



THE ROLE OF “KANYASHREE PRAKALPA” IN EMPOWERING ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN WEST BENGAL

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Initially child marriage outnumbered in West Bengal . To stop that, the government of West Bengal undertook Kanyashree Prakalpa. The numbers of child marriage have increased because some people are oblivious and naive about the outer world. Kanyashree Prakalpa will increase their knowledge and make them aware of the world and laws. This will also bring down the number of child marriage.

Previously the society thought girls to inferior than boys. They thought girls to be a liability. So they gave premature marriages of the girls and didn't even bother to make them educated. Now this stereotype custom is sought to be broken. The society is slowly feeling the need of educating them.

Under the prohibition of child marriage act 2006, 18 is the legal age of marriage for girls and 21 for boys in India. Despite the Act being in existence, the early marriage of children continues to be practiced all over India including West Bengal. According to DLHS-3, 2007-08, the state ranked fifth highest in the country when it came to the prevalence of child marriage, with almost every second girl a child bride (54.7%).

Child marriage is the most prevalent form of sexual abuse of minor girls having a negative impact on their health and their children, leaving them financially and socially disempowered and vulnerable to child labour, trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Recognizing the seriousness of the problem the government of west Bengal announced the Kanyashree Prakalpa on 8th march 2013 and launched it on 1st October 2013.

Two major objectives of Kanyashree Prakalpa are as follows:-

- 1) Empowerment of girls from Socio-economically disadvantaged families by incentivising them to continue in education for a major part of their life for a better establishment in both economic and social sphere

Empowerment of girl child of poor families by disincentivising marriage till the age of 18, thereby reducing the risk of eagerly pregnancies, associated risk of maternal and child mortality, malnutrition.

The district Project Management Unit, Birbhum has been working hard under the able leadership of the District Magistrate, Birbhum since the inception of the scheme in 2013 for successful implementation at grass-root level. The District Project Management Unit(DPMU, Birbhum) has been successful to include the names of 763 numbers of educational institution(699 Schools including MSK/Madrashah & 64 colleges) registered under the Kanyashree portal of the department till today since the inception of the flagship programme of Govt. In 2013. Accordingly schematic benefit in respect of **345676 k1** cases and **38268 k2** cases have been released so far by the DPMU, Kanyashree Prakalpa, Birbhum till June 2017. In terms of volume of Grant-In-Aid fund an **amount of Rs 1937710750** have been disturbed to all concerned beneficiaries enrolled under Kanyashree Prakalpa within The District till date. 19 BPMU (Block Level Setup) & 3 SDMU (Sub—Divisional Level Setup) under the DPMU, Kanyashree Prakalpa, Birbhum also have been working hard to promote various other multifarious activities9i.e. Social Awareness programme and convergence activities) involving the Kanyashree girls throughout the district for successful implementation of the programme in true sense.

A conditional cash transfer scheme

In order to ensure that girls stay in school and delay their marriages till at least age 18 the scheme has two conditional cash benefit components.

The first is K1, an annual scholarship of Rs 750/- to be given annually to the girls in the age group of 13 to 28 years for every year that they remain in education, provided their unmarried at the time. (During the years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 the annual scholarship was Rs 500/-).

The second benefit is K2, a onetime grant of Rs 2500/- to be paid when girls turn 18 years provided that they are engaged in an academic or occupational pursuit and are unmarried at that time.

The term education encompasses secondary as well as higher secondary education and various vocational, technical and sports courses available for this age group. This scheme is open only to girls from families whose annual income is rupees 1 lakhs 20 thousand or less. For girls with special need, girls who have lost both parents, as well as for girls currently residing in Juvenile Justice Homes, this criterion is not needed. Although the annual scholarship is payable only when girls reach class 8, this criterion is not needed for girls with special needs whose disability is forty percent or more. The Kanyashree Prakalpa provides financial inclusion to the adolescent girls, thereby empowering them through providing benefits directly to bank accounts in the girls' names leaving the decision of utilization of the money in their hands.

THE SCHEMES COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR CHANGING ASPIRATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

For enhancing the social power and self-esteem of girls, the scheme adopted following targeted behaviour change and public advocacy communication strategy: -

The scheme and its benefits are directly communicated to the target beneficiaries through schools. Besides this the communication channels include celebrity endorsements on radio, television, advertisements in public spaces as well as traditional formats like fairs (melas) and street theatres to reach families and communities. Suitably decorated mobile vans spread the message of Kanyashree in both urban and rural areas.

All Government departments promote the scheme through their own programmes.

The communication strategy not only builds awareness of the scheme, but includes adolescent friendly approaches like drama competitions, drawing, poster making and poetry writing competitions involving both boys and girls on gender-sensitive themes.

August 14, this year 25th July is celebrated as Kanyashree day with simultaneous public events being held in every district and block in west Bengal in presence of senior

elected representatives like MPs, MLAs and ministers. At the state level, the event is celebrated with the chief minister in presence of celebrities. This ensures state wide publicity on the issue of girl children.

A movement of adolescent girls is built up through giving identity cards to endure girls, specially designed bangles and several other innovative methods for capturing the imagination of young girls. Kanyashree Sangha's are also set up in schools across the state.

For conveying social and psychological empowerment strong women figures are endorsed as role models, and girl achievers with outstanding records are felicitated at state and district Levels.

The Kanyashree girls trained with martial arts demonstrate their agility and skills in school fields and in district competitions.

Sustainable Development Goals of Kanyashree

- 1) Generational cycles of development of families, community and society
- 2) Improved educational attainment and skills and voice in family and society.
- 3) Reduced risk of maternal and child ill-health and mortality
- 4) Reduced risk if violence, abuse and exploitation
- 5) Socio-economic inclusion and balanced power relations
- 6) Prevention of child marriage completion of school education and financial inclusion for girls between the ages of 13 and 183
- 7) Change in perceptions, attitudes and aspirations of girls and families
- 8) An enabling environment in which girls and woman are considered and integral part of society, and are treated as equal citizens

Table 1.1

| | | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| <i>DLHS3</i> | 2007-08 | 54.7% |
| <i>DLHS4</i> | 2012-13 | 49.1% |

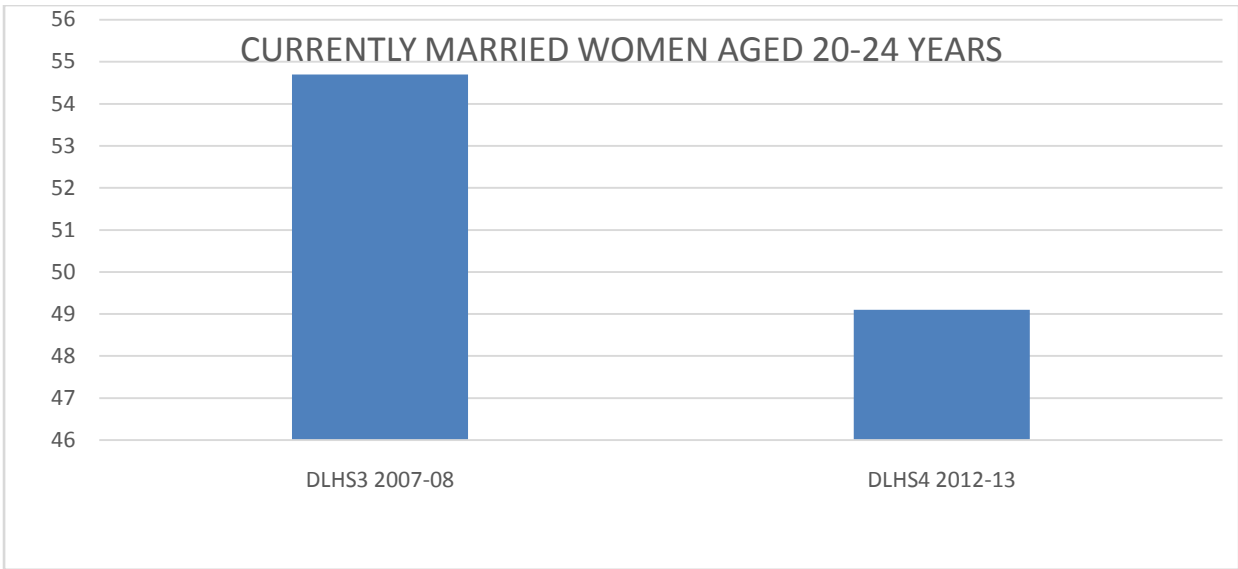


Diagram 1.1

KEY STATISTICS

(OCTOBER 2013-MARCH 2015) SCHEME FINANCIAL

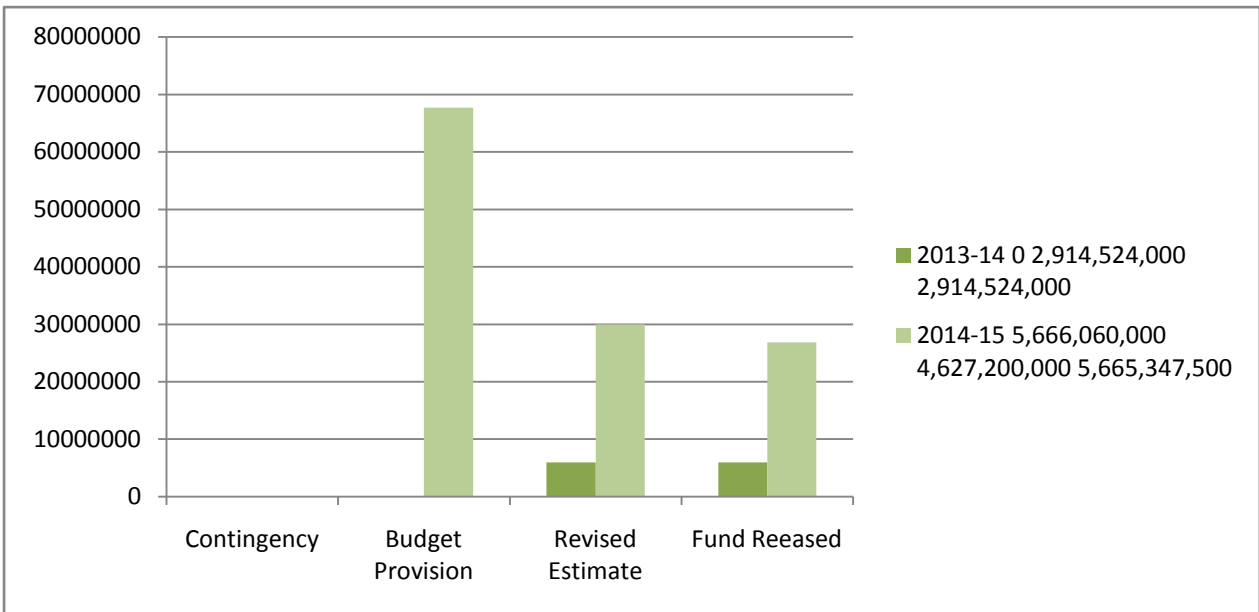


Diagram: - 1.2

Table :-1.2

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| NFHS3 | 2005-06 | 53.3% |
| NFHS3 | 20015-16 | 40.7% |

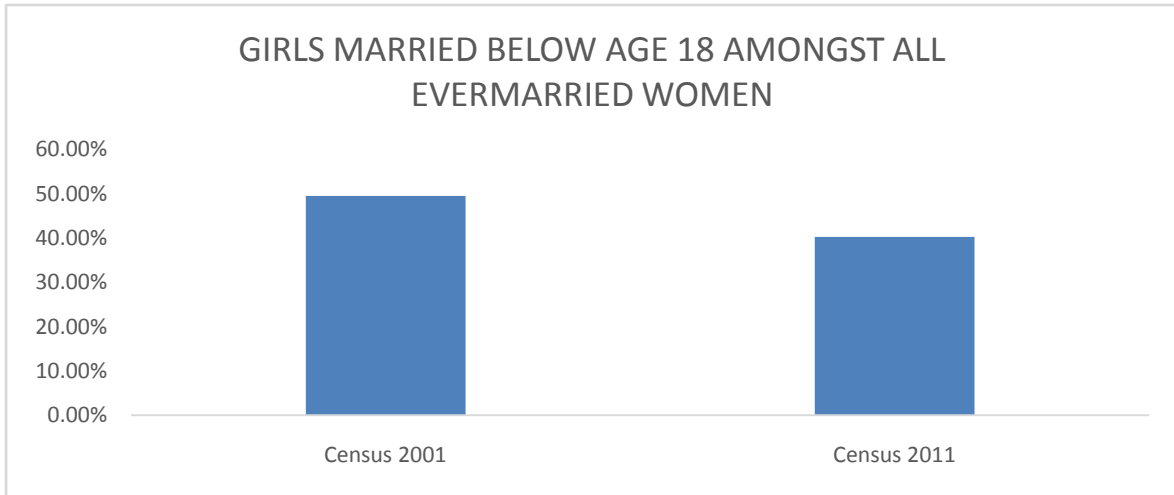


Diagram:- 1.3

Table 1.3:- Girls married below age 18 amongst all evermarried women

| | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Census | 2001 | 49.49% |
| Census | 2011 | 40.27% |

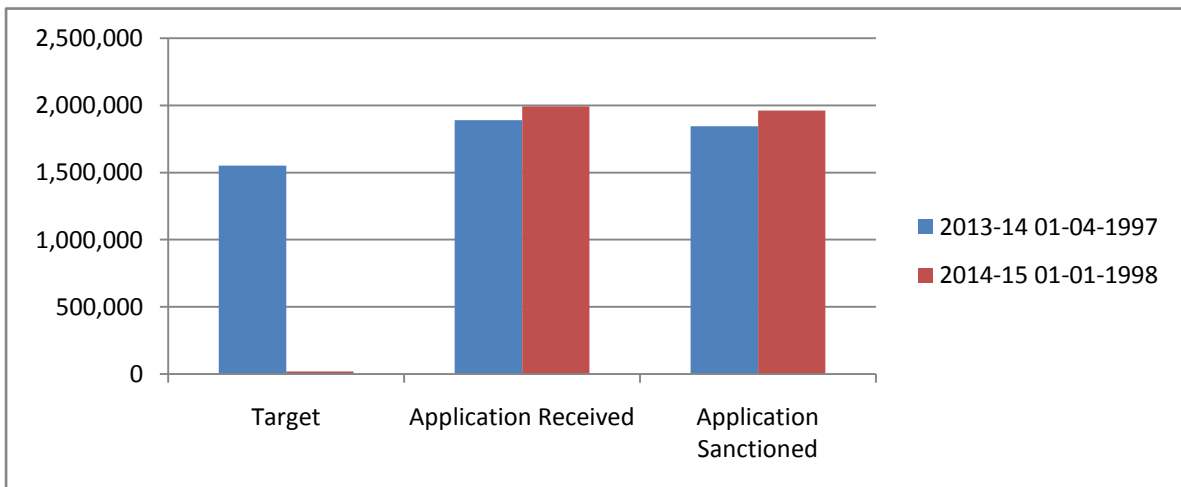


Diagram:- 1.4

COVERAGE OF CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFERS (ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP OF RS 500/-)

| Annual Scholarship of RS 500/- | 2013-14 | 2014-15 |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Applicable to girls born between | 01/04/1997-31/03/2002 | 01/04/1998-31/03/2003 |
| Target | 15,52,265 | 18,000 |
| Applications Received | 18,89,960 | 19,92,066 |
| Applications Sanctioned | 18,44,990 | 19,61,976 |

ONE TIME GRANT OF RS 25,000/-

| One Time Grant of RS 25,000/- | 2013-14 | 2014-15 |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Applicable to girls born between | 01/04/2002-31/03/2003 | 01/04/2003-31/03/2004 |
| Target | 1,30,206 | 2,51,000 |
| Applications Received | 1,44,197 | 3,05,636 |
| Applications Sanctioned | 1,38,965 | 2,94,940 |

ASSESSMENTS & EVALUATION

RAPID ASSESSMENT: - Department of Women Development and Social Welfare have done regular monitoring activities. They have commissioned several independent assessment to provide feedback into the schemes designed and implementation. The assessment conducted in September 2014 in twelve schools in six districts showed that attendance rate has improved from 72% in 2011-12 to 75% in 2013-14 while 73 cases of child marriage were identified by schools. In 2013-14 54 cases have been reported. The assessment conducted in June 2015 in selected schools in the districts of Malda, Purulia and North 24 Parganas suggested that because of implementation of the Kanyashree scheme school enrolments had marginally increased in October 2013 while dropouts had significantly reduced. While 132 cases of child marriage were identified by schools in 2013-14, in subsequent academic year only 89 cases were identified.

During the period 2013-15 the Kanyashree scheme generated unprecedented enthusiasm and good will and it became a household word. The huge response from the bottom-up and the leadership and commitment from the top made the scheme vibrant and sustainable. To become a Kanyashree girl is a matter of prestige and parents of Kanyashree girls speak less of their marriages and more of other achievements their daughters can aim for. In the year 2015-16, significant policy changes were made to strengthen the scheme's design and implementation. The annual scholarship amount enhanced from RS 500/- to RS 750/-. While Kanyashree's enrolments have exceeded expected targets, in each and every district Kanyashree .

Various activities of Kanyashree Girls under Kanyashree

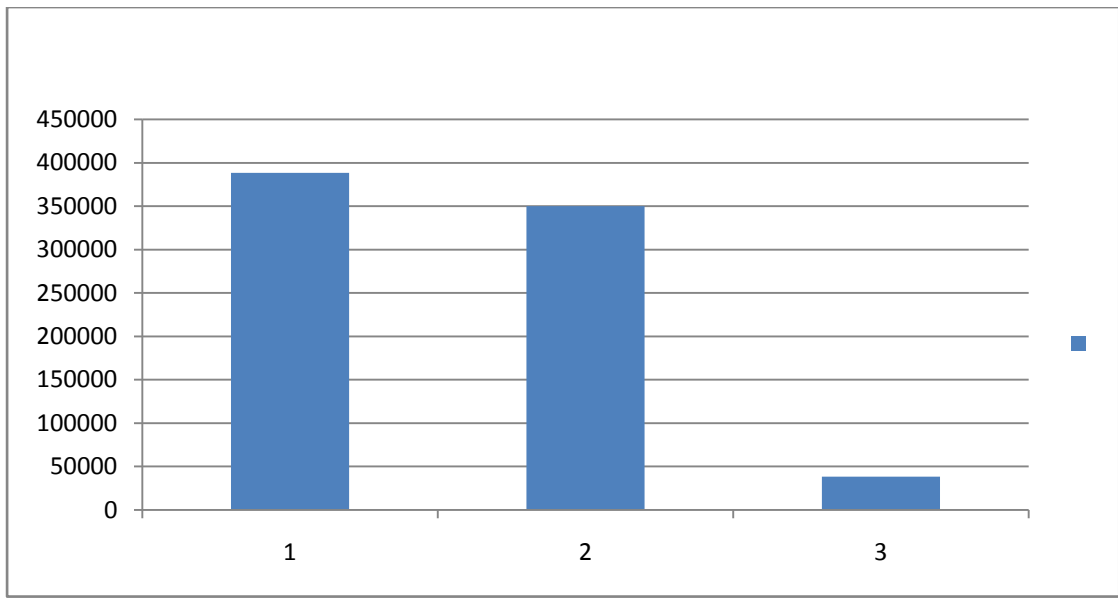
Prakalpa, Birbhum since inception of the Programme in 2013

| | |
|---|---|
| District Level Initiative undertaken so far | |
| SI. | Brief report on initiative |
| No. | |
| 1. | Awareness programme on various social issues such as child marriage trafficking have been organised frequently at Institution/Block level with active involvement Kanyashree girls throughout the district. |
| 2. | The Karate Training Programme which was launched as pilot project on 14.08.2015 in Birbhum recently completed successfully covering nearly 2000 Kanyashree participants from 30 schools of the district. This year for 2016-17 session similar Karate learning programme have been launched covering 1,500 Kanyashree participants from 30 schools of the district. Planning has been done to continue the self-defence programme for 2017-18 sessions as well to cover all major left institution of the District. |
| 3. | Career counselling programme throughout the district was launched in 2015 and in this connection Career counselling booklet named "Swopner Chabikathi" distributed to all Kanyashree girls for 2014-15 & 2015-16. Kanyashree activities are regularly updated in our Facebook page. Besides, Kanyashree souvenir "Vorer Pakhi" is being released every year. |
| 4. | DPMU took special initiative to launch a soft-toy making training programme for Kanyashree girls at Illambazar block in 2015 which became very popular. Planning is under progress to include few others selected girls as well as under training trade of |

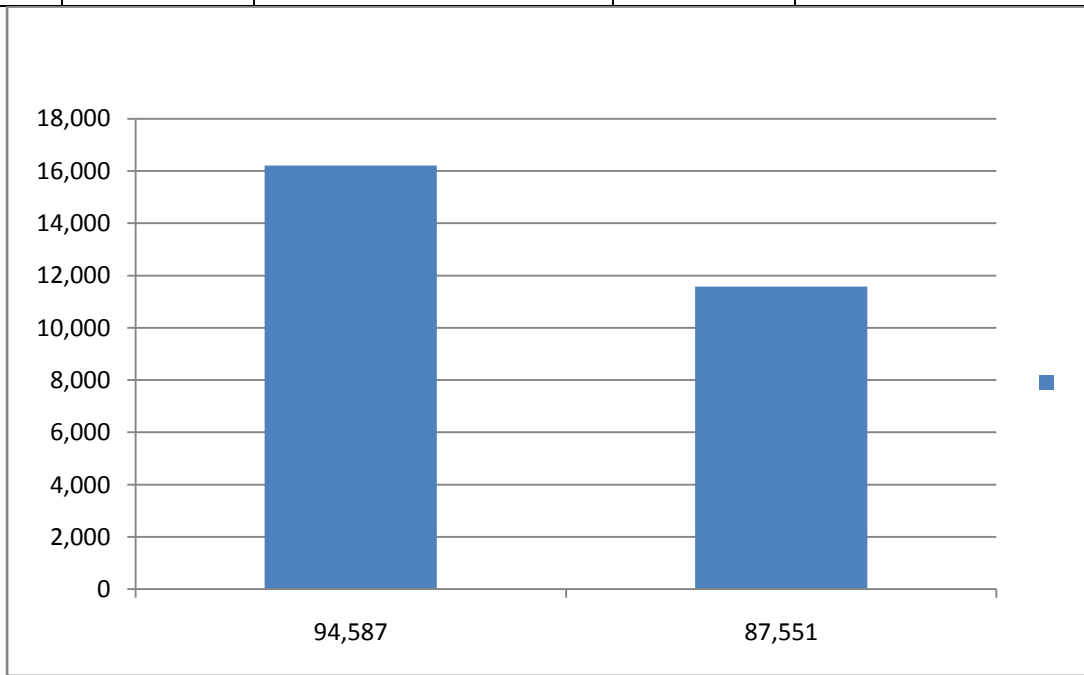
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|---|
| “Tailoring” and “Beautification” for 2017-18. |
| 5. Initiatives were taken for distribution of fruit bearing trees to the Kanyashree girls in convergence with MGNREGA Scheme and District Horticulture Dept. On Kanyashree Diwas, 2016. Here the vision is to generate employment as well as creation of asset for the benefit of the Kanyashree girls of future. |
| 6. Participation of Kanyashree Girls of various schools of the district in “Safe Drive Save Life” campaign in collaboration with Block Administration and Police Administration were successfully held. |
| 7. As desired by the Department of WD & CD & SW, Govt. Of WB, exposure visit of Kanyashree Girls of various blocks of the district to Anewesha Clinic & Rural hospitals were arranged by the Block Administration in collaboration with BMOH and the programme was conducted successfully. |
| 8. As desired by the Dept. Initiatives have also been taken by different Blocks & Municipalities of the district to organise several awareness camps with a view to educate the Kanyashree 4.0 online Portal and to make them self dependent for uploading applications online on their own and various aspects of utilising the service of Kanyashree Mobile App launched for 2016-17 session. |
| 9. With a view to promote the awareness among girls regarding necessity of physical fitness, DPMU is planning to adopt few sponsorship programmes in future in respect of selected Kanyashree girls of the district for encouraging them in outdoor sports activity. |

**ANNUAL REPORT OF DPMU, KANYSHREE PRAKALPA, BIRBHUM
DISTRICT AS ON 24/07/2017**

| Total Figures Of K1 & K2 Since Inception (1) | K1 Since Inception (2) | K2 Since Inception (3) |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3,88,284 nos of Beneficiaries | 3,49,925 nos of Beneficiaries | 38,359 nos of Beneficiaries |



| Scheme | Target for 2016-17 (1) | Achievement for 2016-17(Till 24.7.2017) (2) | % | Sanction figure 2016-17(Till 24.7.2017) |
|--------|------------------------|---|-----|---|
| K1 | 94,587 | 87,551 | 92% | 80,957 |
| K2 | 16,207 | 11,574 | 71% | 10,483 |



List of References:-

- 1) KANYASHREE PRAKALPA Annual Report 2015-16
- 2) Prevent of Child Marriage : An essay with special reference to Kanyashree.

- 3) The Journey of Kanyashree Prakalpa in Birbhum, under West Bengal
- 4) Kanyashree project - becoming a 'global model' for girl students