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Title : Need to take effective steps to prevent child marriages in the country.

**SHRI CHARLES DIAS (NOMINATED):** The prevalence of underweight children in India is among the highest in the world, with dire consequences for mobility, mortality, productivity and economic growth. The UN estimates that 2.1 million Indian children die before reaching the age of 5 every year – four every minute-mostly from preventable illness such as diarrhoea, typhoid, malaria, measles and pneumonia. Child malnutrition is responsible for 22% of India's burden of disease. One of the major reason for unhealthy children in India is that girls are forced to get married before they attain eighteen years of age. The under-aged mothers mostly belong to socially and economically backward classes. They are denied basic education and forced to bear children, who are naturally unhealthy.

The girls who are forced to get married at young age from economically weaker sections and bearing children without getting proper medical care. These unhealthy pregnant girls naturally give birth to children who are weak and ill-fed. As there is no proper guidance and control and even the law cannot be enforced to remote villages where highhandedness of men usually make the law. This has resulted in creating a generation of undernourished children with deformities. The Government has to study the seriousness of the problem and try to prevent marriage of girls before eighteen years. Urgent attention of the Government is warranted to take effective measures to prevent girls getting married before eighteen. Let us plan the future of our people, by carefully providing the underprivileged children with planned food, so that India can proudly witness the advancement of its people in the years to come.