

(a) whether the Government have reviewed recently the Tarkunde and Goswami Committee Reports of 1975 and 1990, respectively for bringing the electoral reforms;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) whether the Government have discussed the matter of electoral reforms with political parties and other concerned organisations in the recent past; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. THAMBI DURAI): (a) to (d) The Government had discussed a set of proposals on electoral reforms with leaders of various political parties in a meeting held on 22nd May, 1998. These proposals *inter alia* included some of the recommendations made by Tarkunde Committee/ Dinesh Goswami Committee. Pursuant to a decision taken in this meeting, a seven member committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Indrajit Gupta, Member of Parliament has been constituted to suggest concrete proposals for providing state funding of elections and also to make recommendations on other related proposals. The Government, however, have not recently conducted any formal review of the aforesaid reports.

[Translation]

Child Marriage System

5688. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI:
SHRI MADHAV RAO PATIL:
SHRI ANUPLAL YADAV:
SHRI RAJBANSHI MAHTO:
SHRI PANKAJ CHOUDHRY:
SHRI ADITYANATH:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether child marriage system is still prevailing in the country;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government propose to take any special measures to check this system; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Yes,

Sir. Child Marriage is still prevailing in certain parts of the country.

(b) and (c) Government of India had enacted the Child Marriage Restraint Act in 1929 which was amended in 1978 to raise the minimum age for marriage for boys to 21 years and for girls to 18 years. The implementation of this Act is the responsibility of State Governments/UT Administrations. Government of India has been urging State Governments/UT Administrations regularly to strictly implement the provisions of the Act and to take up awareness generation campaigns and other measures to prevent child marriage.

[English]

Ashram Schools

5689. SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Ashram schools running in the country State-wise;

(b) the results of these schools at th class examination for the year 1997-98; and

(c) the number of qualified teachers teaching in them?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The establishment of Ashram Schools is decided by the concerned State Governments and UTs, as a part of its overall educational Planning and local needs with availability of resources. The concerned Central Ministry is the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment operates a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas with an objective to extend educational facilities to Scheduled Tribes Students in pursuit of study from primary to college level. As per the information furnished by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment these Ashram Schools are managed and run by State Governments/UT Administration and as such the information about the number of Ashram Schools, the result of a particular class and number of teachers etc. is not available with the Ministry.