

The Impact of Kanyashree Scheme in West Bengal

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Abstract: In India girls are called Lakshmi (The Goddess of wealth and prosperity). But in reality we have paid a little honor to them. In this situation the Govt. Of West Bengal has launched KANYASHREE SCHEME. Kanyashree Prakalpa (scheme) is a brain child of Mamata Benerjee, Hon'ble chief minister of West Bengal. It is a flagship scheme for the prevalence of a girl child marriage, empowerment of adolescent girls, promoting girls' education, to make them independent, skillful to improve the status and well being of girls. This scheme also enhances the social power and self-esteem of the girls. It is a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme for the girls between the ages of 13-18 years of lower income families. It has a versatile impact in West Bengal also in India.

Keywords: kanyashree prakalpa, women empowerment, social change, sustainable development, Brain Child.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda said that there is no chance for welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. If we can improve, the condition of women, we can get back India's lost glory and pride. (1) In India the girls have been very neglected through the ages. Gender discrimination against female children is extending across the India, also in the word .West Bengal is not an exception. Total population of West Bengal is 91276115; male 46809027, female 44467088. Sex ratio is 950 female per 1000 male. (2) Literates male is 81.69%, female is 70.54%. Girls' Child marriage is one of the curses of this state .The legal marriageable age for the girls are 18 and for the boys are 21 in India. But according to the census 2011, the percentage of girl's marriage in West Bengal below the age of 18 is almost 40.24%, where the national average is 30.21%.

Early child marriage brings a lot of problems like increase the school dropout rate for girls, early pregnancies, malnutrition among children, high maternal and infant deaths, poverty, life of financial and social insecurity. In this situation Govt Of west Bengal has taken an initiative that is Kanyashree Prakalpa. Kanyashree prakalpa will improve the life and the status of the girl children by helping economically backward families with cash, so that families do not arrange the marriage of their girl child before 18 years because of economic problem. Kanyashree prakalpa help those girls who are from poor families and can't take higher education due to poverty. It helps them to get secondary and higher education not only education, it gives them a statusful life, self-confident, to achieve their goals. The main goal of this prakalpa is stopping the marriage before 18 years for girls. The Hon'ble chief minister of west Bengal, Mamata Benerjee launched this scheme on 1st oct. 2013.

What Is Kanyashree?

Bengali word 'Kanya' means 'girl'. 'Shree' means beautiful, valuable, wealth, prosperity. According to Mamata Benerjee kanyashree means "girls are our wealth." They bring in our life beautifulness, prosperity. They are valuable for our life, family, society and of course for our nation. It is a scheme for the empowerment of adolescent girls (13-18).

Who are Kanyashree ?

The girls who belongs the age of 13-18 years are 'Kanyashree'. There is two kinds of Kanyashree. The first is K 1: the girls who belong to the age group of 13-18 year are K 1. The second kind is K 2. The girls who turn 18 are K 2. Both the benefits under the scheme are granted to the girls who belong to families with annual income not more than Rs.1, 20,000.00. The bar of family income is not applicable to the girls who lost both parents, physically challenged (40% disabled).

Components of the scheme

- 1) Annual scholarship of RS-750 for K 1 (during the year 2013-14 the annual scholarship was 500).
- 2) One time grant of Rs. -25000, 00 for K 2.

The annual scholarship is for unmarried girls aged 13-18 years enrolled in class vii-xii in government recognized regular or equivalent open school or vocational/technical training course. Kanyashree prokalpa started in 2013. In this five year total enrollment of Kanyashree are -45, 36,660, enrolled applications are 1, 15, 84611; sanctioned applications are 1, 06, 44,194. Registered institutions are 16,672. This statistics is enough for understandings the impact of Kanyashree prokalpa is versatile. These are:

Prevention of child marriage:

According to Kanyashree Annual Report -15-16 the rates of child marriage in west Bengal has reduced. According to DLHS -3-2007-08 the state ranked fifth highest in the country when it came to the prevalence of child bride (54.7%)(3). Most of these girls are married before they reach adulthood. But now the situation has changed .according to NFHS-3(2015-16) woman aged 20-24 years married before age 40.7%.Although the decline rates is very slow, but it is very significant. After launched the kanyashree prokalpa, the rates of child marriage has put down. Girls say 'no' to child marriage. (4)

Secondary and higher education :

kanyashree schemes has given an opportunity to bring girls back to school . a fundamental and farreachingeffect change is slowly taking place in the society of west Bengal . The parents have become a believer of girl's education. When the kanyashree girls reach at the age of 18 years, they get Rs. 25000 one time grant that helps her study. Most of kanyashree girl can convinced their parents to allow them to attend school or colleges. Parents do not need to collect money for their girl's education, hats why they are not afraid now. They are happy with this scheme. They are happy to permit their girls to get secondary and higher education. Now the drop-out rates are decline in higher classes.

Social Awareness:

kanyashree girls organized many social awareness programs like –Dengue awareness program, Mission Nirmal Bangla, Safe drive- save life , child protection program, child rights, heath awareness program, capacity buildings, pro-participated in election awareness, tree plantation . They organized many seminars at block level on cyber crime. Kanyashree girls make awareness among people about these subjects. Purba Bardhaman district administration made a short film to prevent child marriage. Birbhum child line conducted a awareness program on girl child and women trafficking with the help of kanyashree girls. Most of districts arrange different kind of awareness program with the help of kanyashree girls, and also it is for them. Kanyashree prakalpa increases the rates of social awareness, by which our society will become concuss, alert, about the bad impact of child marriage. Kanyashree girls are now become it-selves a media by which block level administration district level administration can communicate with unconscious, poor peoples. Govt. Of west Bengal is successful to spread the message about child marriage by kanyashree girls.

II. SOCIAL IMPACT

42 lack kanyashree girls are stand in the west Bengal. They are working to improve their society. They are working to stop child marriage. They are fights to kill various kinds of social evils. Kanyashree prokalpa make a deep impression in west Bengal. It is a well known and popular scheme. Everybody appreciate it. The administration of block level (BDO), District level (DM) are averting many child marriage everyday with the help of kanyashree girls. There is a lot of changed in the attitudes of parents, it is extended in the families and communities towards girl children. The attitudes are for honoring the girl. Now the govt of west Bengal is bit of successful to make people understood that girls are not our load, they are our wealth. The impact of kanyashree prokalpa is now speared out through the sociaty, throughout our culture. Now we have kanyashree melas, kanyashree themed puja pandals, songs, theatre. The level of shake up about child marriage, girls' education is increasing.

III. SELF-EMPLOYMENT

One of the major and important impacts of kanyashree prokalpa is self-employment. It is not enough to keep the child girls in school or colleges. The girls from socio-economically disadvantages families are always struggled with poverty. Thus they can't continue their study. They want to earn and help their needy families. kanyashree prokalpa gives them the opportunity. Most of district administration of west Bengal organized food preservation and food processing training program for kanyashree girls. Marketing consultants from the district rural development cell coach them as aspects such as product marketing, capital investment, cost-benefit analysis.(5) After taking this training many girls are now self employee. Few girls with her one time grants (Rs. 25000) opened a cyber shop, stationary shop and many others own business. Thus kanyashree prokalpa increase the girls capacity, skill, confident to find their footing in different fields.(6) There are 123 success story of kanyashree girls in kanyashree web portal of west Bengal. Kanyashree prokalpa fulfill girls dream.

IV. POLITICAL IMPACT

Political impact of kanyashree prokalpa is now very deep rooted. Today kanyashree prokalpa has touched every Bengali. It has reached in every houses-every families. No doubt Mamata Benerjee and her Trinamul Congress also reached in every family with this prakalpa. It has given her much popularity and of course a huge amount of vote in her wallet. Kanyashree prokalpa is a sharp weapon of vote war. Mamata Benerjee checkmate over her political enemy. It has given her enormous gains in the field of election. Opposition can't criticize this prakalpa, because popularity of this project is unbelievable. If they oppose this project, it would be against their political interest. They know that the criticism of kanyashree prokalpa never be accepted by the people. The recognition of UNO gave her an international identity. So, it become "Brahamastra" to win the election.

V. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present with compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."(7) Sustainable Development means the sustainability in the spheres of environment, the economy and society (equity). In the year 2015 the United Nations Organization adopted 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. It consist a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Goals of Kanyashree scheme fulfils some of them. This are- no 1, 3, 4,5,8,10,16 and17. The sustainable development goals of kanyashree scheme are-

- i) "It improved educational attainment and skill and voice in family and society.
- ii) Reduced risk of maternal and child ill health and mortality.
- iii) Reduced risk of violence, abuse and exploitation.
- iv) Socio- economic inclusion and balanced power relations.
- v) Prevention of child marriage, completion of school education and financial inclusion for girls between the ages of 13-18.
- vi) Change in perceptions, attitudes and aspiration of girls and families.
- vii) An enabling environment in which girls and women are considered an integral part of society and are treated as equal citizens.
- viii) Conditional Cash Transfer that incentivize education and discourage child marriage.
- ix) Public advocacy and behavior change communication."(8)

Kanyashree scheme win UNPSA award 2017 from UNO. Kanyashree took 1st place among 552 public service schemes from across 62 countries.

VI. E- GOVERNANCE

Kanyashree get National e-governance Award- 2014-15. It wins SKOCH SMART Governance award - 15 for its electronic and Cash Transfer Features. The entire process of kanyashree is online. These are online enrollment from school, online data approval, sanction, disbursement all through the online. The benefits of scheme are paid directly to their bank accounts. The Kanyashree prokalpa has an e-learning portal for beneficiary. It enhances e-governance. Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to make Digital India, no doubt it help him. Kanyashree scheme win Finalist in GEM –Tech Award 2016 organized by ITU and UN women. . Didi's pet kanyashree wins UN –WSIS prize 2016 in e- government category.

Towards a Social Movement: Kanyashree prokalpa is now going towards to become a social movement. The movement, to stop child marriage, encourage the child girl for higher education, become self employee and of course empowering adolescent girls –women. 16679 registered institution (9) thousands of teacher, hundreds of BDO, DM, child line member, thousands of bank employee and many other officer are engage with this movement .They are with the kanyashree girls and help the kanyashree girls differently .The parents of kanyashree girls are also warrior of this movement .It will be spread at grassroots level day by day and hope will be successful.

VII. CONCLUSION

The impact of Kanyashree scheme is very deep-rooted in the society of West Bengal .It become a boon for adolescent girls of West Bengal and also for Didi (politically). According to Mamata Benerjee kanyashree become 'BISWASHREE'. She is not just happy with the impact of kanyashree,she feels proud for her pet - brain child. Being inspired, with result of kanyashree she has now declared another scheme for kanyashree, is 'RUPOSHREE'. In this scheme every kanyashree girls will get one time Rs.25000 at the time of their marriage.

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