

on implementation of the commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and identifies the gaps and challenges that remain.

(c) The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a 'child' as every human being below the age of 18 years. The UN Committee on Child Rights has recommended for a uniform definition of the child. However, the Convention also allows for minimum age to be set, under different circumstances, balancing the evolving capacities of the child with the State's obligation to provide special protection.

(d) Harmonization of definition of 'child' under different Acts and policies is a continuous exercise and requires extensive consultations and discussions with all stakeholders.

Forced marriages in Haryana

2630. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that trafficking in Haryana for forced marriages has reached alarming proportions; and

(b) if so, the steps that the Ministry is taking to reverse this trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH): (a) There are media reports of girls being brought from outside the State for the purpose of marriage in Haryana. However, Government of Haryana has stated that there are no forced marriages in the State and that the marriages are also being solemnized across the country breaking the barriers of caste, creed and language. Further, the Census data shows that the overall sex ratio in the State of Haryana has improved from 861 in 2001 to 877 in 2011 and the child sex ratio (0-6 years) from 819 to 830 over the same period.

(b) The Government has taken a number of measures to improve the sex ratio. The Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994 makes sex selective abortions a punishable offence. Further, the Ministry undertakes programmes for awareness generation as well as for socio-economic empowerment of women.

The Government of Haryana has also taken various steps to improve the gender balance. These include- implementation of the Ladli Scheme w.e.f. 20.8.2005 under which a sum of Rs. 5000/- is given on the birth of second girl child for a period of 5 years; and giving cash prize to the best performing districts in terms of sex ratio.

In so far as trafficking is concerned, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 supplemented by the Indian Penal Code (IPC) prohibits trafficking in human beings, including children and lays down penalties for trafficking. Advisories for combating

trafficking have been issued on 09.09.2009 and 12.10.2011 by the Government of India to all States/Union Territories. Further, the Ministry has been implementing the "Ujjawala" Scheme, under which financial assistance is being provided for prevention of trafficking and for rescue, rehabilitation and re-integration of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

Continuance of malnutrition

2631. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of women and children suffering from malnutrition in the country, State-wise;
- (b) the reasons for the continuance of this pathetic situation even after 60 years of planning; and
- (c) the steps that are being taken by Government to address this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH): (a) to (c) As per the National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3), 2005-06, 42.5% children under 5 years are underweight and 69.5 % are anemic. 35.6% of women in the age group of 15-49 years suffer from chronic energy deficiency (CED) (measured as low body mass index) and 55.3% are anemic. The State-wise details of the underweight and anemic children and women are given in Statement-I and II (*See below*).

The rate of malnutrition has declined from 42.7% in 1988-99 (NFHS-2) to 40.4% in 2005-06 (NFHS-3) for children below 3 years of age. However, anemia in children (6-35 months) has risen from 74.3% (NFHS-2) to 78.9% (NFHS-3) respectively. Similarly in women aged 15-49 years, the anemia has increased from 51.8% to 56.2%.

Malnutrition is manifestation of several underlying factors and causes and is complex, multi-dimensional and inter-generational in nature. The causes are varied and include inadequate consumption of food, frequent infections, lack of availability of safe drinking water and proper sanitation, illiteracy specially in women, poor access to health services, low purchasing power, socio-cultural factors such as early marriages of girls, lack of care during pregnancy and infancy, ignorance about nutritional needs of infants and young children etc.

The Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes/programmes of different Ministries/Departments through State Governments/UT Administrations. The schemes/programmes include the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Mid Day Meal Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Schemes for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) namely SABLA, Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) as Direct