

National Human Rights Commission

National Conference on Child Marriage held in New Delhi on 29-30 August 2018

MINUTES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.0 The National Human Rights Commission had organized a National Conference on Child Marriage in collaboration with South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), on 29-30 August, 2018 at Indian Habitat Centre in New Delhi. It was held under the Chairmanship of Smt. Jyotika Kalra, Member, NHRC and, was attended by Shri Ambuj Sharma, Secretary General, NHRC, Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC, Shri. Dilip Kumar, Joint Secretary (T&R), NHRC, Ms. Chhaya Sharma, DIG (Investigation), NHRC, Mr. Sudhir Kumar, Special Rapporteur, NHRC, ten participating States viz. Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, Member of NCPCR, Chairperson of Rajasthan SCPCR and Karnataka SCPCR, Senior Government Officials, legal experts, Resource Persons, academicians and representatives of NGOs/CSOs.

1.1. Inaugural Session

1.1.1 Shri Dilip Kumar, Joint Secretary (Training & Research), NHRC welcomed all participants on behalf of NHRC and outlined the objectives of the meeting that included raising awareness, ensuring effective legislation and addressing existing gaps in the legislation and policies to arrive at a set of recommendations. He shared that the current meeting was a follow up of a regional consultation in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, where participants of 6 states revisited the issue as a human rights violation.

1.1.2 Ms. Razia Ismail, Convener, CSO Coalition, described the National Conference as a defining event in its historic positioning of child marriage as a violation of human rights and not just a child development deficit. Claiming the right of every child to security she claimed that the practice of child marriage inflicts three children, an underage bride forced into pregnancy, the child born out of this marriage and the underage boy. While acknowledging the decrease in the instances of child marriage over the years, Ms. Ismail hoped that the conference would help identify the groups that are still affected by the practice as well as the issues that were blocking change.

1.1.3 In his inaugural address Shri Ambuj Sharma, Secretary General, NHRC placed child marriage within the continuum of India's struggle with social evils like sati and dowry and made references to its origin points within societal, cultural acceptance and economic compulsions. Calling child marriage a violation of human rights, he linked

its continuation to the underlying societal acceptance of the practice and defects in the democratic polity. Shri Sharma, proposed the launching of a “common minimum national programme” to end child marriage, with measurable success indicators and achievable targets and the provision of incentives to officials for their endeavours in ending the practice in their districts. Including child marriage in the human development index of village plans would ensure building on social infrastructure along with the physical. Pointing to the contradictions in the provisions of the law and its implementation he observed that very few cases are taken to court. Expressing the desire to repeat such meetings biannually to maintain the focus on the issue, Shri. Sharma thanked SAIEVAC and the CSO Coalition for their support.

- 1.1.4 **Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEEC** in a Special Address spoke of SAIEVAC's work towards providing safe spaces for children. Stating that the National Conference on Child Marriage was critical not just for India but for the South Asia region and wider world, Dr. Chopel hoped that the discussions would lead to a reassessment of the investment of efforts to bring about change in the lives of children on the ground. The partnership with Human Rights Institutions marked a change in the dimension under which the discourse on child rights violation takes place, taking the issue from defaults in addressing children's needs and rightful entitlements to the violation of children's fundamental human rights.
- 1.1.5 Giving the Presidential Address, **Smt. Jyotika Kalra, Member, NHRC** highlighted the discrepancies and contradictions in various legal provisions related to child marriage, and recommended a review and reconciliation of all such legislations. These included the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Prevention of Sexual Offences against Children (POCSO), 2012, Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act. In the IPC also there is discrepancy regarding punishment of rape i.e. there is no punishment for rape if wife is between 15 to 18 years of age whereas when the wife is below 12, the penalty is imprisonment which shall not be less than seven years but which may be for life or for a term which may extend to 10 years and fine. If, however, the wife is above 12 but below 15, the punishment is milder i.e. imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or fine or both. Ms. Kalra cited the recommendations of the Law Commission Report 205, to make all marriages below 16 to be void, marriages between 16 to 18 to be voidable, registration of marriage to be made compulsory and age of marriage for both boys and girls should be 18. Recommendations of Law Commission are based on CEDAW. As per the data available out of 192 countries, equal age of marriage is in 128 countries. She also cited Supreme Court ruling on child marriage in *Seema v Ashwini Kumar* which made registration of marriage compulsory. Along with the enactment of laws, she called for an increased investment in gender-sensitive education and skill development programmes for girls and stressed the need for providing information and for continuous engagement with boys, girls, religious leaders, and influencers.

1.1.6 Delivering the Vote of Thanks, Dr. M.D.S. Tyagi, Joint Director (Research), NHRC summed up the key points made by the speakers that included a proposal for a Common Minimum National Programme with measurable indicators, a review and reconciliation of legislations, contributions to national and regional initiatives and working in partnerships to address the child marriage.

2.0 Session I: Commitments, Ground realities and Signs of Change- State Presentations

Chair: Smt Jyotika Kalra, Member, NHRC

Co-chair: Shri Ambuj Sharma, Secretary General, NHRC

2.1 Government representatives from the States of Bihar, Haryana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Odisha, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh made presentations on the current scenario prevalent in the States, strategies and best practices adopted to end child marriage and future action plan. The presentations highlighted the intent and commitment of all the State governments in addressing the issue and their efforts and initiatives to end the practice. The State presentations were followed by a Panel discussion on **Commitments, Ground Realities and Sign of Change** by experts from different fields on the subject.

2.2 All states have initiated on- the- ground awareness campaigns to raise awareness on the issue and have set up institutional mechanisms to prevent child marriage and enforce the provisions of the PCMA Act, 2006. Child Marriage Prohibition officers have been identified and notified in most states.

2.3 Challenges cited in the states included the prevalence of harmful traditional practices like Atta Satta (simultaneous marriage of a brother and sister pair from two households), lack of awareness of the legal implications of the PCMA, delay in reporting, absence of support from local leaders and the lack of resources.

2.4 There was agreement on the need for a multi-pronged, multi stakeholder strategy to address the issue and to identify and target programmes in 'hotspots' within each state. Recommendations from representatives included the need to provide for the rehabilitation of the girls who were rescued from child marriage, linking schemes such as conditional cash transfers to girls completing secondary schooling.

2.5 Key highlights from the State presentations are given below:

2.5.1 Bihar

- A state wide campaign called '*Baal Vivah Evam Dahej Mukht Bihar*' was launched on October 2nd, 2017 to end the practices of child marriage and dowry in the state. The first phase of the campaign has focussed on using multiple media to create visibility, generate support and encourage commitment from stakeholders in all 38 districts. The Chief Minister of Bihar has personally issued letters to all districts and over 24.5 million people have so far pledged to end child marriage and dowry.

- A human chain was formed with over 30 million people participating across the states. Activities in phase 2 include the formation of adolescent groups, meetings in high burden districts with focussed community mobilisation interventions.
- Child marriage has been included among the development indicators for women and girls in Bihar along with gender gap and literacy.

2.5.2 Haryana

- The Haryana government has appointed 21 full time Child Marriage Prevention Officers (CMPOs) at the district level and a consultant who are based in the special cell of the Women's police station that is present in each district. The CMPO have received training and have full time staff to execute orders.
- The Haryana State Legal Services Association (SLSA) has set up legal clinics in the special cells. Standard Operating Procedures have been developed to stop the conducting of child marriages during festivals such as the Akshya, Tritya, an auspicious period for solemnising of marriages.

2.5.3 Karnataka

- While elaborating its effort stated that a Child Marriage Prohibition and Monitoring Cell has been created at the Directorate of Women and Child Development that has so far prevented 5081 child marriages. Coordination and Review Committees have been constituted at the state, district, taluk and Child Protection Committees at the gram panchayat level for the prevention of child marriages. There are nearly 58,400 Child Marriage Prohibition Officers have been appointed and trained.
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Karnataka) Rules have been reframed in 2014 and been translated into Kannada.
- The Mahila Samakhya programme has been used to spread awareness through mass media and the creation of television serials.
- has been made free for girls till the till the pre-university level.
- The Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme in the state has introduced two important conditions- that girls should continue in high school and should not have participated in child marriage.

2.5.4 Odisha

- As an institutional mechanism a State Policy for girls and women has been formulated as well as a State strategy paper for Prohibition of child marriage.
- The NHRC's Regional Conference on Child Marriage was hosted by Odisha with the participation of 6 states. Working groups have been set up with CSO participation that helped develop strategies related to legal framework, communication and security and relationship between human trafficking and child marriage.
- The Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme has been implemented in the state since 2011. Scholarships to continue schooling are being given to children of construction labourers.

- Audio visual medium like films, leaflets, and social media campaigns have been used to spread awareness on the issue.
- Special focus in Gajapati and Rayagada Districts in the form of integrated District interventions. Many tribal groups have passed resolutions regarding postponing the age of marriage.

2.5.5 Rajasthan

- Special awareness programmes are initiated during the Akha Teej and Peepal Poonima festivals which are considered auspicious periods for marriages.
- In March 2007, the State government launched the State Strategy and Action Plan (SSAP) to end child marriage and to make Rajasthan child marriage free within a decade. The specific objectives are to strengthen the policies and systems to deliver programs and services; empower adolescents with information, knowledge and skills; involvement of communities for change in norms, attitudes beliefs, practices; Improve the implementation of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act; Creation of robust data management and tracking system.

2.5.6 West Bengal

- Awareness building on the issue has been initiated through various campaigns by the government and the CSOs in the State.
- The Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme was started by the State Government in 2013 to improve the life and the status of girls by helping economically backward families with cash so that the families do not arrange the marriage of their girls before 18 years. 4.8 million Girls have enrolled in this scheme.
- The SCPCR is training teachers in schools and at the Panchayat level to strengthen the on-ground reporting system and capability to prevent child marriage.
- Kanyashree Clubs have been initiated in Murshidabad and Malda, where the rates of child marriage are the highest. Communities are encouraged through oath-taking ceremonies and provision of incentives for stopping child marriage. In Murshidabad, the Kanashree scheme has prevented over 500 child marriages.
- Inter-faith campaigns have been designed and implemented, and this has led to a better interpretation of the scriptures and texts.

2.5.7 Uttar Pradesh

- Illiteracy and poverty are primary causes of child marriage. A key factor impacting child marriage is girls dropping out of school after primary education. The government is focussing on keeping girls in schools.
- The Chief Minister has directed the police to liaise with schools at block level to check child marriage. Police are including priests and preachers in launching awareness campaigns.

- Uttar Pradesh has launched an 'India's Daughters' campaign in all schools promoting meetings and rallies against the customs. Sensitisation programmes are also being conducted for District officials and Child Welfare Committee officials.

Panel Discussion

Panelists: Ms. Bharti Ali, Co-Director, HAQ Centre for Child Rights, Dr Srinivas Goli, Asst. Professor, JNU, Mr. Venkat Reddy, National Convener, M.V Foundation, and Dr Kalpana Apte, Secretary-General, Family Planning Association of India

- 2.5.8** Experts and representatives from civil society organisations and academia participated in a panel discussion on the inherent societal and systemic challenges and gaps, pointing to key actions required to address child marriage. The implications on the health and reproductive rights of children were highlighted. Suggestions included the need to strengthen the birth registration process, address legal lacunae and contradictions, promote the agency of both boys and girls, investment of resources, involving of self-help groups, religious leaders, community influencers, opinion makers and media.
- 2.5.9** **Ms. Bharti Ali**, Co-Director, HAQ, Centre for Child Rights highlighted the need to strengthen the birth registration system and coverage, reasoning that any litigation on child rights is dependent on the proof of age. Suggesting that eliminating child marriage would require working on Self (empowering boys and girls), Society and Systems she spelt out the need to reach out to community and religious leaders, mothers, influencers, self-help groups to support boys and girls. Ms. Ali recommended the revival of the Mahila Samakhyas programme which had seen remarkable achievements. This is needed to be followed up with accountable support systems at the community level and investments in concrete research. Ms. Ali spoke of the dichotomies created in the tussle between women's rights and children's rights while questioning the criminalisation of children (16-18 years) cloping to get married.
- 2.5.10** **Mr. Venkat Reddy**, National Convener, MV Foundation quoted from the testimonials of two young girls following their marriage while still children. He recommended that the gram panchayat maintain the data and monitor each ward. He cautioned against the Compulsory Cash Transfer schemes which many times had an adverse effect on girls while benefitting parents. Mr. Reddy suggested that governments use the funds to support for higher education and recommended mapping good practices such as the formation of girls' collectives that are protesting child marriage. He proposed the extension of compulsory free education till 18 years of age, and access to free health services.
- 2.5.11** **Dr. Srinivas Goli**, Assistant Professor, JNU, presented a conceptual framework for macro level consequences of child marriage and listed the adverse impact of child marriage on demographic progress, health and nutrition progress, educational

progress and economic progress and poverty reduction. He cautioned against making generalised assumptions and inferences based on macro-level data. An analysis of state-wise data against factors such as education levels and literacy did not indicate any significant direct correlation between child marriage and education. States therefore needed to identify their own hot spots and reasons for child marriage, and tailor their interventions accordingly.

2.5.12 Dr. Kalpana Apte, Secretary-General, Family Planning Association of India, highlighted the need to bring in the health perspective and link it to child marriage. She drew attention to the high rates of maternal mortality in India and placed the origins of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) within the framework of human rights. She called for increased attention towards the emotional, physical and mental stress caused by child marriage and the cost in terms of women in their thirties suffering from cervical cancer owing to early sexual activity. Stressing on the need to bridge the systemic gaps and reviewing the role of grassroots functionaries like the Auxiliary Nurse Midwives and the Anganwadi workers, Dr. Apte underlined the need for building more awareness and information on sexually transmitted diseases.

3.0 Session II: Legal and Policy Commitments- Application in Governance: Access to Justice

Chair: Smt. Jyotika Kalra, Member, NHRC.

Speakers: Ms. Manan Chaturvedi, Chairperson, Rajasthan SCPCR, Prof. (Dr.) Jaya Sagade, ILS, Pune, Ms Chhaya Sharma, DIG (Investigation), NHRC.

3.1 Ms. Manan Chaturvedi, Chairperson, Rajasthan, SCPCR spoke on the need to understand ground realities and the challenges posed by existing cultural practices in order to connect with communities and focus on interventions to end child marriage. She spoke of traditional practices like the Atta Satta and Natha Pratha that allows women and men to live together without any legal bindings. She suggested the strengthening of current legislation such as the POCSO Act on ground by spreading awareness on them and increasing the accessibility of the vulnerable groups to legal processes.

3.2 Professor Jaya Sagade, ILS, Pune , spoke of the concerns around access to justice through the PCMA, 2006. She presented possible scenarios linked to child marriage and the legal recourses available. These include preventing a child marriage before it happens, instances after the event, where the girl expresses her unwillingness to continue in the marriage, and in situations where the girl wishes to continue with the marriage. Suggesting that all child marriages are forced marriages, Dr. Sagade, spoke of the need for training of the police and judiciary on the use of the legislation in all scenarios. She also called for a reconciliation of legislative provisions in the different Acts and a review of the PCMA, 2006 to remove the confusion caused by the differentiation in the definition of the terms 'void' and voidable in the Act.

3.3 Ms. Chhaya Sharma, DIG (Investigation), NHRC, shared experiences from the field on the involvement of the police in responding to reporting of child marriage. She spoke of the need for assistance from Child Welfare Committees and NGOs in providing safe places for rescued girls to stay as the police did not have any provisions. Very often girls were trafficked from other states and the police then had to overcome language barriers and medical conditions. Ms. Sharma spoke of the gaps in implementation and legal capability leading to police inability to play a pro-active role. The challenges the police faced included delayed reporting, parents destroying proof of age documents, girls refusing to file complaints or give statements. She emphasised the need for providing training to the police force to deal with cases of child marriage with more empathy.

4.0 Session III: Working Groups were formed to discuss and come up with the recommendations to address the issues pertaining to the key areas and the recommendations on the following were presented and debated in the **Session IV of the Conference on Day 2.**

Group 1: Legal and Policy Commitments- Application in Governance: Access to Justice;

- **Group 2: Dynamics of influencing factors including social and cultural aspects on Child Marriage: Preventive Measures;**
- **Group 3: Formulating Strategic Framework and Action Plan on ending Child Marriage**

5.0 Finally, the **Session V** discussed the **National Action Plan on Children, 2016** from a perspective of ending Child Marriage under the chairmanship of by **Smt. Jyotika Kalra, Member, NHRC** and **Smt. Rupa Kapoor, Member, NCPCR.** The expert members included **Shri Sudhir Kumar, Special Rapporteur, NHRC, Ms. Razia Ismail and Dr. Sunil Mehra, from Civil Society Organizations.**

5.1 Ms. Razia Ismail, Convenor, CSO Coalition, gave a brief background to the development of the National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC), 2016 that involved many stakeholders. The NPAC outlines the importance of children, and sets out measures to ensure their rights to survival, development, protection and participation. However the document has not been as widely disseminated as it needed to have been and the monitoring and implementing mechanisms have still not been set up as outlined in the document.

5.2 Shri Sudhir Kumar, Special Rapporteur, NHRC, spoke on the systemic issues linked to child marriage and the need to strengthen grassroots bodies and the role of the panchayats to ensure that families look at the requirements of children. Emphasising on parents training for awareness on fulfilling the legal, physical and societal needs of children he suggested the need to fix responsibilities within the gram panchayat to address practices such as child marriage.

5.3 Dr. Sunil Mehra, Director, MAMTA, New Delhi, stated that the cultural aspects of all the districts should be kept in mind while formulating strategies. He suggested that focussed programmatic interventions and quick action in the 120 districts showing high rates of child marriage would bring in the desired results of eliminating the practice faster, perhaps within the next decade. He opined that social interventions through village panchayats rather than the PCMA may be the best route to end the practice.

5.4 Calling the National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) 2016, a progressive document, **Ms. Rupa Kapur**, Member, NCPCR, highlighted several commendable features of the NPAC. She shared the inputs given by the NCPCR and mentioned that the plan needed to be reflected in State action plans in order to be implemented. On child marriage, Ms. Kapur stated that in addition to addressing systemic and societal issues, training of various personnel and stakeholders was essential to end the practice.

5.5 Concluding the session, **Ms. Jyotika Kalra**, Member, NHRC, called for the NPAC to be translated into vernacular languages and be disseminated at every level.

5.6 Valedictory Session

5.6.1 Highlighting the necessity of placing elimination of child marriage on the agenda of all state governments, **Shri. Ambuj Sharma**, Secretary General, stated NHRC's intent to write to all the Chief Secretaries in this regard. He also expressed NHRC's agreement with the recommendations of various speakers and delegates on having a national level consciousness in the form of a **mission mode campaign and programme** with clearly measurable goals and outcomes. He proposed that NHRC may collaborate with NCPCR to develop monitoring procedures and work towards periodic focussed discussions on the issue.

5.6.2 **Ms. Jyotika Kalra**, Member, NHRC reiterated the need for the harmonisation of laws and stated the need for a policy concerning child marriage. While listing the challenges of implementing social legislation, she emphasised that the Supreme Court order needs to be implemented and every State needed to make Rules for the compulsory registration of marriages. Appreciating the state presentations and their initiatives towards addressing the issue, she highlighted key derivatives from the presentations.

5.6.3 Thanking the NHRC and the CSO Coalition and expressing his appreciation for the collective and participatory nature of the meeting, **Mr. Rinchen Chopel**, Director General, SAIEVAC mentioned that two of the member countries in the region were using the NHRC, CSO coalition template and agenda to plan their own initiative.

6.0 Recommendations emanated from the deliberations of the Conference

6.1 Review and appropriate amendment in the PCMA Act

- To make all marriages below 16 years age to be ‘void’ and between 16-18 years to be ‘voidable’.
- Time limits for annulment of child marriage and other actions including the filing of application for injunctions should be specified in the Act
- Recognise NGOs and prominent people who play a role in ending child marriage as ‘next friends’ along with the Child Marriage Prohibition Officer under subsection 2 of Section 3 of PCMA for strengthening support systems to the minor victims.
- Based on the Law Commission’s Report No.205, published in 2008, the Government may examine the case for fixing uniform age of marriage for both girls and boys as in the case in over 125 countries in the world, based on a detailed and critical consideration of all pros and cons in the Indian context.

Action: Ministry of Women & Child Development/Ministry of Law and Justice

6.2 Appropriate changes in Right to Education Act: The term ‘Compulsory education’ under RTE Act may be extended up to the age of 18 years and completion of Senior Secondary Education i.e. till Class 12 instead of 14 years and completion of elementary education at present.

Action: Ministry of Human Resource Development/ Ministry of Law and Justice

6.3 Inclusion of child related laws in schools’ curricula: There should be convergence with MHRD at national level and Department of Education (DoE) at the state level to integrate gender and rights education in the school curriculum, highlighting focus on child marriage.

Action: Ministry of Human Resource Development/ Ministry of Law and Justice.

6.4 Common Minimum Programme: There is a need for the Government of India to undertake an in-depth research to understand the underlying causes of social and cultural factors contributing to child marriage and develop a uniform **Common Minimum Programme** at the national level and the State Governments to follow up the messages specific to each state [local language] to combat child marriage.

Action: Ministry of Women & Child Development/ Concerned Department of State Governments/UTs.

6.5 Sensitization and Awareness Campaign: Develop, launch and roll-out of State and District wide campaigns through media, use of role models, and dissemination of communication materials through different means. At the block level and village level, link the dissemination of the campaign to other types of folk media and community mobilization efforts, such as street theatre, radio shows and rallies. Further, the most important provisions of the PCM Act should be taken out, highlighted and then published in vernacular languages in all Districts.

Action: Ministry of Women & Child Development/ Department WCD of State Governments/UTs.

6.6 Vulnerability Mapping: Assign responsibility to empower and engage PRIs and standing committees to periodically map the vulnerable areas at village and block level where child marriage takes place, monitor and track every child's status on education until the legal age of 18. The support of School Management Committees [SMCs] and VLCPCs may be considered in achieving the above. For the purpose, technology should be used for real time data collection, recording, tracking, analysis and identification of hotspots and for awareness generation

Action: Concerned Departments of State Governments/UTs.

6.7 States to develop and undertake monitoring and evaluation for measuring outcomes through participation of all stakeholders involved.

- Efforts from all the stake holders are required to address the problem of Child Marriage in a mission mode.
- Registration of marriages to be made compulsory.
- States to constitute a Task force involving representatives of all line departments (WCD, Education, Health and Family Welfare, Labour and Employment, Panchayati Raj, Revenue) at all levels of administration from State to Village level to ensure the effective convergence between the various line departments.
- Task Force to conduct frequent deliberations involving NGOs and Civil Society members at all levels to ensure convergence between State and non-State players.
- State Task Force to undertake half yearly evaluation to gauge outcomes and impact.

Action: Concerned Departments of State Governments/UTs.

6.8 Tracking and Follow-up of registered cases: Both the cases of (i) child marriage still pending prosecution and (ii) in those cases where child marriage was effectively stopped, there is a need for tracking and follow up of all such cases.

Action: Concerned Departments of State Governments/UTs.

6.9 Rehabilitation of the victim: The State Governments need to formulate a financial plan for rehabilitation of girl victims regarding maintenance, both for the period during annulment proceedings before the Courts and after such annulments also,

where the circumstances of the case so require.

Action: Concerned Departments of State Governments/UTs.

6.10 Appointment of Child Marriage Prohibition Officer: There is a need to appoint sufficient number of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPO) at the block level and village level by involving government functionaries of Education, Health departments, etc, available at that level and the statistics of incidence of child marriage to be maintained for routine follow up.

Action: Concerned Departments of State Governments/UTs.

6.11 Develop Life skill education curriculum for adolescent girls: institutionalize the training of adolescent girls on life skills education through Anganwadi and/or ASHA workers at community level and the teachers at school level. There is a need for integrating Job oriented vocational training in higher education to ensure girls and women are empowered with employable skills and increase their presence in workforce.

Action: Concerned Departments of State Governments/UTs.

6.12 Involvement of Religious Leaders: Engage religious leaders of all faiths so as to enthuse their commitment in Saying NO to SOLEMNIZING marriages before legal age. This also calls for registration of all religious leaders who are engaged in solemnizing marriage and to restrain them from solemnizing Child Marriage without age proof and consent of the bride and groom.

Action: Concerned Departments of State Governments/UTs.

6.13 Community policing: There is a need to introduce community based policing in every State for strengthening the police effectiveness in preventing child marriages as this would help in police officers and private citizens work together in creative way. One such programme in this direction is AMA Police Project introduced by the Odisha Police.

Action: Concerned Departments of State Governments/UTs.

6.14 Linking of welfare benefits with child marriage: Create a linkage between the financial benefits from the state and central government schemes and Birth and Marriage Registration Certificates to ensure delay in marriage of girls and boys until legal age of marriage.

Action: Concerned Departments of State Governments/UTs

6.15 NPAC to be translated into vernacular languages and be disseminated at every level
Action: Concerned Departments of State Governments/UTs.
