

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UN- STARRED QUESTION NO. 810
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.02.2025

Violence against Women

810. Smt. Malvika Devi:

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

- (a) whether Government has taken any steps to ensure that cases of violence against women in backward villages of the country are very seriously on priority basis and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of the steps being taken to ensure make women in villages aware about their rights;
- (c) the details of the steps being taken to ensure children under the age of 14 are not working as in most backward villages are made to earn at an early age;
- (d) whether any steps are being taken to ensure that child marriage is completely stopped and strict action is taken against anyone found guilty for such crime; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD
DEVELOPMENT

(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

(a) and (b): "Police" and "Public Order" are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. The responsibility to maintain law and order, protection of life and property of the citizens including investigation and prosecution of crime against women and children rests primarily with the respective State Governments and they are competent to deal with it.

The Government is committed towards ensuring safety and security for women and has made concerted efforts and significant strides in recent years. The measures and initiatives of the Government encompass a 360-degree approach to cover almost all

spheres of women's lives to combat gender-based violence and foster a safe and secure environment and speedy delivery of justice. These initiatives are taken at national as well as regional level to accomplish the Government's broader commitment of promoting women safety measures, gender equality, enhancing women's empowerment, and addressing the challenges faced by women across the country.

The Central Government gives highest priority to ensuring safety and security of women. Further, Government of India implements various schemes and projects like One Stop Centres (OSCs) for providing support and integrated range of services under one roof to the women affected by violence and those in distress such as Police Facilitation, Medical Aid, Psycho-social Counseling, Legal Aid and Counseling and Temporary Shelters across the country; Women Helpline (WHL) running on toll free telephonic short code 181 to facilitate emergency and non-emergency services and information about Government Schemes and facilities to women; Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) to raise awareness about gender biased sex selection and about education and issues relating to empowerment of girls, and Shakti Sadan for women in difficult circumstances or destitution under umbrella scheme of Mission Shakti.

Under the "Samarthya" sub-scheme of 'Mission Shakti', a new component i.e. SANKALP – Hub for Empowerment of Women to facilitate inter-sectoral convergence of schemes and programs meant for women at the Central, State/ UT and District levels for creating an environment in which women are able to realize their full potential. The support under the HEW provides for guiding, linking and hand holding women to various institutional and schematic set ups for their empowerment and development including access to healthcare, quality education, career and vocational counseling/ training, financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, backward and forward linkages, health and safety for workers, social security and digital literacy at districts/ Blocks/ Gram Panchayats level across the country.

Nari Adalat, a component of the "Sambal" sub-scheme under Mission Shakti, is an initiative, aimed at empowering women and redressing their issues at local level, offers services such as alternate dispute resolution, grievance redressal, counseling, evidence-based decision-making, pressure group tactics, negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation.

Further, the Government, through institutions like the National Commission for Women (NCW), National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) and their counterparts in States have been spreading awareness through seminars, workshops, audio- visual, print and electronic media etc. to sensitize the people about the safety and security of women and children and women related legislation etc.

In addition, the National Commission for Women has started “Mahila Jan Sunwai” (as alternate Grievance Redressal Mechanisms) in coordination with District Legal Service Authorities and Police authorities to take up pending cases related to violence against women on the spot and address the grievances of the complainants. Commission has also started Legal Services Clinic in collaboration with Delhi State Legal Service Authority since March 29, 2022 in a move to make legal aid more accessible for women. The legal aid clinic acts are single-window facilities for resolving grievances of women by offering them free legal assistance in Domestic Violence and other issues.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India has taken a number of initiatives for the safety of women across the country, which are given below:-

- i. Provisions under the Criminal Law (Amendment), Act 2013 and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 have been made even more stringent including death penalty for rape of girls below the age of 12 years. The Act also inter-alia mandates completion of investigation and filing of charge sheet in rape cases in 2 months and trials are to be completed in 2 months. These provisions are now part of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).
- ii. With the introduction of three new Criminal Laws, for the first time the provisions about crime against women which had been scattered through the IPC have been brought under one Chapter in BNS. A new offence for having sexual intercourse on false promise of marriage, employment, promotion or by concealing identity etc. has been incorporated. This provision acts as a deterrent and provides protection to women.

(c): The Government has taken various measures and have made efforts to prevent child labour which include legislative measures, rehabilitation strategy, providing right to free education and general socio-economic development. The details of statutory and legislative measures, rehabilitation strategy and education are as under:

- i. Enactment of the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986. The Act inter-alia covers complete prohibition of work or employment of children below 14 years of age in any occupation or process and prohibition of adolescents in the age group of 14 to 18 years in hazardous occupations and processes. It also provides for stricter punishment for employers for violation of the Act and made the offence as cognizable.
- ii. The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Rules, 1988 inter -alia, provide for District Nodal Officer (DNO) and Task Force at district level under chairpersonship of District Magistrate to ensure that the provisions of the Act are properly enforced.
- iii. Ministry of Labour & Employment has framed model State Action Plan enumerating action points to be taken by respective State Governments for eradication of child labour.

The Ministry of Labour & Employment implements National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme for rescue & rehabilitation of child labourers under which the children in the age group of 9-14 years were rescued from work, enrolled in the NCLP Special Training Centres (STCs) and were provided with bridge education etc. before being mainstreamed into formal education system. The NCLP scheme has been subsumed with Samagara Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a scheme of Ministry of Education with effect from 01.04.2021.

(d) and (e): Child marriage in India is a significant social issue that affects millions of young girls and boys, despite being legally prohibited under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006. Since enactment of the PCMA Act, 2006, the prevalence of child marriage has been reduced by half from 47% in 2006 to 23.3% during 2019-21 as per National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5).

'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. The responsibility to maintain law and order, protection of life and property of the citizens, investigation and prosecution of crime against women and children including prohibition of child marriages, rest with the respective State Governments/ UT Administrations. They are competent to deal with such offenses under the extant provisions of law.

'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' – a flagship campaign launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on 22nd January 2015 has been instrumental in bringing a positive shift in the behaviour and attitude in the society towards valuing the girl child. This is validated by the fact that Child Mortality rate, Sex ratio at birth and girls enrollment at all levels and all streams of educational spectrum has significantly improved over the past few years.

However, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, being the nodal Ministry for implementation of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, launched a national campaign 'Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat' on 27th November 2024 to eliminate child marriages across the country with a 'Whole of Government' and 'Whole of Society' approach. Its key objectives include spreading awareness for the prevention of child marriages, greater involvement of parents, communities, CSOs for the cause, strengthening the role of Child marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPO) in the prevention of child marriages and identifying and assisting the adolescent girls who are drop outs or who have abruptly stopped coming to school to ensure their education, skilling and capacity building. Focus is also on encouraging citizens to report the cases of child marriages through enhanced awareness and sensitization programmes, so that such incidents may be prevented.

The Ministry also launched a 'Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat' portal, a digital platform designed to facilitate the effective reporting of such incidents. To address challenges in effective

implementation of the Act and its monitoring, the new portal serves as a publicly accessible, centralized repository of information on CMPOs across the country, providing an efficient reporting mechanism for child marriage cases.

A national-level training session was conducted for all CMPOs, both those attending physically and virtually, to enhance their effectiveness in this initiative.
