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Role of Public Libraries in Empowering Women of Lalgola Community Development Block in Murshidabad district of West Bengal: An Analysis from Parents' Perception

Prasenjit Deb¹
Subrata Biswas^{2*}

Abstract

The Bengal Public Libraries Act was passed in the Assembly on 12th September 1979. At Present, the State has a State Central Library at the apex, District Libraries and other libraries at a lower level. It has a Directorate of Libraries to manage the system. Currently the numbers of public librarians have been decreased substantially. One librarian is in the charge of two or more public libraries. Hence, one rural public library is practically operated for 2-3 days. The role and responsibility of the public library are to disseminate information apart from lending and receiving books. The present study conducted in Lalgola Community Development Block of Murshidabad district among 100 parents whose daughters received onetime Kanyashree scholarship grant of Rupees twenty five thousand on attaining the age of 18 years. The principal objective of the study is to assess the role of public libraries in empowering women. It has been found that age of the respondent (X₁), educational status (X₂), involvement towards the society (X₅), association with self help group (X₆), reason behind the association with self help group (X₇), availing bank loan (X₈), reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉), nature and extent of savings (X₁₀), attention towards daughter's education (X₁₁) and difficulties towards daughter's education (X₁₃) have massive implications on the level of perception of parents about the effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant towards the empowerment of women. It has also been established for financial condition of the family (X₃), housing condition (X₄), availing bank loan (X₈), reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉), expenditure towards daughter's education (X₁₂), difficulties towards daughter's education (X₁₃) and role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅) had immense bearing on the level of perception of parents about the empowerment of women. It has been further recognized that the variables like association with rural public library (X₂₃), role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅), available services of rural library (X₂₆), activities of public libraries (X₂₇) and up-gradation of public library (X₂₉) when had strong significance on the level of perception of parents to evaluate the function of public libraries towards women empowerment.

Keywords: Public Library, Women Empowerment, Female Education, and Kanyashree Prakaalpa etc.

1. Introduction

The Anandabazar Patrika, a renowned Bengali Daily, published research findings on June, 2015 in which the rate of GDP of Japan was around 12 per cent and that of India were about 8 per cent. The report also showed that if the 50 per cent Indian women have taken into consideration within the purview of women empowerment then the rate of Indian GDP would hike up to 27 per cent.³ Raising women's participation in the labour force to the same level as men can boost India's GDP by 27 per cent, IMF Chief Christine Lagarde and Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg have emphasized in a joint paper.⁴ The various researchers worked on women empowerment and public library system which are given below:

Ahmad and Muneebulla (2016) conducted ICT enabled networking processes for women in the area of empowerment and governance, the hindrances faced in engendering of these processes and goes on to suggest ways to ensure that greater benefits accrue to women in a distributed manner. The following schemes at present are aiming at women empowerment and gender equality in India such as Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (1975), Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) (2010), The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers, Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) (2009-10), Support to

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³ Anandabazar Patrika on 27.06.2015

⁴ economictimes.indiatimes.com

Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), Dhanalakshmi (2008), Short Stay Homes, Swadhar, Ujjawala (2007), Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan), National Mission for Empowerment of Women and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (1993). Again, it is true that though not the women empowerment and autonomy have a link with womens' access to resources or material well-being , it is to be accepted that there is a variety of potential connections and there exists various forms of linkages among these variables. Hence, the answer for the questions "Are women really empowered in India" is nothing but "not yet to the desired level".⁵

In the study of **Yoshida (2013)** that it was found that public libraries as mechanisms for empowering women and their learning efforts affirm their identities as independent women learners. It also describes how their activities broke the relationship between libraries as providers and citizens as beneficiaries merely enjoying fixed library services. Also shows the essential value of the public library's function of providing lifelong learning. It validates the existence of public libraries, which have a unique role in society. Public libraries are placed where lifelong learning is fully achieved in relation to empowering women.⁶

Abu (2012) found in a study that the initiatives of development activities and programs that underpin rural public libraries in supporting rural women development and empowerment in Malaysia. The major findings in this respect were that in three rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia. It draws on original empirical research conducted in investigating the relationship, participation and contribution of rural public libraries towards rural community development in Malaysia.⁷

According to **Abu, Grace and Carroll (2011)** state that, to help the rural children and adults maintain knowledge gaining from their education; to help a rural community understand the country's social, political and economical endeavours and nation building efforts; to aid in the development of wholesome family life, providing materials about social, economic and health care development; and to inspire members of the community to read, to use books, information and knowledge access, and to enjoy all materials in the library for education and recreation. The major findings of this respect were that conceptualization of information for development which accommodates the concepts of advancement of adult literacy and development information for people to improve their economic and social conditions. It reports on early findings of an investigation into the links between community development, empowerment and rural public library usage in Australia and Malaysia.⁸

Sasi (2014) investigates the role public library on women empowerment. It also describes woman users of District library Malappuram. Various information sources of the library are not sufficient to meet the needs of women users and the infrastructure and facilities of the library has to be improved. Majority of the women under study are not aware of the information technology applications. The major findings in this respect were that majority of the users opined that the job oriented programmes plays an important role in women empowerment; the library does not provide internet facilities to the users and majority of the users are not aware of the information technology applications; a good number of the women under study use internet for carrier development; the majority of the respondents opined that information technology have a positive effect on women empowerment; woman respondents give first preference to newspapers (45.41%) followed by periodicals and magazines(31.03%) and books (23.56%) respectively; periodicals and magazines are the most supportive resources among women followed

⁵ Ahmad, Shabir and Muneebulla, Khan Khaisar. (2016). Role of Library & Information Centres in Women Empowerment through ICT: Indian Scenario.

⁶ <http://InformationR.net/ir/18-3/colis/paperC20.html>

⁷ Abu, Roziya. (2012). Rural Public Library Supporting Rural Women Development and Empowerment.

⁸ Abu, Roziya, Grace, Marty and Carroll, Mary. (2011). The Role of the Rural Public Library in Community Development and Empowerment.

Newspapers and majority of the users think social programmes organized by the library supports women empowerment.⁹

Bhat (2017) conducted the role public libraries on women empowerment. Public libraries are an important entity in local communities, particularly in rural and disadvantaged communities. They are more than shelves of books. Public libraries offer an ever changing range of cultural resources for the community, and they have become a type of social and cultural institution. Public libraries serve as an access point for women empowerment in their communities. Instead of this there is variety of facilities and infrastructure was built to support the process of the rural community social and economic development; public libraries are one of these facilities. He again states that the initiatives of developmental activities and programs that underpin the public libraries in supporting women development and empowerment. Hence it has been established as a crucial place in the life of women, as it provides information which is essential for the women empowerment. It will help for their own development, family and community development.¹⁰

In the study of **Atuase (2018)** that it was found that academic libraries in promoting gender equality and women empowerment. The study reviewed existing literature, concepts from theoretical framework and interviews from librarians. The outcome of the study revealed upon the rich and diverse information resources and professional service provisions of libraries position them to provide the right information resources and as well inform, educate and train women to realize their potentials. The study indicated that libraries are development agents and catalyst to women empowerment. However, inadequate knowledge to access the right information hinders the progress of women. The study further revealed that financial and low investments were the major setback for academic libraries to play its integral role to sphere head the course of gender equality and empower women.¹¹

According to **Cassell and Weibel (2007)** state that, Women's programming has been strengthened by a greater visibility of the diverse needs and interests of women, funding for programs for women, and greatly expanded publishing activity that continually provides new titles on women's issues for public library collections. Women themselves have been a catalyst for programming as they have been avid users of public libraries and often the primary audience for library programs. Although librarians seem reluctant to identify their target audience by gender, they continue to develop programming which attracts more women than men.¹²

From the above studies, we can conclude that lot of research work are being conducted on women empowerment and roles and function of public libraries mechanism. However no research is still finding where the role of public libraries in empowering women was conducted.

2. Objective of the study

General objectives

1. To study the different public services like (i) Kanyashree Prkalpa providing annual financial support for female students of Rs. 750/- upto 18 years of age, one time scholarship grant of Rs. 25,000 after attaining 18 years of age, Rs. 2,000 for PG Arts and Commerce and Rs. 2,500 for PG Science students, (ii) Yuvashree providing monthly financial assistance of Rs. 1500/- to Job seekers among unemployed youth of age group 18-45 years for skill development training, (iii) Sabooj Sathi distributing a bi-cycle to one lac students from class 9 to 12 for empowering the

⁹ Sasi, P.K. (2014). Role of Public Libraries on Women Empowerment: A Study with Special Reference to District Library Malappuram.

¹⁰ Bhat, Rouf Ahmad. (2017). Role of public libraries in the empowerment of women.

¹¹ Atuase, Diana. (2018). Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Ghana, the Role of Academic Libraries.

¹² Cassell, Kay Ann and Weibel, Kathleen. (2007). Public Library Response to Women and Their Changing Roles Revisited.

students specially girls and reduce drop-outs in higher education, (iv) Sikshashree Scholarship providing financial assistance to improve SC/ST students of class 5 to 8 in Pre-Matric stages and minimize the incident of drop-out, and (v) Post-Matric Scholarships for SC/ST/Minorities students, Swami Vivekananda Merit-cum-Means Scholarship providing monthly financial assistance of Rs. 1,000 to the poor and meritorious students of UG for Arts & Commerce and Rs. 1,500 for Science, Rs. 2,000 for PG Arts & Commerce and Rs. 2,500 for PG Science, Rs. 5,000 for M.Phil., Rs. 8,000 for non-scholarship Ph.D. students available in West Bengal where the state government is funding the financial support;

2. To study the existing present status of women empowerment within India in general and the West Bengal in specific; and
3. To study the role and functioning of public libraries in rural areas of Bengal.

Specific objectives

1. To study the overall activities of Kanyashree Prakalpa;
2. To access the effectiveness the Kanyashree one time grant of Rs. 25,000 from 15 socio-economic casual variables such as age of the respondent (X_1), educational status (X_2), financial condition of the family (X_3), housing condition (X_4), involvement towards the society (X_5), association with self help group (X_6), reason behind the association with self help group (X_7), availing bank loan (X_8), reason behind taking the bank loan (X_9), nature and extent of savings (X_{10}), attention towards daughter's education (X_{11}), expenditure towards daughter's education (X_{12}), difficulties towards daughter's education (X_{13}), role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X_{14}) and role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X_{15});
3. To study the effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant in empowering women;
4. To evaluate the perceptual level of parents on women empowerment from 22 consequent variables like age of the respondent (X_1), educational status (X_2), financial condition of the family (X_3), housing condition (X_4), involvement towards the society (X_5), association with self help group (X_6), reason behind the association with self help group (X_7), availing bank loan (X_8), reason behind taking the bank loan (X_9), nature and extent of savings (X_{10}), attention towards daughter's education (X_{11}), expenditure towards daughter's education (X_{12}), difficulties towards daughter's education (X_{13}), role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X_{14}), role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X_{15}), Effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X_{16}), Use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X_{17}), wages towards women empowerment (X_{18}), encouragement towards women empowerment (X_{19}), social taboo towards women empowerment (X_{20}), role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X_{25}) and activities of public libraries (X_{27});
5. To evaluate the role of public libraries in empowering women; and
6. To find the relationship between the role of public libraries and 15 others independent variables such as effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X_{16}), use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X_{17}), wages towards women empowerment (X_{18}), encouragement towards women empowerment (X_{19}), social taboo towards women empowerment (X_{20}), assess the level of women empowerment (X_{21}), availability of public library (X_{22}), association with rural public library (X_{23}), level of association with rural library (X_{24}), role of public libraries towards women empowerment

(X₂₅), available services of rural library (X₂₆), activities of public libraries (X₂₇), expected services of rural library (X₂₈), up-gradation of public library (X₂₉) and suggestion towards development public library (X₃₀).

3. Methods

3.1. Study setting

For the improvement in the status of girls and women in West Bengal in order to reduce the girls' dropout, prevent child marriage and to increase in educational attainment of girls till at least of age 18, Kanyashree programme has been adopted by provincial government of West Bengal since 2013. The initial goals of this programme are:

- I. No poverty,
- II. Good health annual being,
- III. Gender equality,
- IV. Quality education,
- V. Economic growth,
- VI. Built resilient infrastructure
- VII. Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation,
- VIII. Reduce inequalities with in an among base countries,
- IX. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, and
- X. Strain then the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The role of public libraries in disseminating information to the society is now very much established (Ngurtinkhuma, 2011). However, the functioning of public libraries in India are limited to collect, organize and serve the different types of books, journals, magazine, periodicals and newspapers among the communities of the society. Our study is to search the level of functioning of public libraries in catering information towards the women empowerment¹³.

3.2 Study design

The primary data was collected from parents of Kanyashree providing one time scholarship grant of Rs. 25,000 to girls' children in Lalgola block of Murshidabad district in West Bengal. The survey was conducted during November, 2018 to April, 2019. The overall objective of this survey is understood the level of involvement of public librarian in rural areas of the state of West Bengal towards disseminating information among the female students especially those who are getting scholarship if one time grant Rs. 25000 at the end of 18 years of age.

As per census 2011 the total populations of Lalgola block is 335831 (Male 51% and Female 49%) and the overall literacy rate is 66.59 %. Lalgola block has a large contraction of minority populations to the tune of 80.25 % of the total populations. It is one of the educationally backward blocks of West Bengal and the female literacy rate of 63.09% is a matter of concern¹⁴. The total numbers of Higher Secondary School and Senior Madrasah of Lalgola Community Development (C.D.) blocks of Murshidabad district are 10 and 6 respectively. There is only one general degree college namely Lalgola College¹⁵. Through random sampling method, we choose 7 numbers of Higher Secondary School and 3 numbers Senior Madrasah. From chosen Higher Secondary Schools, Senior Madrasahs and college, 100 girls student have been identified who have already received the Kanyashree one time grant Rs. 25000 at the end of 18 years. Here, the respondents mean the parents of this 100 girl students.

¹³ Ngurtinkhuma, R.K. (2011). Public library in India: impact on socio-culture & educational development of Mizoram

¹⁴ www.census2011.co.in/census/district/7-Murshidabad.html

¹⁵ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lalgola_\(community_development_block\)#Education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lalgola_(community_development_block)#Education)

3.3 Measures

3.3.1. Outcomes

Outcomes of the present analysis are of three folders. In the first phase analysis includes the effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant (Y), age of the respondent (X_1), educational status (X_2), financial condition of the family (X_3), housing condition (X_4), involvement towards the society (X_5), association with self help group (X_6), reason behind the association with self help group (X_7), availing bank loan (X_8), reason behind taking the bank loan (X_9), nature and extent of savings (X_{10}), attention towards daughter's education (X_{11}), expenditure towards daughter's education (X_{12}), difficulties towards daughter's education (X_{13}), role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X_{14}) and role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X_{15}).

In the second phase, study has been conducted to assess the perception level of parents on women empowerment (Z) from 22 causal factors like age of the respondent (X_1), educational status (X_2), financial condition of the family (X_3), housing condition (X_4), involvement towards the society (X_5), association with self help group (X_6), reason behind the association with self help group (X_7), availing bank loan (X_8), reason behind taking the bank loan (X_9), nature and extent of savings (X_{10}), attention towards daughter's education (X_{11}), expenditure towards daughter's education (X_{12}), difficulties towards daughter's education (X_{13}), role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X_{14}) and role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X_{15}), effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X_{16}), use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X_{17}), wages towards women empowerment (X_{18}), encouragement towards women empowerment (X_{19}), social taboo towards women empowerment (X_{20}), role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X_{25}) and activities of public libraries (X_{27}).

In the third phase, data has been collected in order to evaluate the role of public libraries towards women empowerment (W) from 15 consequent variables such as effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X_{16}), use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X_{17}), wages towards women empowerment (X_{18}), encouragement towards women empowerment (X_{19}), social taboo towards women empowerment (X_{20}), assess the level of women empowerment (X_{21}), availability of public library (X_{22}), association with rural public library (X_{23}), level of association with rural library (X_{24}), role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X_{25}), available services of rural library (X_{26}), activities of public libraries (X_{27}), expected services of rural library (X_{28}), up-gradation of public library (X_{29}) and suggestion towards development public library (X_{30}).

3.3.2. Independent variable

For the present study, we have identified three sets of independent variable. In the first phase apart from socio-economic and personal variables, role of Gram Panchayats and Block Development Office are considers as independent variables.

In the second phase socio-economic and personal variables, role of local self-government, effectiveness of Kanyashree scholarship, issues related to women empowerment and involvement of public libraries towards women empowerment are considered as independent variables.

In the third phase, effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant, factors involving towards women empowerment and functioning of public libraries are taken into account as independent variables.

3.4 Analysis

Using correlation and multiple regression models, we assessed relationship between perception of parents of Kanyashree getting girls children on the effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant from different socio-economic and personal variables.

Table - I: Correlation Analysis between dependent variable effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant (Y) and 15 casual variables

Variables	'r' Value
Age of the respondent (X₁)	-0.3232**
Educational status (X₂)	0.3441**
Financial condition of the family (X ₃)	0.1249
Housing condition (X ₄)	0.1241
Involvement towards the society (X₅)	0.3017**
Association with Self Help Group (X₆)	0.2801**
Reason behind the association with Self Help Group (X₇)	0.3036**
Availing bank loan (X₈)	0.3087**
Reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉)	0.3312**
Nature and extent of savings (X₁₀)	0.3107**
Attention towards daughter's education (X₁₁)	0.2158*
Expenditure towards daughter's education (X ₁₂)	0.1729
Difficulties towards daughter's education(X₁₃)	-0.2444*
Role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X ₁₄)	0.0592
Role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X ₁₅)	0.0571

Critical value (2-Tail, 0.05) = +or- 0.197 *Significant at 5% level
 Critical value (2-Tail, 0.01) = +or- 0.256 ** Significant at 1% level

Table-I depicts the parents perception on the effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant (Y) from 15 independent variables such as age of the respondent (X₁), educational status (X₂), financial condition of the family (X₃), housing condition (X₄), involvement towards the society (X₅), association with self help group (X₆), reason behind the association with self help group (X₇), availing bank loan (X₈), reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉), nature and extent of savings (X₁₀), attention towards daughter's education (X₁₁), expenditure towards daughter's education (X₁₂), difficulties towards daughter's education(X₁₃), role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X₁₄) and role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X₁₅). From the table of correlation coefficient, it has been found that **age of the respondent (X₁)**, **educational status (X₂)**, **involvement towards the society (X₅)**, **association with self help group (X₆)**, **reason behind the association with self help group (X₇)**, **availing bank loan (X₈)**, **reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉)**, **nature and extent of savings (X₁₀)**, **attention towards daughter's education (X₁₁)** and **difficulties towards daughter's education (X₁₃)** had strong bearing on the level of perception about the effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant towards the empowerment of women.

Table II: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	"β" value	"t" value
Age of the respondent (X₁)	-0.261268	-2.413*
Educational status (X ₂)	0.152422	1.128
Financial condition of the family (X ₃)	-0.263438	-1.600
Housing condition (X ₄)	-0.018034	-0.123
Involvement towards the society (X ₅)	0.060313	0.519
Association with Self Help Group (X ₆)	-0.209893	-0.508
Reason behind the association with Self Help Group (X ₇)	0.054920	0.198
Availing bank loan (X ₈)	0.153640	0.707
Reason behind taking the bank loan (X ₉)	0.200120	0.755
Nature and extent of savings (X ₁₀)	0.159181	0.438
Attention towards daughter's education (X ₁₁)	0.035912	0.237
Expenditure towards daughter's education (X ₁₂)	0.021603	0.129
Difficulties towards daughter's education(X ₁₃)	-0.215911	-1.693

Role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X ₁₄)	-0.030044	-0.294
Role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X ₁₅)	0.128054	1.287

Critical value (2-Tail, 0.05) = +or- 1.987 *Significant at 5% level
 Critical value (2-Tail, 0.01) = +or- 2.637 ** Significant at 1% level

Multiple R	= 0.55749
R Square	= 0.31080
Adjusted R Square	= 0.18773
Standard Error	= 1.61373

Analysis of Variance

	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square
Regression	15	98.64454	6.57630
Residual	84	218.74546	2.60411

F = 2.52535 Signif F = .0039

Table II presents the multiple regression analysis with β values and corresponding t values. It is discernible that the variables like age of the respondent (X₁), educational status (X₂), financial condition of the family (X₃), housing condition (X₄), involvement towards the society (X₅), association with self help group (X₆), reason behind the association with self help group (X₇), availing bank loan (X₈), reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉), nature and extent of savings (X₁₀), attention towards daughter's education (X₁₁), expenditure towards daughter's education (X₁₂), difficulties towards daughter's education (X₁₃), role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X₁₄) and role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X₁₅) have been found to exercise significant regression effect on the level of effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant.

It has been found that the different factors affecting the level of effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant. It is also to be mentioned that all fifteen variables put together can explain 31.08 per cent ($R^2 = 0.31080$) of the total effect. This demands inclusion of more variables as well as more number of respondents for being studied across the heterogeneous micro situations to generate higher levels of explicability.

Table III: Step-down Regression Model

Step I: X₂

Multiple R	= 0.34408
R Square	= 0.11839
Adjusted R Square	= 0.10939
Standard Error	= 1.68975

Step II: X₉

Multiple R	= 0.44859
R Square	= 0.20123
Adjusted R Square	= 0.18476
Standard Error	= 1.61667

Step III: X₁

Multiple R	= 0.49281
R Square	= 0.24287
Adjusted R Square	= 0.21921
Standard Error	= 1.58215

In the step down regression model it has been found that after 3rd step, 3 variables namely educational status (X₂), reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉) and age of the respondent (X₁) together can explain 24.29 per cent of the total effect. Here, the 3 variables can explain 24.29 per cent regression effect on the level of effectiveness on Kanyashree one time grant in compare to the total estimated value of 31.08 per cent.

In case of funding the relationship between the perception of parents of women empowerment and socio-economic and personal variables, role of Gram Panchayats and block development office are considers as independent variables.

Table - IV: Correlation Analysis between dependent variable the perception level of parents on women empowerment (Z) and 22 casual variables

Variables	'r' Value
Age of the respondent (X ₁)	-0.0261
Educational status (X ₂)	0.1782
Financial condition of the family (X₃)	0.3023**
Housing condition (X₄)	0.3388**
Involvement towards the society (X ₅)	0.1859
Association with Self Help Group (X ₆)	0.0193
Reason behind the association with Self Help Group (X ₇)	0.1380
Availing bank loan (X₈)	0.2427*
Reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉)	0.2628**
Nature and extent of savings (X ₁₀)	0.0420
Attention towards daughter's education (X ₁₁)	-0.0190
Expenditure towards daughter's education (X₁₂)	0.2912**
Difficulties towards daughter's education (X₁₃)	-0.3371**
Role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X ₁₄)	0.0694
Role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X ₁₅)	-0.0072
Effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X ₁₆)	0.1291
Use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X ₁₇)	-0.0878
Wages towards women empowerment (X ₁₈)	0.1226
Encouragement towards women empowerment (X ₁₉)	0.0903
Social taboo towards women empowerment (X ₂₀)	0.0854
Role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅)	0.2620**
Activities of public libraries (X ₂₇)	0.0146

Critical value (2-Tail, 0.05) = +or- 0.197 *Significant at 5% level

Critical value (2-Tail, 0.01) = +or- 0.256 ** Significant at 1% level

Table IV depicts the perception level of parents on women empowerment (Z) from 22 causal factors like age of the respondent (X₁), educational status (X₂), financial condition of the family (X₃), housing condition (X₄), involvement towards the society (X₅), association with self help group (X₆), reason behind the association with self help group (X₇), availing bank loan (X₈), reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉), nature and extent of savings (X₁₀), attention towards daughter's education (X₁₁), expenditure towards daughter's education (X₁₂), difficulties towards daughter's education (X₁₃), role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X₁₄) and role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X₁₅), Effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X₁₆), Use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X₁₇), wages towards women empowerment (X₁₈), encouragement towards women empowerment (X₁₉), social taboo towards women empowerment (X₂₀), role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅) and activities of public libraries (X₂₇). From the table of correlation coefficient, it has been found that **financial condition of the family (X₃), housing condition (X₄), availing bank loan (X₈), reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉), expenditure towards daughter's education (X₁₂), difficulties towards daughter's education (X₁₃)** and

role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅) had strong bearing on the level of perception about the empowerment of women.

Table V: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	“β” value	“t” value
Age of the respondent (X ₁)	-0.099284	-0.992
Educational status (X ₂)	0.029260	0.236
Financial condition of the family (X ₃)	0.220073	1.441
Housing condition (X ₄)	0.263898	1.949
Involvement towards the society (X ₅)	-0.077719	-0.692
Association with Self Help Group (X ₆)	-0.356193	-0.943
Reason behind the association with Self Help Group (X ₇)	0.394420	1.512
Availing bank loan (X₈)	0.448380	2.286*
Reason behind taking the bank loan (X ₉)	-0.026832	-0.112
Nature and extent of savings (X ₁₀)	-0.216382	-0.667
Attention towards daughter’s education (X₁₁)	-0.450131	-3.039**
Expenditure towards daughter’s education (X ₁₂)	-0.029096	-0.187
Difficulties towards daughter’s education(X₁₃)	-0.296065	-2.513*
Role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X ₁₄)	0.002571	0.028
Role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X ₁₅)	-0.008858	-0.098
Effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X ₁₆)	0.049291	0.452
Use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X ₁₇)	-0.073703	-0.588
Wages towards women empowerment (X₁₈)	0.238308	2.385*
Encouragement towards women empowerment (X ₁₉)	0.120161	0.973
Social taboo towards women empowerment (X ₂₀)	0.064093	0.676
Role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅)	0.217181	2.116*
Activities of public libraries (X ₂₇)	-0.099455	-1.005

Critical value (2-Tail, 0.05) = +or- 1.987 *Significant at 5% level

Critical value (2-Tail, 0.01) = +or- 2.637 ** Significant at 1% level

Multiple R	= 0.70961
R Square	= 0.50354
Adjusted R Square	= 0.36169
Standard Error	= 0.49622

Analysis of Variance

	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square
Regression	22	19.23020	0.87410
Residual	77	18.95980	0.24623

F = 3.54992 Signif F = .0000

Table V presents the multiple regression analysis with β values and corresponding t values. It is discernible that the variables like age of the respondent (X₁), educational status (X₂), financial condition of the family (X₃), housing condition (X₄), involvement towards the society (X₅), association with self help group (X₆), reason behind the association with self help group (X₇), availing bank loan (X₈), reason behind taking the bank loan (X₉), nature and extent of savings (X₁₀), attention towards daughter’s education (X₁₁), expenditure towards daughter’s education (X₁₂), difficulties towards daughter’s education(X₁₃), role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X₁₄) and role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X₁₅), effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X₁₆), use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X₁₇), wages towards women empowerment (X₁₈), encouragement

towards women empowerment (X_{19}), social taboo towards women empowerment (X_{20}), role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X_{25}) and activities of public libraries (X_{27}) have been found to exercise significant regression effect on to assess the perception level of parents on women empowerment. It has been found that the different factors affecting the level of women empowerment. It is also to be mentioned that all twenty two variables put together can explain 50.35 per cent ($R^2 = 0.50354$) of the total effect.

Table VI: Step-down Regression Model

Step I: X_4

Multiple R	= 0.33884
R Square	= 0.11481
Adjusted R Square	= 0.10578
Standard Error	= 0.58733

Step II: X_{11}

Multiple R	= 0.43337
R Square	= 0.18781
Adjusted R Square	= 0.17107
Standard Error	= 0.56548

Step III: X_{13}

Multiple R	= 0.53429
R Square	= 0.28546
Adjusted R Square	= 0.26313
Standard Error	= 0.53315

Step IV: X_8

Multiple R	= 0.59525
R Square	= 0.35432
Adjusted R Square	= 0.32713
Standard Error	= 0.50947

While the step down regression model is applied to segregate the prominent independent variables then it is found that after step 4, the 4 variables namely, housing condition (X_4), attention towards daughter's education (X_{11}), difficulties towards daughter's education (X_{13}) and availing bank loan (X_8) can together explain 35.43 per cent of the total estimated effect 50.35 per cent.

With the help of bivariate correlation and multiple regression analysis, we evaluated the association between the role of public libraries and socio-economic and personal variables, role of local self-government, effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant, issues related to women empowerment and involvement of public libraries towards women empowerment are considered as independent variables.

Table - VII: Correlation Analysis between dependent variable role of public libraries towards women empowerment (W) and 15 casual variables

Variables	'r' Value
Effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X ₁₆)	0.1750
Use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X ₁₇)	-0.0362
Wages towards women empowerment (X ₁₈)	-0.0836
Encouragement towards women empowerment (X ₁₉)	-0.1188
Social taboo towards women empowerment (X ₂₀)	-0.0491
Assess the level of women empowerment (X ₂₁)	-0.0368
Availability of public library (X ₂₂)	0.0676
Association with rural public library (X₂₃)	0.2203*
Level of association with rural library (X ₂₄)	-0.0295
Role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅)	0.3879**
Available services of rural library (X₂₆)	0.3599**
Activities of public libraries (X₂₇)	0.3114**
Expected services of rural library (X ₂₈)	-0.0134
Up-gradation of public library (X₂₉)	0.3291**
Suggestion towards development public library (X ₃₀)	0.1738

Critical value (2-Tail, 0.05) = +or- 0.197 *Significant at 5% level

Critical value (2-Tail, 0.01) = +or- 0.256 ** Significant at 1% level

Table VII depicts the parents perception on to evaluate the role of public libraries towards women empowerment (W) from 15 consequent variables such as effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X₁₆), use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X₁₇), wages towards women empowerment (X₁₈), Encouragement towards women empowerment (X₁₉), social taboo towards women empowerment (X₂₀), assess the level of women empowerment (X₂₁), availability of public library (X₂₂), association with rural public library (X₂₃), level of association with rural library (X₂₄), role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅), available services of rural library (X₂₆), activities of public libraries (X₂₇), expected services of rural library (X₂₈), up-gradation of public library (X₂₉) and suggestion towards development public library (X₃₀). From the table of correlation coefficient, it has been found that **association with rural public library (X₂₃)**, **role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅)**, **available services of rural library (X₂₆)**, **activities of public libraries (X₂₇)** and **up-gradation of public library (X₂₉)** had strong bearing on the level of perception of parents to evaluate the functions of public libraries towards women empowerment.

Table VIII: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	“β” value	“t” value
Effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X ₁₆)	0.145245	1.313
Use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X ₁₇)	-0.003038	-0.025
Wages towards women empowerment (X ₁₈)	0.042536	0.390
Encouragement towards women empowerment (X ₁₉)	0.075327	0.620
Social taboo towards women empowerment (X ₂₀)	0.026382	0.265
Assess the level of women empowerment (X₂₁)	-0.212231	-2.058*
Availability of public library (X ₂₂)	-0.148569	-1.305
Association with rural public library (X₂₃)	-0.537834	-2.837**
Level of association with rural library (X ₂₄)	-0.079509	-0.865
Role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅)	0.268379	2.092*
Available services of rural library (X₂₆)	0.681666	3.541**
Activities of public libraries (X ₂₇)	0.134872	1.266

Expected services of rural library (X ₂₈)	0.111705	1.175
Up-gradation of public library (X ₂₉)	0.221518	1.831
Suggestion towards development public library (X ₃₀)	-0.020040	-0.186

Critical value (2-Tail, 0.05) = +or- 1.987 *Significant at 5% level

Critical value (2-Tail, 0.01) = +or- 2.637 ** Significant at 1% level

Multiple R	= 0 .59386
R Square	= 0.35267
Adjusted R Square	= 0.23708
Standard Error	= 0.63758

Analysis of Variance

	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square
Regression	15	18.60344	1.24023
Residual	84	34.14656	.40651

F = 3.05095 Signif F = .0006

Table-VIII presents the multiple regression analysis with β values and corresponding t values. It is discernible that the variables like effectiveness of Kanyashree grant (X₁₆), use of Kanyashree scholarship grant towards education (X₁₇), wages towards women empowerment (X₁₈), encouragement towards women empowerment (X₁₉), social taboo towards women empowerment (X₂₀), assess the level of women empowerment (X₂₁), availability of public library (X₂₂), association with rural public library (X₂₃), level of association with rural library (X₂₄), role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅), available services of rural library (X₂₆), activities of public libraries (X₂₇), expected services of rural library (X₂₈), up-gradation of public library (X₂₉) and suggestion towards development public library (X₃₀) have been found to exercise significant regression effect on to evaluate the level role of public libraries towards women empowerment.

It has been found that the different factors affecting the level role of public libraries towards women empowerment. It is also mentioned that all fifteen variables put together can explain 35.26 per cent ($R^2 = 0.35267$) of the total effect.

Table IX: Step-down Regression Model

Step I: X₂₅

Multiple R	= 0.38792
R Square	= 0.15048
Adjusted R Square	= 0.14181
Standard Error	= 0.67621

Step II: X₂₉

Multiple R	= 0.43041
R Square	= 0.18525
Adjusted R Square	= 0.16845
Standard Error	= 0.66564

After applying the step down regression process, it has been found that only 2 variables namely, Role of public libraries towards women empowerment (X₂₅) and up-gradation of public library (X₂₉) can explain 18.53 per cent of the total regression effect.

With the help of bivariate correlation and multiple regression analysis, we evaluated the associationship between the role of public libraries and socio-economic and personal variables, effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant, factors involving towards women empowerment and functioning of public libraries are taken into account as independent variables.

4. Result and Discussion

While measuring the level of perception of guardians of female students who have already received Kanyashree one time grant of Rs. 25000 on attaining the age of 18 years, we found that age of respondent parents had the negative impact on the level of perception which indicates that at the higher age of parents, the level of perception decreases. It indicates that at the higher age, pessimistic ideas come to the minds of parents. The educational status of the respondent shows the positive bearing on the level of perception. It is obvious that as the education level of the parents is higher, the perceptual level of the parents is also clearer to them. Involvement towards the society had the positive correlation effect to the level of perception similar to that of association of Self help group. Involvement towards the society and association with self help group enable parents towards understanding the issues affecting their perceptual level. In Lalgola block of Murshidabad of West Bengal, the Muslim population of 80.25 per cent (Census 2011) is the majority in compare to others religions.¹⁶ The analysis shows that parents are facing difficulties towards educating their daughters. It is the Government of West Bengal's project under which every girl's children within the age group 13 to 18 while their reading classes VIII onwards will be getting Rs. 750 per year and after completion of 18 years of age every unmarried girls children will get Rs. 25000 as one time Kanyashree grant. The first philosophy behind awarding of such onetime grant of Rs. 25000 is that in rural Bengal still a good numbers of daughters have been forced towards their marriage life even before the age of 18 years. In that sense such Kanyashree one time grant would encourage parents to continue the daughter's education up to age of 18 years. So it is reveled from the data that after implementation of Kanyashree Prakashya, the rate of early child marriage has been reduced substantially. In 2007-08, the early child marriage rate of Murshidabad district was 61.6 per cent (DLHS-3)¹⁷ whereas in 2012-2013 the early child marriage rate in Murshidabad district was 39.1 per cent (DLHS – 4)¹⁸. The second philosophy behind the implementation of Kanyashree Prakashya is to empower the women especially in the rural Bengal. After receiving Kanyashree grant, one can start small enterprise and in that case Rs. 25000 may be utilized as start up grant. Now the Kanyashree annual scholarship grant is being given to all girl students from class 8 up to post graduation level. For school level, a girl student is getting Rs 750 per annum and at the age of 18 years, she will get one time scholarship grant of Rs. 25,000 and for University level, Rs. 2,000 is given for female students of Arts and Commerce Stream and Rs. 2,500 for female students of Science Stream and the scholarship amount is directly deposited to their bank account. Thus the Kanyashree Prakashya has multi-dimensional achievements to reduce the level of poverty, upbringing of their good health, reducing the gender equality gap, enhancing quality education, increasing economical growth, promoting sustainable development and fostering innovation, reducing dropout rate as various level, reducing child trafficking and promoting peaceful inclusive society.

It is very difficult to access the perceptual level of parents on women empowerment from 22 casual variables. The present study revealed that the perceptual level of parents is more significant where the financial condition of the family is comparatively better. Better the financial condition of the family implied to the better housing condition and it is well established fact that the different banks are ready to provide the loan to those solvent families where

¹⁶[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lalgola_\(community_development_block\)#Language_and_religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lalgola_(community_development_block)#Language_and_religion) retrieved on 13.05.2019

¹⁷ www.rchiips.org/pdf/rch3/report/wb.pdf retrieved on 05.07.2019

¹⁸ http://rchiips.org/nfhs/FCTS/WB/WB_FactSheet_333_Murshidabad.pdf

the repayment the bank loan is guaranteed. Again sound financial condition of the family will provide a considered level amount of expenditure towards daughter's education. In rural part of the Bengal especially among the minority people, it is very difficult to continue the daughter's education against the community after a certain age of 15 years. Hence role of the public library towards the women empowerment is not only crucial but also one of the prime sources for both the parents along with their daughters to opt their choice towards the fulfillment of women empowerment. It is the public libraries which extended their support in the form of disseminating the knowledge through providing journal, magazine, and reference books so that parents along with their daughters can select their right enterprise with the help of start of grant of Rs. 25000. Here women empowerment means the cumulative sum of financial empowerment, social empowerment, empower to make and take decision, and political empowerment. So as soon as the process of financial empowerment has started, the other forms of empowerments will come automatically. Our society is typically a gender bias society and in rural areas particularly among minority people, such gender biasness is more prominent. Thus the present study shows that the attention of the parents towards the daughter's education had the negative regression effect and it affects largely empowering women.

In rural areas of West Bengal, public libraries have given the responsibility towards disseminating knowledge, supply the additional information and to extent the various external activities. Due to lack of proper staff strength, one librarian of any public library is given the additional responsibility of at least two to three adjacent public libraries. Thus public libraries are often failed to associate or connect with the rural people and to access the level of women empowerment. However, the present study revealed that the public librarian of public libraries served their best services with the available resources. Time has been changed. Digitalization of public library and the available facility of internet are not only the need of the hour but it provides the necessary information to the parents and their daughters in empowering women.

While placing the question before 100 respondent parents about their preference of expenditure then 47 per cent of the respondents agreed that their first priorities are on daughter's education and home repairing and sanitation construction. 23 per cent of the total respondents had shown their interest on the marriages of their daughter. 22 per cent of the parents are thinking about education of their sons. While respondents are asked to design their priorities of changing the social evils then 27 per cent of the total respondents expressed views against early child marriage and 25 per cent are in opposition to the violence against to women. 24 per cent of the total respondents expressed their opinion against the child labour or school dropouts and eradication of illiteracy.

When asked about the meaning of the women empowerment then 41 per cent of the population expressed that financial empowerment should come first, 37 per cent are in favour of taking the societal decision, 13 per cent expressed in favour of taking decision within the family and 9 per cent of the total respondents believed in favour of taking decision in rural administrative matters.

5. Conclusion:

The present study is on the perception of guardians about public libraries in empowering women in one of the community development blocks of Murshidabad district of West Bengal. Here, the undertaken study is developed in the way that Kanyashree one time grant of Rupees twenty five thousand would be used as start up money to initiate a small enterprise and with the establishment of financial empowerment, the other issues like taking decision in family, participation in societal decision and the contribution in the rural administrative decision will unite to built the women empowerment. The Community Development Block Lalgola is one of Muslim minority dominated area where Girls students below 18 years were given marriage but after the implementation of Kanyashree Prakalpa, the rate of early marriage has been reduced. Another important sign is observed that due to Kanyashree Prakalpa, the rate of growth of education among female children has been increased. The nature of utilization of Kanyashree one time grant of Rupees twenty five thousand is peculiar. Some deposited this money to the Bank, some purchased gold

jewelries for their future marriage purpose, some invested the money for purchasing goat and others, some invested in agriculture, and a good numbers utilized this fund for their higher education and future training. The infrastructural facility and the personnel administration available through the public libraries are so poor that they fail to disseminate knowledge and other information to their publics at a large. India is still considered as one of the developing countries in the world. To enhance the growth gross domestic product and per capital income, women empowerment is one of the essential criteria. To achieve this aim, public libraries should be strengthening.

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