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“A Study of Students’ Welfare Prkalpa Programs in West Bengal High Schools”

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Abstract

Education is the respiratory of all knowledge. Education plays an important role in social and economic development. In order to improve school education and support students from economically weaker backgrounds, the Government of West Bengal has introduced several welfare schemes known as “Prakalpa.” These schemes aim to increase school enrollment, reduce dropout rates, encourage girls’ education, and provide financial assistance to students. Major schemes implemented in high schools include Kanyashree Prakalpa, Sabooj Sathi Scheme, Aikyashree Scholarship, Rupashree Prakalpa, and Taruner Swapna. This research article examines the objectives, features, and impacts of these schemes in high schools in West Bengal. The study also evaluates how these initiatives contribute to educational development and social empowerment among students.

Key words - Prakalpa, Enrolment, Kanyashree, Sabooj Sathi Scheme, Aikyashree Scholarship, Rupashree Prakalpa, Taruner Swapna.

1. Introduction

Education is considered one of the most important factors for social development and human progress. Governments often implement welfare programs to ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have equal opportunities to receive education. In West Bengal, several government schemes called “Prakalpa” have been introduced to support students studying in government and government-aided schools. These schemes aim to improve educational access, reduce school dropout rates, and promote gender equality in education.

High schools in West Bengal (Classes IX–XII) are the main beneficiaries of many of these schemes. Students receive financial assistance, scholarships, bicycles for transportation, digital devices, and other benefits through these initiatives. The Government of West Bengal has launched schemes such as Kanyashree, Sabooj Sathi, Aikyashree, and Taruner Swapna to promote educational development and improve the overall quality of school education.

This research paper discusses the different types of Prakalpa implemented in high schools in West Bengal and evaluates their importance in improving educational opportunities.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research study are:

- To identify the different types of Prakalpa implemented in high schools in West Bengal.
- To examine the objectives and benefits of these schemes.
- To analyze the role of these schemes in promoting education among students.
- To evaluate the impact of these schemes on school enrolment and dropout rates.

3. Methodology

This research article is based on descriptive and analytical research methodology.

- The data for this study have been collected from:

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- b) Government reports and official websites
 - c) Educational research articles and journals
 - d) Books and academic publications on education policy
- Secondary sources such as government scheme portals and educational websites. The study mainly focuses on high school students studying in classes IX to XII in West Bengal.

4. Concept of “Prakalpa” in Education

The term “Prakalpa” refers to a government project or welfare scheme designed to achieve specific social and economic goals. In the field of education, Prakalpa refers to programs that provide financial support, incentives, or resources to students in order to encourage them to continue their education. Educational schemes in West Bengal mainly aim to:

- a) Increase school enrollment
 - b) Reduce dropout rates
 - c) Promote gender equality in education
 - d) Provide financial assistance to poor students
 - e) Improve access to education in rural areas
- These schemes are implemented through schools and educational institutions across the state.

5. Major Types of Prakalpa in High Schools in West Bengal

5.1 Kanyashree Prakalpa:

One of the most important schemes implemented in West Bengal is Kanyashree Prakalpa. It was introduced in 2013 by the Government of West Bengal to empower girls and prevent early marriage. The scheme provides financial assistance to girls aged 13–18 who are studying in schools or colleges.

Objectives

The main objectives of Kanyashree Prakalpa are:

- a) To encourage girls to continue education
- b) To reduce child marriage
- c) To empower adolescent girls socially and economically

Benefits.

The scheme provides two types of financial benefits:

- i) Annual scholarship of about ₹1000 for girls studying in classes VIII–XII.
- ii) One-time grant of ₹25,000 when a girl reaches 18 years of age and continues her education.

Impact

Kanyashree has significantly increased the enrollment of girls in schools and has helped delay early marriage in many parts of West Bengal.

5.2 Sabooj Sathi Scheme

The Sabooj Sathi Scheme is another important initiative of the Government of West Bengal introduced in 2015.

Under this scheme, bicycles are distributed to students studying in classes IX–XII in government and government-aided schools.

Objectives

- a) The main objectives of the scheme are:
- b) To improve transportation facilities for students
- c) To encourage students to attend school regularly
- d) To reduce school dropout rates

Benefits

Students receive free bicycles which help them travel easily to school, especially in rural areas where transportation facilities are limited.

Impact

Studies have shown that the scheme has helped reduce dropout rates and improved attendance among students in rural areas.

5.3 Aikyashree Scholarship Scheme

The Aikyashree Scholarship Scheme is designed to support students from minority communities.

Objectives

The objectives of the scheme include:

- a) Providing financial assistance to minority students
- b) Encouraging students to continue education
- c) Reducing educational inequality among communities

Benefits

The scheme provides scholarships at different educational levels including high school and higher secondary education.

Impact

Aikyashree has helped many students from economically weaker backgrounds continue their studies without financial difficulty.

5.4 Taruner Swapna Scheme

The Taruner Swapna Scheme was introduced to promote digital education among students.

Objectives

The main objectives of the scheme are:

- a) To improve digital learning among students
- b) To support online education
- c) To reduce the digital divide between rural and urban students

Benefits

Students studying in classes XI and XII receive financial assistance (around ₹10,000) to purchase smartphones or tablets for educational purposes.

Impact

The scheme has helped students access digital learning materials, online classes, and educational resources.

5.5 Rupashree Prakalpa

The Rupashree Prakalpa is another welfare scheme aimed at supporting girls from economically weaker families.

Objectives

The main objective of this scheme is to provide financial assistance for the marriage of adult girls from poor families.

Benefits

The scheme provides a one-time grant of ₹25,000 to eligible families.

Although this scheme is not directly related to school education, it indirectly encourages families to delay early marriage and allow girls to complete their schooling.

6. Other Educational Support Programs

Apart from the major Prakashpa schemes, several other initiatives support high school students in West Bengal.

6.1 Shikshashree Scheme

This scheme provides financial assistance to students belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities.

6.2 Mid-Day Meal Scheme

Although mainly implemented at the primary level, this scheme helps improve school attendance and nutrition among students. The government also provides free textbooks, school uniforms, and other learning materials to students studying in government schools. These initiatives collectively contribute to improving educational access and quality.

7. Impact of Prakashpa Schemes on High School Education

The introduction of these schemes has had several positive impacts on school education in West Bengal.

7.1 Increase in School Enrollment

Financial incentives and scholarships encourage more students to enroll in schools.

7.2 Reduction in Dropout Rates

Schemes such as Sabooj Sathi and Kanyashree help reduce dropout rates by providing support to students who might otherwise leave school due to financial or social reasons.

7.3 Promotion of Girls' Education

Kanyashree Prakashpa has significantly contributed to the promotion of girls' education and gender equality.

7.4 Improvement in Digital Education

Taruner Swapna has helped students access digital learning tools and online educational resources.

8. Challenges and Limitations

Despite their success, these schemes face certain challenges.

8.1 Lack of Awareness

Some students and parents are not fully aware of the benefits of these schemes.

8.2 Administrative Problems

Delays in application processing and verification sometimes create difficulties for students.

8.3 Limited Infrastructure

In some rural areas, lack of infrastructure and internet connectivity affects the effectiveness of digital education schemes.

9. Suggestions for Improvement

To improve the effectiveness of these schemes, the following measures can be taken:

- i) Increase awareness among students and parents about available schemes.
- ii) Improve digital infrastructure in rural schools.
- iii) Simplify the application process for scholarships.
- iv) Provide regular monitoring and evaluation of scheme implementation.

10. Conclusion

The various Prakashpa schemes implemented by the Government of West Bengal have played a significant role in improving school education in the state. Schemes such as Kanyashree, Sabooj Sathi, Aikyashree, and Taruner Swapna have helped increase school enrollment, reduce dropout rates, and promote gender equality in education. These initiatives have also improved the socio-economic conditions of students from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing financial assistance and educational resources. However, continuous monitoring, better infrastructure, and increased awareness are necessary to ensure that these schemes reach all eligible students and achieve their intended objectives. Overall, the Prakashpa schemes have made a significant contribution to the development of high school education in West Bengal and continue to play an important role in shaping the future of students in the state.

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