

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**LOK SABHA**

**UN-STARRED QUESTION NO.4157**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.12.2019

**NFHS**

4157. DR. PRITAM GOPINATHRAO MUNDE:  
SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU:

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

- (a) whether a child bride is more than doubly prone to health problems than a grown-up woman and as per WHO report, 11 per cent of the births worldwide are among adolescents, they account for 23 per cent of the overall burden of diseases, if so, the facts thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (b) whether the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2015-16 also showed that 26.8 per cent women are married off before they turned 18, if so, whether currently child marriages are valid in India;
- (c) whether there is a proposal to amend section 3 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, under which a child marriage is only voidable at the option of the contracting parties and to amend the law that allows child marriage to continue; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it will be finalized?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) : Yes, Sir. As per Sixty Fifth World Health Assembly Report, child marriage makes girls far more vulnerable to the profound health risks of early pregnancy and childbirth. Further, as per the report, first pregnancy at an early age is risky. Although births among adolescents account for 11% of all births worldwide, they account for 23% of the overall burden of disease (in terms of disability adjusted life years) due to pregnancy and childbirth among women of all ages. In low and middle income countries, complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death in women aged 15–19 years.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) in 2014 to reach out to 253 million adolescents. One of the six key components of the RKSK is Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) which includes awareness generation and information provision for averting early marriage and teenage pregnancies using community and facility level interventions.

(b) : As per the data provided by National Family Health Survey (2015-16), 26.8% women are married before reaching the age of 18 years. As per Section 3 of 'The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006', every marriage contracted between a male aged below 21 years of age and female aged below 18 years of age is voidable at the option of the contracting parties, if they approach the court before attaining two years of majority.

(c) & (d) : The Government of India has initiated Inter-Ministerial consultation for considering amendments in 'The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006'. However, finalising the proposal of amendment requires careful consideration and consultation with all stakeholders.