

**Child marriages rampant in rural areas**

455. SHRI AVINASH PANDE: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that the Annual Health Survey Report, 2012 has revealed that child marriages are rampant in rural areas;
- (b) the reasons for a high rate of child marriages even now;
- (c) whether the Ministry has taken any new steps to curb the practice from its roots;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH): (a) The Annual Health Survey (AHS, 2010-11) by the Office of Registrar General of India shows that as per 2001 Census in all the 284 districts in 8 Empowered Action Group States (Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Rajasthan) and Assam, marriage below legal age varies from 3.0% in Uttarakhand to 21.9% in Rajasthan. In rural areas, every 4th marriage among females in Rajasthan and every 5th in Bihar and Jharkhand take place below the legal age.

(b) Lack of education and awareness about negative consequences of child marriage, concerns about safety of the girl child, social customs and poverty are perceived to be the main reasons for prevalence of child marriage in the country.

(c) to (e) The Government of India enacted Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) 2006, to provide for the prohibition of solemnisation of child marriages and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, which came into force with effect from 1st November, 2007. For effective implementation of the Act, State Governments have been requested from time to time to notify rules under PCMA 2006. In addition, following steps have been taken to address the issue of Child Marriage:

- i. 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.

- ii. Every year, State Governments are requested to take special initiative to delay marriage on *Akha Teej*—the traditional day for such marriages, by coordinated efforts.
- iii. The Government of India launched SABLA, a Scheme for empowering adolescent girls, in 200 districts of the country on 19th November, 2010. The Scheme aims at empowering adolescent girls (11-18 years) by improving their nutritional and health status and upgrading various skills like home skills, life skills and vocational skills etc. and building awareness on various issues. They are also sensitized towards the importance of marriage at the right age. By empowering adolescent girls, the Scheme addresses the issue of child marriage.
- iv. Workshops, seminars and legal awareness camps are organized in various States by the Ministry and its autonomous institutions to spread awareness and bring attitudinal changes to prevent child marriage.

**Speeding up the process of reforming juvenile delinquents**

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

- (a) whether it is proposed to speed up the process of reforming juvenile delinquents under qualified counsellors in the country;
- (b) whether this process has taken the back-seat in the country with the result that there has been a fast increase in this category;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) what is the other course of action plan to reform child delinquents and bring them on the proper road for development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH): (a) The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 being administered by the Ministry of Women and Child Development is the primary legislation for rehabilitation and reintegration of children in difficult circumstances, including children in conflict with law. The JJ Act and the Central Model Rules thereunder, provide for various measures, including counselling, for ensuring the well being and rehabilitation of such children.