

Attitude of Parents and Teachers towards Kanyashree Prakalpa in Nadia District of West Bengal

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Abstract – Kanyashree Prakalpa 2013, a CCT scheme for improving the status and well being of the girl child in the state has been formulated and implemented by the Department of Women Development and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal. The department of DWD & SW observed that girl child marriage is a social menace and the socio-economic problem is the moot point behind it. Therefore if poor parents are supported with a substantial economic package then they can take recourse to getting their daughters married off at an early age. Kanyashree Prakalpa has started functioning in two ways – it helps poor parents to marry off their daughters though not forcibly, and it motivates such parents to encourage their daughters to study for their bright future. Under this backdrop, present study was conducted in Chakdah & Haringhata blocks of Nadia district of West Bengal. The present paper was an effort to assess the attitude of parents and teachers towards Kanyashree Prakalpa. To explore the Attitude of Father (N= 45), Mother (N= 45) and teacher (N= 40) towards Kanyashree Prakalpa, data were collected using a structured interview which was based on ten questions highlighting ten areas to be covered. Findings, as determined from the content analysis of interviewed data, indicate greater percentage of positive attitude of parents and teachers towards Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme. 97 per cent father and 71 per cent mother appreciated this scheme but, most interestingly below 50% teachers did not appreciate this scheme.

Keywords: Attitude, Kanyashree Prakalpa, Parents, Structured Interview.

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INTRODUCTION

West Bengal government has launched "Kanyashree Prakalpa" scheme in 2013. The scheme intends to be available to families with an annual income of Rs 1.2 lakhs. The one-time payment of Rs 25,000 is offered to the girl who is part of this education scheme and is not married off below the age of 18 years (Sengupta, P., 2013). The broad aim of this scheme is protecting and empowering all adolescent girls and supporting their healthy development .by creating an enabling environment for their participation and meaningful contribution to society. WHO has identified this age group as the period of preparation for adulthood during which several key developmental experiences occur like acquiring social and economic independence, development of identity, the acquisition of skills needed to carry out adult relationships and roles and the capacity for abstract reasoning. While adolescence is a time of tremendous growth and potential, it is also a time of considerable risk during which social contexts exert powerful influences. (Source: Detailed Tables-SRS based on Census 2011).

Child marriage and consequent school dropout of girl students is another significant area that has been considered under the purview of this scheme. While a number of factors contribute towards girls dropping out of schools, human rights research shows that the greatest obstacles to girls' education are child marriage, pregnancy and domestic chores, and that ensuring that girls stay in school is one of most effective protective measures against child marriage. In the above context, the Government of West Bengal has decided on creating an enabling environment for elevating the education, health and nutrition status of girl children through an innovative scheme "Kanyashree - Prakalpa".

Department of Women Development and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal (DWD&SW) has designed the Kanyashree Prakalpa - a conditional cash transfer scheme with the aim of improving the status and well being of the girl child in West Bengal by incentivizing schooling of all teenage girls and delaying their marriages until the age of 18, the legal age of marriage. Kanyashree

Prakalpa is a West Bengal Government sponsored scheme which has already been implemented in all districts of the State. The Scheme assures annual scholarship of Rs. 500/- to all girls aged 13 but not yet turned 18.

As the West Bengal Government has observed that at least 40 percent of the 'One-Time Grant' beneficiaries i.e. 'unmarried girls within the age-group 18-19 years, having family income of Rs. 1, 20,000/- or less per annum' are studying in different colleges and unitary universities across the state, all the principals of all the colleges under the state jurisdiction have been instructed to motivate all the eligible girls for enrolment under the Kanyashree Prakalpa. The principals have been further instructed to give necessary certification stating the fact that 'she is unmarried, studying regularly in the said institution and belonging to the age-group of 18-19 years' at the time of application with a family income of 1, 20,000/- or less per annum (Government of West Bengal 2014).

Under the above backdrop, the present study was conducted in Chakdah & Haringhata blocks of Nadia district of West Bengal with an aim to explore the nature of attitude of parents and teachers toward the scheme "Kanyashree - Prakalpa".

METHODOLOGY

Present study was a descriptive exploratory research through the strategy of attitude survey that intended to seek out the answers of the following research questions:

- What is the attitude of parents as stakeholders of "Kanyashree - Prakalpa"?
- What is the attitude of teachers as one of the implementers of "Kanyashree - Prakalpa"?
- Does attitudinal differences exist among stakeholders due to some social stratification?
- If so, how?

Sample for the study

The sample of the study comprised of 130 respondents and was divided into fathers (N = 45), mothers (N = 45) and teachers (N = 40). The sample was selected purposively from Chakdah & Haringhata blocks of Nadia district of West Bengal and was further stratified according to their educational background and religious belongingness. These demographic characteristics acted as independent variables where as their attitude toward "**Kanyashree - Prakalpa**" was the dependable variable for this study.

Tool for the study

One structured interview schedule was prepared by the researcher with the help of experts. It consisted of ten questions covering ten areas to explore the nature of attitude of participants toward "**Kanyashree - Prakalpa**".

Data collection

The researcher as trained interviewer explained to the participant parents and teachers the purpose of the study, its significance and what was expected from them and requested them to interact on the questions. Participants were assured about the confidentiality of study data and informed that they would be asked questions related to their attitude towards "Kanyashree Prakalpa". On receiving the signed consent form, the data were collected using a structured interview.

The participant was asked about their attitude towards "**Kanyashree Prakalpa**" (10 items). The survey also collected information about demographic characteristics of the participant (name, address, working status, level of education, religion). The demographic information was obtained from an investigator developed subject profile.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table-1 Shows the percentage of respondents with attitude of the Father (N= 45), Mother (N= 45) and teacher (N= 40) towards Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme. It indicates that attitude towards Kanyashree Prakalpa was widespread.

Table 1: % of total respondents (Father, Mother and Teacher) in regard to positive attitude towards "Kanyashree Prakalpa"

Sub-themes of the interview	Respondents		
	Father (45)	Mother (45)	Teacher (40)
Positive Govt. Policy	97%	71%	48%
Solution of Economic problem	57%	46%	33%
Necessary in regard to increase Socio-economic status	93%	88%	63%
Beneficial effect on family	88%	77%	55%
Resisting Childhood marriage	82%	57%	35%
Literacy drive among girls	73%	64%	30%

Preferable to early marriage	18%	23%	85%
Education of early marriage	45%	40%	18%
Encouraging the girls for education	88%	77%	30%
Increasing of girls education rate	93%	77%	45%

From the above table (table 1), it was found that

Positive Govt. Policy	Most of the fathers' expressed positive attitude.
	Majority of the mothers' expressed positive attitude.
	However, teachers' attitude was not so positive.
Solution of Economic problem	Respondent group's attitude was negative, only fathers' expressed positive attitude.
Necessary in regard to increase Socio-economic status	Respondent group's attitude was much positive.
Beneficial effect on family	Respondent group's attitude was much positive.
Resisting Childhood marriage	Most of the fathers' expressed positive attitude.
	Majority of the mothers' expressed positive attitude.
	However, teachers' attitude was not so positive.
Literacy drive among girls	Most of the fathers' expressed positive attitude.
	Majority of the mothers' expressed positive attitude.
	However, teachers' attitude was not so positive.
Preferable to early marriage	Respondent group's attitude was negative, only teachers' expressed positive attitude.
Education of early marriage	Respondent group's attitude was not much positive.
Encouraging the girls for education	Most of the fathers' expressed positive attitude.
	Majority of the mothers' expressed positive attitude.
	However, teachers' attitude was not so positive.
Increasing of girls education rate	Most of the fathers' expressed positive attitude.
	Majority of the mothers' expressed positive attitude.
	However, teachers' attitude was not so positive.

Table-2 Shows the attitude of the Illiterate Father (N= 20) and Illiterate Mother (N= 16) towards Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme. It indicates that attitude towards Kanyashree Prakalpa was widespread.

Table 2: Attitude of Illiterate Father and Illiterate Mother towards "Kanyashree Prakalpa"

Sub-themes of the interview	Respondents	
	Father (20)	Mother (16)
Positive Govt. Policy	100%	62.5%
Solution of Economic problem	55%	37.5%
Necessary in regard to increase Socio-economic status	90%	70%
Beneficial effect on family	85%	55%
Resisting Childhood marriage	70%	50%
Literacy drive among girls	70%	50%
Preferable to early marriage	75%	93.75%
Education of early marriage	55%	25%
Encouraging the girls for education	85%	75%
Increasing of girls education rate	90%	93.75%

From the above table (table 2), it was found that

Positive Govt. Policy	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude towards this govt. policy was positive
Solution of Economic problem	Fathers' attitude was positive, while mothers' attitude was negative.
Necessary in regard to increase Socio-economic status	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Beneficial effect on family	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Resisting Childhood marriage	Majority of fathers' attitude was positive, but 50% mothers' attitude was positive and remaining 50% mothers' attitude was negative.
Literacy drive among girls	Majority of fathers' attitude was positive, but 50% mothers' attitude was positive and remaining 50% mothers' attitude was

	negative.
Preferable to early marriage	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Education of early marriage	Fathers' attitude was positive, while mothers' attitude was negative.
Encouraging the girls for education	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Increasing of girls education rate	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was very much positive

Table-3 Shows the attitude of the Literate Father (N= 25) and Literate Mother (N= 29) towards Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme. It indicates that attitude towards "Kanyashree Prakalpa" was widespread.

Table 3: Attitude of literate Father and literate Mother towards "Kanyashree Prakalpa"

Sub-themes of the interview	Respondents	
	Father (25)	Mother (29)
Positive Govt. Policy	92%	75.8%
Solution of Economic problem	60%	51.7%
Necessary in regard to increase Socio-economic status	96%	89.7%
Beneficial effect on family	92%	82.7%
Resisting Childhood marriage	92%	62.06%
Literacy drive among girls	76%	72.4%
Preferable to early marriage	96%	93.1%
Education of early marriage	56%	48.27%
Encouraging the girls for education	92%	79.3%
Increasing of girls education rate	96%	75.86%

From the above table (table 3), it was found that

Positive Govt. Policy	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Solution of Economic problem	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Necessary in regard to increase Socio-economic status	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Beneficial effect on family	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Resisting Childhood marriage	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Literacy drive among girls	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Preferable to early marriage	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive

	highly positive
Education of early marriage	Fathers' attitude was positive, while mothers' attitude was negative.
Encouraging the girls for education	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Increasing of girls education rate	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive

Table-4 Shows the attitude of the Hindu Father (N= 22) and Hindu Mother (N= 22) towards Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme. It indicates that attitude towards Kanyashree Prakalpa was widespread.

Table 4: Attitude of Hindu Father and Hindu Mother towards "Kanyashree Prakalpa"

Sub-themes of the interview	Respondents	
	Father (22)	Mother (22)
Positive Govt. Policy	95%	77%
Solution of Economic problem	68%	59%
Necessary in regard to increase Socio-economic status	100%	100%
Beneficial effect on family	90%	90%
Resisting Childhood marriage	86%	73%
Literacy drive among girls	68%	68%
Preferable to early marriage	100%	100%
Education of early marriage	41%	73%
Encouraging the girls for education	90%	82%
Increasing of girls education rate	90%	82%

From the above table (table 4), it was found that

Positive Govt. Policy	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Solution of Economic problem	Both father and mothers' attitude was positive
Necessary in regard to increase Socio-economic status	Both fathers' and mother's attitude was highly positive
Beneficial effect on family	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was quite highly positive
Resisting Childhood marriage	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive

Literacy drive among girls	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Preferable to early marriage	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was highly positive
Education of early marriage	Though fathers' attitude was negative but mothers' attitude was positive.
Encouraging the girls for education	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Increasing of girls education rate	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive

Table-5 Shows the distribution percentage of respondents with attitude of the Muslim Father (N= 23) and Muslim Mother (N= 23) towards Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme. It indicates that attitude towards Kanyashree Prakalpa was widespread.

Table 5: Attitude of Muslim Father and Muslim Mother towards "Kanyashree Prakalpa"

Sub-themes of the interview	Respondents	
	Father (23)	Mother (23)
Positive Govt. Policy	96%	65%
Solution of Economic problem	48%	35%
Necessary in regard to increase Socio-economic status	87%	78%
Beneficial effect on family	87%	65%
Resisting Childhood marriage	78%	43%
Literacy drive among girls	78%	61%
Preferable to early marriage	74%	87%
Education of early marriage	70%	78%
Encouraging the girls for education	87%	74%
Increasing of girls education rate	96%	83%

From the above table (table 5), it was found that

Positive Govt. Policy	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Solution of Economic problem	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was negative
Necessary in regard	Both father and

to increase Socio-economic status	mothers' attitude was positive
Beneficial effect on family	Both father and mother's attitude was positive
Resisting Childhood marriage	Though fathers' attitude was positive but mothers' attitude was negative.
Literacy drive among girls	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Preferable to early marriage	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Education of early marriage	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Encouraging the girls for education	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive
Increasing of girls education rate	Both fathers' and mothers' attitude was positive

Table 6. Composite table with stratification in regard to positive attitude towards "Kanyashree prakalpa".

Sub-themes of the interview	Sub-groups of respondents							
	Hindu Literate Father (18)	Hindu Literate Mother (19)	Hindu Illiterate Father (6)	Hindu Illiterate Mother (5)	Muslim Literate Father (9)	Muslim Literate Mother (12)	Muslim Illiterate Father (14)	Muslim Illiterate Mother (11)
Positive Govt. policy	94.4%	78.94%	100%	80%	88.88%	75%	100%	54.54%
Solution of Economic problem	66.66%	63.15%	83.33%	60%	55.55%	41.66%	42.8%	27.27%
Necessary in regard to increase Socio-economic status	100%	100%	100%	100%	88.88%	75%	85.71%	81.81%
Beneficial effect on family	88.88%	89.47%	100%	100%	100%	75%	75.57%	54.54%
Resisting Childhood marriage	94.4%	73.68%	66.66%	80%	88.88%	50%	71.42%	66.66%
Literacy drive among girls	66.66%	78.94%	83%	40%	100%	66.66%	64.28%	54.54%
Preferable to early marriage	100%	100%	100%	100%	88.88%	83.33%	64.28%	90.90%
Education of early marriage	44.44%	47.36%	50%	40%	88.88%	58.33%	57.14%	18.18%
Encouraging the girls for education	88.88%	84.21%	100%	80%	100%	75%	78.57%	72.77%
Increasing of girls education rate	100%	78.94%	66.66%	100%	88.88%	75%	100%	90.90%

From the above table (table 5), it was found that

Positive Govt. Policy	All the respondents' attitude was positive
Solution of Economic problem	All the respondent group's attitude was positive, except Muslim literate mothers', Muslim illiterate fathers' and Muslim illiterate mothers' group
Necessary in regard to increase	All the respondents' attitude was positive

Socio-economic status	
Beneficial effect on family	All the respondents' attitude was positive
Resisting Childhood marriage	All the respondents' attitude was positive, where as only 50% Muslim literate mothers' attitude was positive and remaining 50% Muslim mothers' attitude was negative
Literacy drive among girls	The entire respondents' attitude was positive, but only Hindu illiterate mothers' attitude was negative.
Preferable to early marriage	All the respondents' attitude was highly positive
Education of early marriage	The entire Hindu group and Muslim illiterate mothers' group's attitude was negative, where the entire Muslim group, except Muslim illiterate mothers' group's attitude was positive.
Encouraging the girls for education	All the respondents' attitude was positive
Increasing of girls education rate	All the respondents' attitude was positive

DISCUSSION:

Kanyashree Prakalpa is an important step taken by the Govt. of West Bengal to uplift the condition of the women in the state. The most important finding of the present research is all the participants supported and appreciated this scheme. Interestingly, the secondary school teachers are not very much optimistic about this scheme.

Due to economic problem most of the families are forced to discontinue the study of the girl child. Through this scheme, this problem may be solved to some extent. Most of the respondents supported it, except Muslim literate mother, Muslim illiterate father and Muslim illiterate mothers' group. Even regarding this point the secondary teaching community of Nadia district is pessimist in their outlook.

The necessity in regard to increase Socio-economic status is also very important. Here all the participants including the teaching community's attitude is positive.

There is no doubt that one time grant helps not only the girl child, but this grant helps the family a lot. In the present research it is quite clear. The entire participants' attitude was positive regarding this financial help.

The early childhood marriage of the girl child is mainly due to poor economic condition of the family. If the family gets any financial help then they may abstain from early childhood marriage. All the participants' attitude towards this is positive.

The present literacy rate of the country is 74.04%. Male literacy rate is almost 85% and female literacy rate is nearly 65%. (Census2011). The country will not be able to prosper without proper female literacy. Regarding this point the entire participants' attitude was positive, but only Hindu illiterate mothers' attitude was negative.

As stated previously, the early childhood marriage of the girl child is mainly due to poor economic condition of the family. If the family gets any financial help they may abstain from early childhood marriage. It is true that this scheme can not remove poverty at all and this thing is supported by the entire participant.

Very few participants agreed that through this scheme early childhood marriage can be stopped. The entire Hindu group and Muslim illiterate mothers' group's attitude was negative, whereas the entire Muslim group, except Muslim illiterate mothers' group's attitude was positive.

The entire participants' attitude was positive regarding the encouragement of the girl child education.

And last but not the least, all the participants agreed positively regarding the increase of female literacy rate as well as girl education.

CONCLUSION:

Kanyashree Prakalpa is a scheme which visualizes women empowerment through women education. In the present research the attitude of the parents has been measured. The findings were sometimes very much optimistic, sometime it is not very satisfactory. One thing is clear that parents are conscious and worried about the future of their girl child. It is mainly due to financial problem that they married off their girl child before 'proper time'. The present research is limited only to the two blocks of Nadia district of West Bengal and the sample size is also not very big. In future, such type of research may be conducted in other districts with more samples, even the research may be conducted state wise. From this point of view, this research is a pioneer one in this field.

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