

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UN-STARRED QUESTION NO.1203
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28.06.2019

CHILD MARRIAGES

1203. SHRI PINAKI MISHRA

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the fact that child marriages are still widely practiced despite the ban on it and Rajasthan has the highest incidence of child marriages in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the National Health Survey of 2015-16 data shows that 40.5% of the women in the age group of 20-24 in rural Rajasthan got married before they were 18 years of age;
- (c) whether the Centre has taken up the matter with the said State Government;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the response of the State Government thereto; and
- (e) whether the State Government has given any assurance of effective implementation of the ban for the betterment of the girl child?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

- (a) & (b): As per National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 (2015-16) conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, child marriage is still practiced. The survey report NFHS-4 covered all the States and UTs of India including Rajasthan. As per the NFHS-4 State Factsheet of Rajasthan, the percentage of rural women aged 20-24 years who were married before age 18 years is 40.5.
- (c) to (e): The practice of Child Marriage is prevalent in India largely due to the prevailing social customs, tradition, illiteracy, poverty, low status of women in society and lack of awareness. The Government of India has enacted The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 in order to prohibit child marriages. The States/UTs from time to time are being regularly pursued for effective implementation of The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. Ministry of Women and Child Development regularly sends out letters to District Collectors to increase alertness to prevent underage marriages during festivals such as Akshaya Tritiya/Akha Teej. The prevention of child marriage and protection of the girl child is a prominent part of the National Plan of Action for Children, 2016.

The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme is working to ensure the education of girls and reduce dropouts, thus delaying their marriage. A significant part of the BBBP advocacy campaign is focussed on creating awareness and discouraging the practice of child marriage. Further, the newly formulated Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) scheme focus is on creating awareness and equipping women at the village level with information on issues of gender equality and empowerment, a critical part of which will be the prevention of child marriage. Government of India in collaboration with State and District authorities undertakes media campaigns and outreach programmes to address this issue.

As informed by the State Government of Rajasthan, the issue of child marriage is being viewed seriously by the State Government and various programmes and activities are implemented by the State Government to address the issue of child marriage, which is at **Annexure-I**.

Annexure referred to in reply to Part (c), (d) & (e) to the Lok Sabha Un-starred Question No.1203 for 28.06.2019 regarding 'Child Marriages'

The activities undertaken by the Government of Rajasthan are as follows:

- (i) In compliance to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, the State Rules for Rajasthan Child Marriage Prohibition Act were notified in 2007.
- (ii) Under section 16 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, all Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Tehsildars have been notified as Child Marriage Prohibition Officers.
- (iii) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been issued to indicate the role and responsibility of various stakeholders.
- (iv) 'Sajha Abhiyaan-Bal Vivah Mukht Rajasthan' is a campaign envisaged as a platform to connect and consolidate various projects, programmes and ideas of the government, civil society, individuals and media to take unified action against child marriage.
- (v) A State strategy and Action Plan (SSAP) aimed to end child marriage, which are executed by various departments, development partners and all concerned stakeholders.
- (vi) Child Marriage Prohibition Officers play important role in implementation of Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, therefore, Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Tehsildars) of the State have been oriented and sensitised on this Act.
- (vii) Intensive Media campaign involving both print and electronic media is conducted on Akshya Tiritiya and Peepal Murnima along with establishment of control rooms at the State, District and Block level.
- (viii) Every year Legal Literacy camps are being by the Rajasthan State Legal Service Authorities, District Legal Service Authorities and the Taluka Legal Service Authorities in partnership with the District Administration. The para legal volunteers organise sessions on Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 in school, to sensitize children on the issue.
- (ix) Advisories are issued to Zila Pramukh, Pradhan and Sarpanch on the issue of child marriage and the role of public representatives.
- (x) Government of Rajasthan is also creating awareness on the issue of child marriage, its harmful effects and legal provisions related to child marriage through Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana and Mahila Shakti Kendra.
- (xi) The issue of child marriage has been included as meeting agenda point of Gram Sabha.