
Women Empowerment in India: a case study of the Kanyashree Prakalpa in West Bengal

Simran Parveen

Assistant Professor

Department of Political Science

St. Claret College

Bengaluru.

Article Link: <https://aksharasurya.com/2024/02/simran-parveen-2.php>

ABSTRACT:

The present study is related to the women empowerment in India, plight of women in Indian society, measure which have taken by both central government and state government for the empowerment and betterment of women and lastly will be focus on Kanyashree programme as a programme which help the poor women to continue their study and enhance the women empowerment in the society.

KEY WORDS:

Women Empowerment, schemes, Kanyashree Prakalpa, implementation, success.

.....

INTRODUCTION

India is a complex multicultural country where the patriarchal social system is its characteristic feature. People worshipped to the female goddess, give respect to their daughter, sister, wife and mother but at the same time treat discriminate attitude towards them because of its social structure which outlined the domination of men and subordination of women. The role of the women controlled by men in the manner of women's productive and labour power, women's reproduc-

tion, women's sexuality, mobility, property and economic resources. India which has evolved throughout all the tradition where harsh practice such as Sati pratha, practice of dowry, female infanticide, wife burning, sexual violence, child marriage which were the norm of the society were justified by the ancient books- Upanishad, Vedas, Manusmriti etc.¹ Women which belonged to the 48% of the total population of Indian society needs empowerment because of the character of the society.

The multiple forms of violence experienced in the household, at community level and in some instances by the state threaten women's security in India. Women are tortured both within the sphere of house and outside the house. Dowry related death, gang-rape, domestic violence all contribute to women's insecurity in India. Forty percentage of all sexual abuse case in India are incest and 94% of the incest case had a known member of the house hold as the perpetrator. Women and girls in India are also at the high risk of gender-based violence. Government of India provides several security to women such as Domestic Violence Act 2005, Compulsory Registration of Marriage Act 2006, 73rd and 74th Amendment to the constitution provide 33.3% reservation for women to enter politics at panchayat level and municipal level. But these are significantly gaps between policy advancement and actual practice at the community level. According to National Family Health Survey -3(NFHS), survey on women's decision-making power shows that only about one third of the women interviewed took decision on their own regarding household issues and their health. Decision –making among employed urban women was higher than among rural and less educated women. The survey also

found that older married women had more decision-making power than the younger married women. Younger women and girl experience an additional layer of discrimination as a result of their age. Data on women's mobility shows that women have limited choices and urban women have more mobility power than the rural women. Data indicates that about half the women have the power or freedom to go to market and health facility alone. Seventy nine (97%) percentage of urban women and only 40% of rural women are allowed to go to market alone. Mobility restriction are dependent on the how the family and society view women and their rights.

Additionally women in India face high rates of violence. Some recent statistics on women include:2

- » India rank 18th among the highest maternal mortality rates in the world with 540deals for every 100,000 birth.
- » Only 48%of adult Indian women are literate.
- » Among rural women 36% have experienced physical violence in their adult lives.
- » 66% of women have physical violence in their life time are divorced, widow or deserted.
- » 85.3% of women reporting violence against their husband.

The other report of national crime bureau shows the head wise incident of crimes against women during 2008-2012.3

Crime head	2008	2012
Rape (section376 IPC)	21467	24923
Dowry death (sec302/304IPC)	8172	8233

Kidnapping and abduction (363 to373)	22,939	38,262
Cruelty by husband and relative (498-A)	81,344	106,527
Insult to the modesty of women (509IPC)	12,214	9,173
Assault on women (354IPC)	40,413	45,351
Importation of girls(366-B)	67	59
Total IPC crime against women	186,616	232,528

This report vivid shows that what is the condition of women in society what people are doing with them, those crime which are restricted in the eye of the court but happening with the women of India. Women are the most disadvantage section of the society. For helping the condition of women and empowered them the central and state government launched many schemes, programme and policies because through empowerment and gender justice material and social condition of women will improve. First we will discuss about the central government schemes which help in women's empowerment and development. These are4

- » Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme
- » One Stop Centre Scheme
- » Women Help Line Scheme
- » UJJAWALA: A comprehensive scheme for prevention of trafficking and rescue rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation

To make the central government scheme successful, the state government shake hands with the scheme of central government and launched some effective measures and policies for the betterment of women. The west Bengal government ensure women empowerment through various schemes so that women in the state lead a life of dignity and are treated at par with the men. These scheme are⁵

- » The Kanyashree Prakalpa
- » The state government has set up 80 fast track courts to deal with the women case
- » 65 women's police station so that women can fearlessly report any crime
- » Self-defense programme for school girls titled Sukanya has been launched in association with the Kolkata police

Kanyashree Prakalpa

Kanyashree Prakalpa is an innovative project of the West Bengal government with the intention to enhance the educational status amongst the girl children belonging to the age group of 13-18 years and 18-19 years.⁶ Kanyashree Prakalpa is a conditional cash transfer (CCT) scheme that concentrates on girls especially on the dropping out of school and child marriage : adolescent between the age of 13-18 years. This scheme is supported by many state administration and district administration and also by its associations and organisations. It is compromised in two components-

- » Unmarried girl who is up to the age of 13-18 years, reading in any recognised schools in class 8/9/10/11/12 and if parents annual income is up to Rs- 1, 20,000/- and not more

than the exact amount then she is eligible for the K1 form and will get annual scholarship of Rs-500/- this form is available in every recognised institution of the state.

- » Unmarried girl who born on and after 1.04.1995 and 18 years old and about to reach 18 years, reading either in any recognised colleges, schools, and universities or any vocational course and sport training and annual family income is up to 1, 20,000/- is eligible for K2 form and getting one time grant of Rs-25000/-, this form is also available in all respective institutions.
- » For the implementation of Kanyashree Prakalpa the West Bengal government made provision for the opening of zero-balance bank account in girls name at the nearest banks simplified opening procedures, direct transfer of funds.⁷

Agenda of the programme

The purpose of the programme is to promote the primary education of girls so that they could be save from marriage and dropout from school at least till the age of 18 years. It is a small step towards making women empowerment and self reliant by⁸

- » Discouraging early marriage of girls to ensure compliance with the legal provisions pertaining to the minimum age at marriage
- » Incentivize through scholarship, the continuation of education of the girl child in secondary and higher secondary classes and those undergoing vocational training or sports training
- » Improving Infant Mortality Rate(IMR) and Maternal Mor-

tality Rate(MMR) by delaying the age of marriage and consequently increasing the median age of first birth

- » Reducing the incident of dropouts, especially amongst girls from poor families
- » Raise the level of nutrition among girls child and eradicate the mal-nutrition of girl child
- » Preventing trafficking and exploitation of the girl child

Implementation/management of scheme

For the implementation of this scheme the West Bengal government established state, district, block level and Kolkata municipal steering and monitoring committee in their respective areas. For the district of Darjeeling, it emphasized on two district steering and monitoring committee, one for Gorkhaland Territorial authority and other for non- Gorkhaland Territorial areas(GTA). This committee in their respective areas – (1) review, monitor and advise on all matters relating to the implementation of the scheme, including reviewing progress and strengthening coordination and convergence between and within concerned department. (2)This committee will consider the bottlenecks faced during the implementation of the scheme and suggest modifications required for improving implementation. (3) Committees will meet periodically (quarterly at state level and monthly at the district and block level) or earlier, if needed at the discretion of the chairperson of the committee. If required, technical experts, NGO's or civil society groups may be invited to attend to meetings.⁹

Project Management Units

The scheme will be implemented by project manage-

ment units, with units at the state level and one in each district in West Bengal. The District level Project Management teams will function under the supervision of the State Project Management Units.¹⁰

State Project Management Units (SPMU)

The SPMU will be established under the Department of Women Development and Social Welfare, and be headed by a State Project Manager (Kanyashree) assisted by a Deputy Project Manager (Kanyashree) and an Accounts Officer recruited on deputation or contractual basis. To manage the project at the state level, a programme management consultant (a management agency) would be hired for the initial period of 1 year. Under the guidance of secretary, Child Development and Women Development and Social Welfare, the agency would be responsible for overall management of the IT (Information Technology) component as well as implementation of communication and capacity building strategy for the scheme. The agency would also support the SPMU in hiring implementation agencies. They will be assisted by two accountants- cum-data managers employed on a contractual basis, and who must be proficient in common office applications, especially word processing, spreadsheets, presentation and accounting software. All new appointments will be made for 3 years on probation basis.

Partner Bank

A partner bank will be selected from any scheduled bank as per the second schedule of Reserve Bank Of India Act, to the management of the funds of the scheme including disbursements to beneficiaries, maintaining the financial account-

ing system, FMIS(Facility Management Information System) of the scheme and regularly submit the statements and reporting on a regular basis TO DPMU and SPMU, the bank will also assists beneficiaries in opening/ operating bank accounts to receive their entitlement.11

Fund Management

The fund for the scheme will be met from the budget of the Department of Women Development and Social Welfare. 3% of fund budgeted for the scheme will be reserved for project management and publicity costs. Of this 1/3 will be allocated at the state project management unit level and balance 2/3 will be allocated at district level.

Procedure of passing the application forms

Application forms for the scheme and forms for opening up of the bank accounts is available free-of-cost primarily at the secondary/ high secondary school to avoid misuse. However these forms are also available online in a downloadable format and also available in the following institutions – Local Government Offices(Gram Panchayat, Municipalities, and Borough Offices, Head Offices of KMC), Offices of Commissioner of Social Welfare and District Social Welfare Officers, Sub- Divisional offices, Block Development Officer, Office of Block Medical Officer of Health/ Primary Health Centres with ANMs(Auxiliary Nurse Midwifery's/ ASHAs(Accredited Social Health Activity's) . These all institutions are responsible for submitting the application forms with complete documents certifying eligibility. The schools and educational institution send their collected application forms to the above mentioned institutions of the state government and from their

officer is appointed in each such office to undertake the scrutiny of application forms. These officers will scrutinize the application forms on the basis of eligibility criteria and on the basis of these criteria they approve or reject the forms. Within the one month of receiving the application, the officer make a list of recommended and rejected forms which further send to Sanctioning Officer. The Sanctioning Officer issues the sanction order which authorizes the partner bank to transfer the sanctioned amount to the bank accounts of the approved beneficiaries. The partner bank shall transfer to beneficiary the approved amount within a week of receiving the sanction order. These are procedure of passing of passing the forms.¹²

Effectiveness of the kanyashree programme

Kanyashree prakalpa is the most successful programme of the West Bengal. From this programme almost 9 Lakhs girls have been benefitted in span of four months. It fulfils the lacuna of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan because under the K1 scheme of kanyashree RS 500/- gets credit to the beneficiaries account in each year up to the age of 18 years which in turn motivates many poor families to send their children to school. As per the K2 scheme the beneficiaries received RS 25000/- as a onetime grant motivates the poor families to continue the studies of their girl child after school the sum is enough for college study and enables girls to become a graduate without any financial hassles. The Kanyashree programme hits just where it should be hitting and works best in the favour of poor and lower middle class girls and helps them not only in getting well educate but also being financially independent in the process. The west Bengal chief minister Mamta Banerjee on Friday described August 14 as the Daughter's Independent Day. Mamta Baner-

jee said that “the Kanyashree Project that has now come to support 2.7 million girl students of the state, is an ever expanding programme and more girl students would be brought under its purview. It is to empower our daughter.¹³ The scheme has acknowledged by the UNICEF (United Nation Children’s Fund) and other world forum and this programme has the potential to become a global model for girl’s rights.

According to data from National Sample Survey 2014, the school dropout rate among girls in the state has come down. The report says that while the National average for school dropout rate for girls is 3.23% the same rate for the state is 1.28%. In 2009 survey, the figure stood at 2.34% for Bengal.¹⁴ Women and Child Development minister Shashi Panja said that this scheme was rolled out to prevent the child marriage in the state where about 54% girls are married off before they turn 18.¹⁵ The overall impact so far has been that more girls are benefitted from this scheme let’s take the example of a girl 14 years old girl name Malina who is one among 16 lakhs benefitted girls, Malina a 8 class student dreamt of becoming a teacher till her father Shikh Ajmal decided to marry her off. “I have seven children and Malina is the eldest. I wanted to marry her off because i was finding it difficult to keep her in school, it no sense since she would get married someday soon. It is only because of the government’s incentive programme that I decided to let her finish her study. Also, officials made me understand that if Malina is literate, her children will also learn from her”.¹⁶

Conclusion

kanyashree programme is working in the enhancement

of women status in society by providing them quality education to them and empower them so that they can also stand and take action against themselves. Everyone is appreciating this scheme because of sudden achievements, like this scheme Mamta Banerjee should launched other scheme on focusing of other social evil so that women can be fully free from these social discriminatory system of the society. But overall the programme is good and helping the government especially the rural girls of the society. A short film is also making in the appreciation of this programme by an Oscar winning director Megan Mylan “After My Garden Grows” in London on a young girl fight to stave off marriage and help her family make ends meet.¹⁷ This is the first time that foreigners are appreciating the Indian programme and making film on it. No parents want to marry her off daughter in the very adolescent age but due to poverty they have to do it but Mamta Banerjee scheme of Kanyashree Prakalpa minimize the burden of the poor family now they are free from the tension of girls education and girls are also continuing their study without any obstacle. This programme is also selected for the presentation of “Girl Summit” 2014 at London.

Endnote:

1. Namit K Srivastava ,”Women Empowerment in India-Rights, Laws, Policies; www.indiacelebrating.com>social-issues , Dec 24 2016, (accessed on 4.7.17)
2. Reecha Upadhyay , “Women’s Empowerment in India : An analytical overview, The Asia Foundation , 30 sep 2010
3. Mamta Mokta, “Empowerment of Women in India : A critical analysis” , Indian Journal of Public Administration, Volume ix No.3, July

2014

4. Ministry of Women and Child Development (GIO), “Women Empowerment Schemes| Ministry of Women and Child ...”, wcd.nic.in/schemes-listing/2405, National Information Centre(INC), 05July 2017
5. All India Trinamool Congress; Empowering Women : A key Focus on West Bengal Government, aitcofficial.org/aitc/empowering-women-a-key-focus-of-west-bengal-government (accessed on 5.7.17)
6. Biplab Saha, “Impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa on girl child in West Bengal, India”, IRJMSH, Volume 6, issue 7(year2015)
7. Biplab Saha, “Impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa on Girl Child in West Bengal , India”,IRJMSH, Volume 6, Issue 7 (year 2015)
8. Ibid
9. Department of Women Development and Social Welfare Government of West Bengal, “Kanyashree Prakalpa 2013- Implementation Guidelines”, (Drafted 19th August 2013)
10. Ibid
11. Department of Women Development and Social Welfare Government of West Bengal, “Kanyashree Prakalpa- Implementation Guidelines “, Version 2.0(Draft) published on Oct 30, 2015
12. Department of Women Development and Social Welfare Government of West Bengal , “ Kanyashree Prakalpa 2013 – Implementation Guidelines”, (Drafted 19th August 2013)
13. All India Trinamool Congress, “The success story of Kanyashree- Mamta Banerjee’s brain child”, aitcofficial.org/aitc/the-success-story-of-kanyashree, 22 Jan 2015, (accessed on 5.7.17)
14. All India Trinamool Congress , “The success story of Kanyashree – Mamta Banerjee’s brain child”, aitcofficial.org/aitc/the-success-story-of-kanyashree, 22Jan 2015(accessed on 6.7.5)
15. IANS, “Around 9 lakh girls helped by Bengal’s Kanyashree Scheme”, www.sify.com/finance/around-9-lakh-girls-helped-by-bengal-s-kanyashree-scheme-news-national-ocmuvAahhjgsi.htm, updated wed Feb 12, 2014(accessed on 6.7.17)
16. Dirimi Chaudhuri, “Scheme saves girls from early marriage”, m.deccanherald.com/articles.php?name=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.deccanherald.com%2Fcontent%2F4271, Aug 24 2014

17. Shankudeb Panda, "Oscar-winning director makes short film on Bengal's Kanyashree scheme", <https://m.facebook.com//notes/shankudeb-panda...>, 19 Nov 2014(accessed on 6.7.17)

Reference:

1. Namit K Srivastava ,”Women Empowerment in India-Rights, Laws, Policies; www.indiacelebrating.com>social-issues , Dec 24 2016, (accessed on 4.7.17)
2. Reecha Upadhyay;” Women’s Empowerment in India: An analytical overview”, The Asia Foundation,30 sep 2010
3. Mamta Mokta ;”Epowerment of Women in India: A critical analysis” ; Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol ix No.3, July 2014.
4. Namit K Srivastava, ”Women Empowerment in India –Rights, Laws, Policies”; www.indiacelebrating.com>social-issues , Dec 24 2016, (accessed on 4.7.17)
5. Reecha Upadhyay; “Women’s Empowerment in India: An analytical overview”, The Asia Foundation, 30 Sep 2010.
6. Harapriya Mohapatra; “Status of Women in Indian Society”, Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, Volume 3- Issue6 (2015).
7. Namita K Srivastava, “Women Empowerment in India- Rights, Laws, Policies”, www.indiacelebrating.com>social-issues , Dec 24 2016, (accessed on 4.7.17)