in order to keep women's interest. 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) (e)),

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) [7][8][9].

It is true that the condition of women in India has been improved comparing to that of eighteen or nineteen centuries, but there are lots of concern still remain in the question of women education and social issues. Child marriages have been traditionally prevalent in India and it continues to even today. Although child marriage was outlawed in this country but till today it is a common practice. According to UNICEF's "State of the World's Children-2009" report, 47% of India's women aged 20–24 were married before the legal age of 18. In rural areas it is as high as 56%. The report also showed that 40% of the world's child marriages occur in India.

The constitution of India calls for free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years, in spite of that illiteracy is the major problem of India, particularly in rural India even today. There are many barriers to overcome this problem but at first gender disparity and gender inequality need to be addressed with special efforts on an urgent basis. Significantly, there are dozens of causes which keep the children away from schools and the quantum of these causes emerges more from girls' side than that of boys. Problems of illiteracy among girl children vary from place to place and region to region and across the groups as well. At all levels enrolment status of girl children is lower than that of boys and this difference goes on increasing as we move towards higher level. Though participation of girls at all stages of education has been increasing steadily, yet the girls' participation is still below 50 percent at all stages of education. It is also reported that dropout rates among girls are at higher side than that of their boy counterparts.

Most of the time gender differences are observed in home, in society, schools, at work places and in political decision-making within the democratic process itself. More specifically it is reflected in the distribution of care work, household responsibilities and the decision-making powers at home and also this discrimination is seen in the parents' behaviours and choices as well as in total school environment. In specific situations, both the socio-cultural and the physical environments continue to create barriers to girl's education, social malpractices, such as child marriage, while hardly affect the education of boys, they have a prominent adverse effect on the girls' education. These factors adversely contribute to creating unattractive environments in which girls must run the gauntlet of difficulties to remain in school, as a result of which their learning is severely compromised. A discriminatory attitude builds up among teachers and other members of society resulting in girls dropping out in large numbers.

Benefits of Women Empowerment

An inclusive social development would not be possible ignoring women and leaving them in dark. Gandhiji has rightly said that "Man should learn to give place to woman. A country or community in which women are not honoured cannot be considered as civilized". Empowerment of women in the society is considered to be the key resource for educating girls and realizing numerous benefits for betterment of society. In the light of reducing gender disparity at elementary level, empowering women is not an option rather a compulsion to achieve the target. It helps in providing following benefits to our society:

It is believed that women's education is associated with longer life expectancy, lower infant and maternal mortality and lower fertility. Education of women aims at improving access to the use of information, health services and increasing income of family. Women's access to income can be beneficial to children's health and education as well.

Early marriages still a norm in many part of our country, particularly in rural areas. Even today parents consider educating daughter as burden. It is found that educated women tend to marry later, with implications for their economic opportunities and choices.

Educated women have lower desire and aim at actual family size. They likely to use contraception and have longer interval between birth. Children of educated mothers, especially daughters are more like to get education. It helps in reducing gender disparity in the field of education. Education of mother has a greater positive effect on education of children. One of the important concern of women empowerment is changing family perception of investment i.e. perception of parents that the economic return for educating daughter is lower. Empowered women can contribute substantially to overcome such blind beliefs and superstitions from society.

Effectiveness of Kanyashree Prakalpa

Swami Vivekananda had introduced Kumari Puja in the Belur Math hundred years ago. It was not just a religious ritual. It was actually a message to the society regarding the significance of a girl child. It was a humble gesture of reverence toward women in the society. Kanyashree Prakalpa has been introduced with the true spirit of Swami Vivekananda's concept of Kumari Puja. Swamiji said, "Where women are respected, there the Gods delight, and where they are not, there all work and efforts come to naught. There is no hope of rise for that family or country where they live in sadness." The government introducing Kanyashree Prakalpa addresses

two major challenges in the society, a girl's dropout from school and the prevalence of a girl child marriage, which are believed to be the most influential obstacles in question of women education and empowerment.

Kanyashree Prakalpa is a conditional direct cash transfer scheme for young girls of lower income families. It has two categories: K-1 and K-2. K-1 is applicable to Girls aged between 13 – 18 years and studying in a Government or a Government undertaking school. K-2 is applicable to girls who are enrolled in a government or a Government undertaking college aged between 18-19 years. As per the scheme K-1 Rs 500/- has been credited to the beneficiary account in each year up to the age of 18. The amount in some extent will meet the recurring expenses of education but more importantly it will prevent girls of poor families to discontinue the study, which reduces the tendency of drop out from school at early stage of education. Moreover, as per the scheme K-2 a beneficiary will receive Rs 25000/- as a onetime grant. Which is Rs 8333/- per year. It motivates girls of poor families to pursue higher education after completion of school education. A college girl with this amount can easily bear it recurring expenses in graduation level. So a girl who at the age of 13 comes under the purview of Kanyashree Prakalpa can easily continue her study up to Graduation without facing any financial obstacles. It relieves parents of economical weaker section to bear the expenses of girls' education and also motivates them to encourage girls to attend the school and after completion of school education to pursue higher study.

Creating a large number of beneficiaries

Another important 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% 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 public money. 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 studying through public money. It obviously reduces the tendency of girls in weaker section to discontinue the study and drop out from school.

Kanyashree Prakalpa not only minimizes the tendency of girl students to dropout from schools at early age at the same time it will make a positive impact of the prevention of girl child marriage. A precondition of the Prakalpa is not being married. A girl who gets the benefit of the Prakalpa (K-1) will enjoy the benefit till she is reached at the age of 17. Survey reveals that during a significant percentage of girl child marriage occurs during the age of 15 to 17. In most of the cases the marriage is organised by family. Parents of the girl through this marriage off load a liability. But after implementation of Kanyashree Prakalpa families think twice to marry their girl at early age. After that marriage the girl will not be a beneficiary. The amount of Rs 500/-per month means a lot to a poor family. Moreover, after completion of the school when the girl enrolls herself with a college she will get another opportunity to get the benefit of the scheme (K-2). The benefitted amount this time is higher than the previous one and its preconditions are (a) being unmarried and (b) the minimum age should be 18 and not more than 19. For obvious reasons the girl herself and her family would like to get the benefit and its result is that the family would not arrange the marriage of the girl before her age of 18. It obviously reduces the prevalence of child marriage in the state.

Gender inequalities have instrumental impacts through creating constraints in their achievement of a number of development goals. 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. Gender inequality also has a negative impact on economic growth. There is now overwhelming evidence that countries that adopt specific measures to protect women's rights and increase their access to resources and schooling have less corruption and achieve faster economic growth than countries that do not. The government of West Bengal has planned to sensitise the society specially in backward communities in rural areas and slum areas in urban locality about the necessity of providing equal access and opportunities for growth and development, including education to both boys and girls'. For that purpose, government sponsored various types of awareness generation programme had been organised from village level to state level throughout the years. Special initiative has been taken by visiting nearby village or town, interact with parents and local community and discuss with them the need and ways to promote gender equality and girl's education [12].

One of the barriers for girl education may be the location of schools which some cases far away from their homes, particularly in rural areas. Adequate transport system is needed for girl to attend the schools. It will be more convenient for them to attend school if they access some mode of transport to attend school. Government has taken note of that matter and in various social welfare and cultural programmes by-cycle had been presented to girls of poor families. No doubt in comparison to crisis it is just a baby step. Nevertheless, it reflects the good will and true intention of the government to success the Kanyashree Prakalpa.

II. ANALYSIS

The prime and foremost challenge to India is to remove poverty and so also to the state of West Bengal. Eradication of poverty is not an overnight affair. It requires an effective policy which leads to a sustainable development and growth. Swami Vivekananda said, “There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible to bird to fly on one wing.” He stated further that all nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future. The modern statistics and socio-economical analysis also support it. As stated by Pradhan and Abraham “Recent empirical advancement in growth economics emphasized that the key factors in modern economic growth is the productive and efficient use of human resources. The role of women’s status is very crucial, as they constitute an important supply of human capital”.¹⁶ It is found in a study by using an econometric model that the economic development of a nation and women status of it moves simultaneously. Where the social status of women is lower, the economic development is also lower. Its contrary is also true, i.e., the nation economically progress where women enjoy more decision making power in the society. It is found in the study that those states in India occupy higher ranks in the index of economic development over time more or less achieved women empowerment but those states unable to make any successful step to empower women lags far behind in question of economic development. On the whole the ranks in economic development and ranks in women’s status too are highly correlated to each other.

The present study is the effectiveness of the scheme across the districts of West Bengal and their uniformity over time span of 4 years 2013-14 to 2016-17.

DATA

The scheme is so designed and web-based that the details about the beneficiaries are available from the portal publicly. The data have been obtained from the portal on the target, completion and sanctioned in the categories ‘fresh’ and ‘renewal/continued’. The total (=‘fresh’ + ‘renewal/continued’) number of beneficiaries are calculated on target, completed and sanctioned number of beneficiaries. It is well and justifies that (i) the number of completed beneficiaries should be equal to the target and (ii) the number of sanctioned beneficiaries should be equal to the number of completed beneficiaries.

III. RESULTS

The difference between number of completed and sanctioned beneficiaries may be an indicator of effectiveness of a district. The same has been calculated for the years 2013-14 to 2016-17 for each of the districts. The ranks have been obtained on the differences for each of the years (Table 1.1 to 1.3). It is true that lower the difference with low rank better is the effectiveness of the district.

Table 1.1: showing ranks of the districts on effectiveness of K1 for the years 2013 to 2016

DISTRICT	R113	R114	R115	R116
BANKURA	4	5	8	12
BARDDHAMAN	14	17	13	16
BIRBHUM	13	15	16	11
COOCH BIHAR	9	9	5	8
DAKSHIN DINAJPUR	3	6	3	4
DARJILING	1	3	2	1
HAORA	10	8	6	10
HUGLI	5	14	12	14
JALPAIGURI	7	4	4	6
KOLKATA	12	1	10	3
MALDAH	11	16	17	9
MURSHIDABAD	19	19	15	20
NADIA	16	12	14	15
NORTH TWENTY FOUR	17	20	19	19
PASCHIM MEDINIPUR	6	7	11	17
PURBA MEDINIPUR	18	10	9	13

PURULIYA	15	11	7	5
SILIGURI	2	2	1	2
SOUTH TWENTY FOUR	20	18	18	18
UTTAR DINAJPUR	8	13	20	7

Note - Rxx is the rank of the difference in the year 20xx.

In discussing performance of K1, in 2013, 4 best performing districts are Darjeeling, Siliguri, Dakshin Dinajpur and 4 low performing districts are South 24 Parganas, Murshidabad, Purba Medinipur, North 24 Parganas. In 2014, 4 low performing districts are North 24 Parganas, Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas, Burdwan and 4 good performing districts are Kolkata, Siliguri, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri. In 2015, 4 best performing districts are Siliguri, Darjeeling, Dakshin Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and 4 low performing districts are Uttar Dinajpur, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Malda. In 2016, 4 low performing districts are Murshidabad, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Paschim Medinipur and 4 good performing districts are Darjeeling, Siliguri, Kolkata, Dakshin Dinajpur. Also, the correlation from year to year are respectively 0.70, 0.82 and 0.60. Therefore, year-wise performances are not consistent.

Table 1.2: showing ranks of the districts on effectiveness of K2 for the years 2013 to 2016

DISTRICT	R213	R214	R215	R216
BANKURA	3	7	5	4
BARDDHAMAN	6	17	13	17
BIRBHUM	14	10	9	7
COOCH BIHAR	16	12	17	15
DAKSHIN DINAJPUR	5	5	6	1
DARJILING	1	2	7	2
HAORA	8	9	4	3
HUGLI	10	13	11	14
JALPAIGURI	12	1	3	11
KOLKATA	17	8	12	12
MALDAH	11	16	20	5
MURSHIDABAD	13	18	16	20
NADIA	20	15	14	8
NORTH TWENTY FOUR	18	20	19	16
PASCHIM MEDINIPUR	2	6	15	10
PURBA MEDINIPUR	15	11	8	18
PURULIYA	7	4	2	9
SILIGURI	4	3	1	6
SOUTH TWENTY FOUR	19	14	10	19
UTTAR DINAJPUR	9	19	18	13

In discussing performance of K2, in 2013, 4 best performing districts are Darjeeling, Paschim Medinipur, Bankura, Siliguri and 4 low performing districts are Nadia, South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Kolkata. In 2014, 4 low performing districts are North 24 Parganas, Uttar Dinajpur, Murshidabad, Burdwan and 4 good performing districts are Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Siliguri, Purulia. In 2015, 4 best performing districts are Siliguri, Purulia, Jalpaiguri, Howrah and 4 low performing districts are Malda, North 24 Parganas, Uttar Dinajpur, Coochbehar. In 2016, 4 low performing districts are Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas, Purba Medinipur, Burdwan and 4 good performing districts are Dakshin Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Horwarh, Bankura. Also, the correlation from year to year are respectively 0.53, 0.81 and 0.44. Therefore, year-wise performances are also not consistent.

Table 1.3: showing ranks of the districts on effectiveness for the years 2013 to 2016

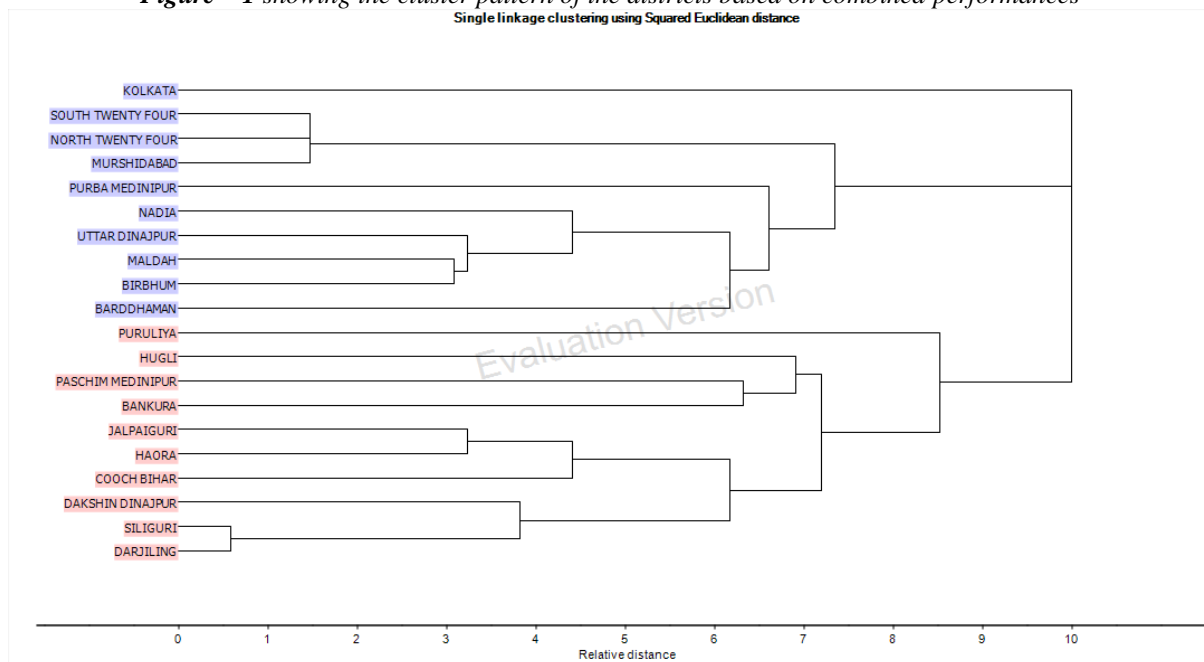
DISTRICT	R13	R14	R15	R16	Score	Rank
BANKURA	4	6	7	12	7.3	7
BARDDHAMAN	14	18	13	16	15.3	17
BIRBHUM	13	14	15	11	13.3	14
COOCH BIHAR	10	9	9	10	9.5	9
DAKSHIN DINAJPUR	3	5	4	4	4.0	3
DARJILING	1	2	2	1	1.5	2
HAORA	8	8	5	7	7.0	6
HUGLI	6	13	12	14	11.4	11
JALPAIGURI	9	4	3	6	5.4	4
KOLKATA	12	3	10	3	6.8	5
MALDAH	11	16	18	9	13.6	15
MURSHIDABAD	19	19	17	20	18.7	19
NADIA	16	12	14	15	14.2	16
NORTH TWENTY FOUR	17	20	19	19	18.8	20
PASCHIM MEDINIPUR	5	7	11	17	10.0	10
PURBA MEDINIPUR	18	11	8	13	12.3	12
PURULIYA	15	10	6	5	8.9	8
SILIGURI	2	1	1	2	1.5	1
SOUTH TWENTY FOUR	20	17	16	18	17.7	18
UTTAR DINAJPUR	7	15	20	8	12.7	13

In discussing performance of K1 & K2 together, in 2013, 4 best performing districts are Darjeeling, Siliguri, Dakshin Dinajpur, Bankura and 4 low performing districts are South 24 Parganas, Murshidabad, Purba Medinipur, North 24 Parganas. In 2014, 4 low performing districts are North 24 Parganas, Murshidabad, Burdwan, South 24 Parganas and 4 good performing districts are Siliguri, Darjeeling, Kolkata, Jalpaiguri. In 2015, 4 best performing districts are Siliguri, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Dakshin Dinajpur and 4 low performing districts are Uttar Dinajpur, North 24 Parganas, Malda, Murshidabad. In 2016, 4 low performing districts are Murshidabad, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Paschim Medinipur and 4 good performing districts are Darjeeling, Siliguri, Kolkata, Dakshin Dinajpur. Also, the correlation from year to year are respectively 0.71, 0.84 and 0.68. Therefore, year-wise performances are almost consistent. The year-wise ranks are combined using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and the model is

$$Score = 0.230073 * R13 + 0.270693 * R14 + 0.252662 * R15 + 0.246573 * R16$$

The ranks (Rank) based on ranks for the last 4 years has been obtained.

Figure – 1 showing the cluster pattern of the districts based on combined performances



It is observed that Kolkata, South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Mushidabad, Purba medinipur, Nadia, Uttar Dinajpur, Malda & Burdwan is one cluster and other districts are in other cluster. It is true Darjeeling and Siliguri are best performing districts along with Kolkata.

IV. DISCUSSION

Kanyashree Prakalpa not only minimizes the tendency of girl students to drop out from schools at early age, at the same time it will make a positive impact on the prevention of early marriage of girl child. All the districts of the state are found not to perform with equal effectiveness nor they are found to be consistent over time. The far-way districts are more serious in implementing the Prakalpa in comparison to the nearby districts. Best performing districts are Darjeeling & Siliguri and less attentive districts seem to be North & South 24 Parganas along with Murshidabad. The reasons are neither gender ratio nor sex ratio. The ideal condition of the project should be equally ranked and no differences must exist between ‘completed’ and ‘sanctioned’.

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