

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4078
ANSWERED ON:26.08.2011
CHILD MARRIAGES
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Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the factors responsible for prevalence of child marriages in the country;
- (b) the number of child marriage cases registered as per National Family Health Survey (NFHS) during the last three years and the current year in the country, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to amend or strengthen the existing Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to prevent child marriages?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH)

(a) to (e): Some of the factors responsible for prevalence of child marriages in the country are: the lack of education and awareness about effects of child marriage, concerns about safety of the girl child, social customs, poor implementation of the law etc. As per National Family Health Survey III (NFHS) (2005-06), the percentage of girls getting married by the age of 18 are enclosed at Annex-I.

The Government has written to State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh to appoint Prohibition Officer under the Act, frames Rules and to take all possible steps to prevent child marriage, particularly, on the occasion of 'Akha Teej' (Akshya Tritiya).

Besides, National Commission for Women (NCW) has requested the State Chief Ministers to sensitize and gear up the concerned machinery of the State Governments against those involved in the incidence of child marriage.

Further, workshops, seminars and legal awareness camps are organised in various States including Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to spread awareness and bring attitudinal changes to prevent child marriage.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act has been made effective from November 2007. Currently, under the provision of the Act, marriage involving minors has not been declared invalid. The penalties are provided only for those who promote its solemnisation. The effect of the provisions of the Act become clearer after the results of 2011 Census are published. Being a social evil, spreading education and creating awareness at the grass root level is equally essential.