

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1597
ANSWERED ON:02.12.2014
RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN BY NAXALITES
Venkatesh Babu Shri T.G.

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of reports that maoists kidnap children and train them in fighting the security forces;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the number of children reported to be kidnapped by the maoists for the purpose during the last three years and the current year, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps to rescue the kidnapped children and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether incidents of maoists forcing at least one children from every family to join their ranks have also been reported; and
- (e) if so, the action taken by the Government to protect the innocent children?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI HARIBHAI PARATHIBHAI CHAUDHARY)

(a) to (d): The Left Wing Extremist groups, particularly the CPI(Maoist), recruit minors, both boys and girls, from the tribal belt of LWE affected areas in the states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Odisha. In Bihar and Jharkhand, these children are enrolled in 'Bal Dasta' and in Chhattisgarh and Odisha, the children's squad is known as 'Bal Sangham'. The idea behind recruiting tribal children is to wean them away from their rich traditional cultural moorings and indoctrinate them L.S.U.S.Q.NO. 1597 FOR 02.12.2014 into Maoist ideology. Such children are asked to perform multifarious tasks such as acting as informers, fighting with non-lethal weapons like sticks etc. Subsequently, after attaining the age of 12 years, they are branched into other children units like 'Chaitanya Natya Manch', 'Sanghams', 'Jan Militia' and 'Dalams'. In 'Sanghams', 'Jan Militia' and 'Dalams', the CPI(Maoist) provide training to children on weapons handling and on use of different types of Improvised Explosive Devices. The children recruited to 'Jan Militia' and 'Dalams' also participate in armed exchanges with the security forces where they are tactically pushed to the forefront. This is to derive propaganda mileage by the CPI(Maoist) in case of casualties of minors. It has been reported that children recruited in 'Dalams' are not permitted to leave. They face severe reprisals including killing of family members, if they surrender to security forces. There are no precise estimates of total number of children recruited by the CPI (Maoist).

As per the intelligence reports, in the current year, incidents of Maoists forcing at least one child from each family to join the outfit has been reported from areas under Police Stations Senha (district Lohardaga), Bishunpur (district Gumla) in Jharkhand and Police Station Ambabeda (district Kanker) in Chhattisgarh.

(e): 'Police' and 'Public Order' being State subjects, action with respect to maintenance of law and order lies primarily in the domain of the State Governments concerned, who deal with the various issues related to naxalite activities in the States. The State Governments initiate legal action on case-by-case basis in such matters. The Central Government is also closely monitoring the situation.

The Bal Bandhu Scheme, specifically focusing on children in violence affected States, is being implemented in Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar and Chhattisgarh since December, 2010 to March, 2013 by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). The scheme, inter-alia, attempted to bring stability in the lives of children and to ensure that all their entitlements to protection, health, nutrition, sanitation, education and safety are fulfilled through Government action. This Scheme ceased to be operative with effect from 31.3.2013.