



## Kanyashree Prakalpa : Social Safeguard of Adolescent Girls

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**Abstract:** *Women's Development in the age of Technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century one of the tools for women's education and Empowerment is the west Bengal women's Development "Kanyashree Prakalpa". Kanyashree Scheme for the girls is an important women Empowerment scheme. Government scheme Kanyashree was Introduced to educate the daughters of economically backward families in West Bengal. Currently, many girls are studying till age of 18 to get the benefits of the Kanyashree scheme. Earlier, where girls used to get married before completing secondary and higher secondary, this has been prevented through the Kanyashree Prakalpa. As a result, the rate of early marriage is decreasing day by day and the education rate of women is Increasing a lot. Under this Prakalpa, along with Women's education, Women's good health, Socio- economic status and financial security will be ensured. Hence kanyashree Scheme for girls is Considered as an important women Empowerment scheme. What and why "Kanyashree Prakalpa" is one of the resources of West Bengal in women development and Empowerment was discussed.*

**Keywords :** *Kanyashree Prakalpa, Scheme, Components, Women Educaton, Financial Security, Empowerment.*

### Introduction:

In India, especially in Bengali culture, girls are worshiped as God or Goddess or mother wisdom. There are many proof of it in history. We are currently in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but we continue to divide our society on the basis of gender, caste, religion, race, which should not be done. Even in the age of technology, women's disrespect, deprivation and neglect are daily companions in the society. Housekeeping is given more importance than teaching girls to study. It is believed that girls real life starts after marriage by going to their in law's house. As a result, parents are Marrying off girls at a young age. Girls are constantly abused at home, sexually harassed at work. Now most of the girls finish their education and instead of being self-reliance they are busy with household chores, it is better to say kept busy. West Bengal has an adolescent population (age 10-19 years ) of about 1 crore 73 lakes of which 48.11 % are girls. 9.3% of the total population is in the 10- 14 age group and 9.7% in the 15- 19 age group.

WHO( World Health Organization) has identified that social, economic self- reliance, development of skills, relationships and abstract thinking skills began at this age, especially at the adolescent level. At this age level,spontaneous expression of child's growth and development occurs. There are many risks to be faced at this age. According to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, the legal marriage age for women and men in India is 18 and 21 years respectively. Despite the fact that this law has been in force for the past few

years, the incidence of Child marriage in West Bengal has been Steadily increasing. According to the 2007-08 report, West Bengal ranks fifth in the incidence of Child marriage in India. One out of every two girl children is a victim of Child marriage here. In rural West Bengal as well as in Kolkata, a Quarter of girls are married before the age of 18.

A glaring example of gender disparity is child marriage, of which more girls than boys are victims. Child marriage has more and more negative effects on the body and mind of girls. Weakening them socially and economically. As a result, unwanted incidents like trafficking or recruitment and examination of child labor are seen. In fact, the districts of west Bengal where Child Marriages are high are also the districts where women are trafficked. According to Educational statistics(2010) published by MOHRD the gross Enrollment Ratio( GER) at secondary and Higher Secondary levels in west Bengal has gradually declined and school dropouts at puberty. The drop- out rate for girls from class 1to 10 stands at 63.5% and 64.9% for boys. The ASER 2012( by Prathama) showed that 8.2% of girls aged 11- 14 and 14% aged 15- 16 belong to the Vulnerable group in school.

Child marriage and school dropouts continue to occur side by side. Although enrollment and completion rates in primary education have increased since the Lurch of the universal education drive in India, the transition rate from primary to higher education has not been as expected. Higher education is costly, so most poor parents find it unwise to invest money in Higher education of a girl Child and marry her off at this age keeping in mind family security. This move endangers the life of this married girl socially and economically. Later it was seen that this girl was indulging in money making. Due to lack of education Qualifications and experience, they are considered unsuitable for the workplace. This makes them suffer from poverty and insecurity throughout their lives.

The Department of women,children and social welfare launched a drive against child marriage to push the Child Marriage Prohibition Act to different levels of society. But it is understood that Child marriage cannot be prevented by legal measures and social messages alone. So there is a need for a step, which will protect the girl Child from child marriage and educate her in Higher education by which the woman can chart her own future life. The Kanyashree Prakalpa is the product of such a realization. In such a context, the west Bengal state Government has introduced the Kanyashree scheme for education and development of women,giving priority to women in the development of society.

**Objectives:** The present article has been undertaken with following objectives:

- i) This article has shown that the Kanyashree Prakalpa for girls is an important women Empowerment process.
- ii) This article shows how the Kanyashree Prakalpa can ensure the good health, education and Socio- Economic Status and Financial Security of the Women of West Bengal.

**Methodology:** The article is supported by secondary data. Given the nature of the current research, secondary sources have to used to gather material of this exploratory and descriptive paper. Secondary data was gathered from academic working papers currently in progress, books, Journals, newspapers, research projects and websites run by the Indian government.

**Discussion:**

West Bengal's Honorable Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is one of the Champions of women's education and women's Empowerment in the age of Technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of the various women development provinces West Bengal is "Kanyashree Prakalpa". Of 2013 . In October, West Bengal chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched "Kanyashree" a government scheme aimed at advancing the education of girls from economically backward families in the state by providing scholarships and one-time grants at the Netaji Indoor Stadium. Currently, many girls are studying till the age of 18 to avail the benefits of the

Kanyashree scheme. That is, through the Kanyashree Prakalpa, there are facilities for studying in colleges and universities. Earlier, where girls used to get married before crossing the middle and higher secondary stage, this has been prevented through the Kanyashree scheme. Through the Kanyashree Prakalpa awareness has been greatly increased, as a result of which the rate of early marriage is decreasing day by day and the female education rate is increasing greatly.

“Kanyashree Prakalpa” for girls is Considered as a an important women Empowerment scheme. Government provides scholarships to school students under this scheme. Women’s rights are also protected under this Prakalpa along with Women’s education. Through the Kanyashree scheme, the west Bengal government has promoted the improvement of condition of girls and their welfare, especially for the poor families.

From the said discussion it can be said that generally Kanyashree Prakalpa s the project design of department of women development and social welfare of west Bengal government, where the money is given conditionally. The objective of this project is to improve the condition of all adolescent girls in west Bengal and to keep the child girls safe and prevent their marriage till they reach the legal age of 18 years. Kanyashree Prakalpa is a sanctioned by the west Bengal government which will further accelerate the development of all districts in future. Kanyashree Scheme is a novel initiative of the west Bengal government for the development and Empowerment of women.

### **Why is the Kanyashree Prakalpa Necessary?**

We need to know who benefits from the very important women Empowerment “Kanyashree Prakalpa”.

- i) Unmarried girls should be identified in schools, Colleges, universities as privileged women.
- ii) Applicant must be a permanent resident of West Bengal state.
- iii) Those whose annual income is less than 1,20, 000 Rupees will get the benefit of this scheme. However, this has now been abolished.
- iv) Girls who are between 13 to 18 years can apply for Kanyashree k-1 and get Ra 750 per year.
- v) Girls who are 18 to 19 years old and college students can apply for Kanyashree k-2 and get a one time government grant if Rs 25000.
- vi) Students pursuing post Graduation (PG) course from any college or university can also for Kanyashree k-3 scheme. Kanyashree k; under the scheme, science students will get a scholarship of Rs 2500 per month and arts commerce student will get a scholarship of Rs 2000 per month.
- vii) Kanyashree k-3, conditions must have Kanyashree k-2;,ID to apply for the scholarship. Kanyashree k-3 Scholarship cannot be applied for without k-2 ID.
- viii) K-3 applicant must have 45% marks in graduation, only then Kanyashree k-3;,you can apply online for the scholarship.
- ix) Currently about 18 lakh female students receive annual scholarship every year.
- x) At present, one- time scholarship are available to about 50,000 students every year.

### **Kanyashree Prakalpa and Objectives:**

The Objectives of the “Kanyashree Prakalpa”, one of west Bengal’s resources for women’s development and Empowerment, are

- i) To improve the condition of poor and marginalized family girls through conditional cash transfer and to organize their future and
- ii) To ensure proper and responsible professions by thoroughly educating them in secondary, higher secondary, traditional education, technical and vocational education and to ensure the status of worthy society .
- iii) Delaying marriage is girls till at least 18 years of age, elimination of malnutrition,meternal and child mortality, complications related to pregnancy before the prescribed physical maturity and other physical disadvantages.
- iv) The Kanyashree scheme is not only aimed at helping the girl child, but also ensuring and strengthening the path of dignified self- reliance of the girl child and establishing her a as a self-suffering human being. Therefore, Kanyashree girls Direct Disbursement into bank accounts so that they can make spending decisions themselves.
- v) To inculcate self- confidence,social dignity and mental Empowerment among all girls through constructive activities such as organizing various cultural and conservative competitions among girls under Kanyashree Prakalap, building Kanyashree Sangha, making connections with well-established women in the society.

So it can be said that while in an educational environment, human skill and knowledge range continuously develops and over time it paves the way for financial development and self- reliance. If a girl child enters married life at least the age of 18, it can lay a solid foundation for her mature life. If it is ensured that every girl child enters married life after attaining a suitable age, on the one hand the society will be freed from the prejudice of child marriage, on the hand the well- being of the women will be ensured,education, socio-economic status and above all financial security.

#### **Importance of Kanyashree Prakalpa:**

“Kanyashree” has now become “Biswashree”. There are many qualities behind becoming Biswashree . This Prakalpa has a lot need or importance in women development and Empowerment which we cannot deny as residents of west Bengal. The importance or requirements of the Kanyashree Prakalpa re mentioned below:

**Preventing Child Marriage:** History testifies that girls are married off at an early age,i.e. as minors not least in west Bengal, but all over India. Legally, girls are considered minors when they turn 18 and are considered marriageable. Child marriage is strictly prohibited. Child marriage continues in the society despite government laws, cooperation of various organizations, publicity Campaigns etc, to stop Child marriage. It cannot be said that it has been completely closed at present. Hence there is a need for Kanyashree Scheme especially to prevent Child Marriage of girls.

**To Encourage:** Encouraging the education of girls is one of the objectives of the Kanyashree Prakalpa. Education is the key to the development of girls. But see many have died prematurely despite their potential only due to lack encouragement stop studying. Girls also so that suitable qualified scholarship selection for those who can read based on their own needs, preferences, interests support and encouragement are needed.

#### **Reducing the number of school dropouts:**

A large proportion of the “dropout” students are girls. It has been observed that although Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(2001), Right to Education Act (2010) was introduced in all countries, school dropout of girls has not been reduced in any way. Girls drop out midway due to poverty, illiteracy, superstition, child marriage. Through that Kanyashree Prakalpa, school dropouts among girls have been reduced to a large extent. Girls

are crossing the barrier of secondary, higher secondary and entering higher education. So this scheme is unique in reducing the number of girls who drop out of school.

### **Eradication of Malnutrition :**

Kanyashree Prakalpa is immense importance in eradicating malnutrition among girls. If a girl child enters married life at least after the age of 18, it can lay a solid foundation for her mature life. So if girls are not malnourished, their lives will be beautiful, normal development will accelerated.

### **Preventing Women Trafficking, Violence Against Women:**

Generally most people in our society live below the poverty line. Due to poverty, many times parents sell their daughters, send them to work in other people's homes, and village girls to Urban areas for work and get involved in various bad Circles, become Trafficked. Girls Spend most of their time indoors, resulting in physical, girls have to endure emotional and temporal torture. Kanyashree is an important to prevent these.

### **Building Self- Confidence:**

Based on self- Confidence any person can improve in life. Hence proper inculcation of confidence, social dignity and emotional Empowerment among all girl children is one of the importance of Kanyashree Prakalpa.

### **Kanyashree Prakalpa and Women Educaton: Effects**

The noble cause with which the Kanyashree Prakalpa was started has had a positive impact on education and society Today. The Kanyashree Prakalpa is a whole along with the development of women's education, It has a special influence on education. At present they effects of Kanyashree Prakalpa on women educaton are

- i). The rate of child marriage has decreased in the society due to the impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa. In other words, the rate of girls getting married before the age of 18 years has decreased a lot.
- ii). Increased Empowerment of women in social, economic and political fields.
- iii). This project has enabled to eliminate illiteracy and gender inequality in the country.
- iv). This Prakalpa the effect of creating better human resource irrespective of Sex, religion and caste.
- V). Improved the social and cultural status of women.
- vi). Contribution of men as well as women has been given importance in economic and human resource development and nation building.
- Vii). The effect of Kanyashree Scheme on imparting knowledge and skills useful in the labor market is unsurpassed.
- Viii). This Prakalpa helps to increase self- dignity, self-confidence and self- awareness among women.
- ix). Has developed the capacity to lead in the areas of community and national development.
- X). This project has helped in raising awareness about family health and hygiene, family planning, standards of living.
- Xi). One of the major impacts of the Kanyashree Prakalpa is the development of decision making capacity among girls.

Xii). Sustainable development, environment conservation and development of better values.

Xiii). Increased awareness among women about women Rights.

Xv). Kanyashree Scheme encouraged active participation in social programmes.

About 45 lakh girls from around 15,500 institutions- non- traditional schools, Madrasas, Colleges, Open Universities and universities, Vocational Training centers, Industrial Training, even Sports Training centers in every region of the State have been brought under the Scheme. More than 5000 girls have been trained in self- defense. Apart from this, a large number of girls under the Kanyashree scheme are being given vocational and other skill development training. A special educational and awareness campaign for girls under the Kanyashree scheme has been launched in North 24 parganas district named “Kanyashree Dishari”. August 14 is celebrated as “Kanyashree Divas” across the state.

The project has won several national and international recognitions for its planning and good governance features:

- i. ITU and UNW Organized GEM- Tech Award selected as finalist in 2016.
- ii. Winner of United Nations SWIS 2016.
- iii. Awarded Merit Award in CSI Nihilent e- governance Award, 2014-15.
- iv. SKOCH SMART governance Award 2015 winner.
- v. Awarded in National e- governance Award 2014- 15 organized by Administrative reforms and public Grievances
- vi. Received Mandan Award ( South Asia &, Asia Pacific) in 2014 in e- women & Empowerment category.
- vii. Awarded Chief by minister of west Bengal for women Empowerment in 2014
- viii. U.S Trafficking in persons (TIP) organized by consulate and Shakti Bahini ( Siliguri, February, 2016).
- ix. National Workshop on “Conditional Cash Transfer for Children : Experiences of states of India” organized by NITI AAYOG ( Delhi, December, 2015).
- x. Session on “Empowerment of Adolescent Girls” organized by world Bank ( Ranchi, may, 2015).
- xi. Symposium on “Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy” organized by Tata Institute of social sciences ( Delhi, March, 2015).
- xii. Girls summit DFID and UNICF( Landon, July, 2014).

### **Conclusion :**

“Kanyashree” has now become Vishwashri. This Kanyashree Prakalpa is aimed at preventing child marriage in west Bengal and encouraging the education of socio- economically backward Girls. With the Kanyashree Prakalpa, the changes of girls dropping out of school have been reduced to a great extent. The importance of Kanyashree Prakalpa in eliminating malnutrition and healthy life of girls is immense. Kanyashree Prakalpa is an important effort to prevent women trafficking and violence against women. Through the Kanyashree Prakalpa, one of west Bengal’s assets in women development and Empowerment, if every girl child is ensured to enter married life after attaining the appropriate age, on one hand the society will be freed from

the prejudice of child marriage, on the other hand, women's good health, education, socio- economic status and above all financial security will be maintained.

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