

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3368

ANSWERED ON:01.08.2014

CHILD MARRIAGE

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

- (a) the number of child marriage cases registered as per National Family Health Survey (NFHS) during each of the last three years and the current year in the country, State/UT-wise;
- (b) whether India has the highest number of child marriages in the world;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether child marriage has not been declared invalid under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to amend the said Act in this regard and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the other corrective steps including awareness generation and advocacy measures being undertaken by the Government in this direction?

Answer

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA SANJAY GANDHI)

(a) to (c): According to the National Family Health Survey of 2005-06, the percentage of women between the age of 20-24, who married before the age of 18 was 47%.

(d): As per Section 3 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, every child marriage, whether solemnized before or after the commencement of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 is voidable at the option of the contracting party being a child at the time of the marriage, provided a petition for annulment of the marriage is filed in a District Court. Petition can be filed by the parent or guardian along with the Child Marriage Prohibition Officer on behalf of the child (if minor) for annulment. Apart from this, any child marriage that is solemnized by breaking of an injunction order issued by Judicial Magistrate of the first class or a Metropolitan Magistrate shall be void. Also, child marriage can be made null and void if the child (a minor) is taken away, lured, forced by deceitful means to go away from the care and protection of the legal guardian or is sold for the purpose of marriage, trafficked and used for immoral purposes.

(e) & (f): There is no such proposal to amend the said Act. The States are being regularly pursued for its effective implementation. Further, State Governments are requested to take special initiative to delay marriage by coordinated efforts on Akha Teejâ€”the traditional day for such marriages; Further, advertisements in the press and electronic media educating peoples about the issue of Child Marriage etc also being taken up. Platforms such as the International Women's Day and the National Girl Child Day are used to create awareness on issues related to women and to bring to the centre stage issues such as sex selective abortions and child marriage. Through Sabla programme of this Ministry, adolescent girls in the age group of 11 to 18 years are imparted about their rights.