

TELANGANA

STATE ACTION PLAN

TO PREVENT
CHILD MARRIAGES



**Department of
Women Development & Child Welfare Department
Telangana State**

**STATE ACTION PLAN TO PREVENT
CHILD MARRIAGES
(SAPPCM)**

2020

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This study was carried out by Poverty Learning Foundation in partnership with Mahita (GAA Implementing Partner) and financially supported by Plan India.

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Mahita (2021) State Action Plan to End Child Marriages, Mahita (GAA partner),
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FOREWARD

Marriage before the age of 18 is known as child marriage and it is a fundamental violation of human rights. It is one of the most prevalent forms of gender based violence and social evil. Child marriage denies child rights and hampers their physical, emotional, economical and psychological wellbeing and mitigate the opportunity to fully develop their potential as healthy, productive and empowered citizens. Child marriage also affects boys, but to a lesser degree than they affect girls. It often compromises a girl's development by resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupting her schooling, limiting her opportunities for career and vocational advancement and placing her at an increased risk of domestic violence. Many factors come into play to place a girl at risk of child marriage; these include poverty, family honor, social norms, customary or religious laws that condone the practice, lack of proper education facilities, an inadequate legislative framework etc.

Though several efforts have been taken up to eradicate this problem, it still persists at significant level in our country. In India the prevalence of child marriage declined from 47 percent girls married before age 18, in 2005-2006 to 27 percent in 2015-2016. In Telangana State, where according to NFHS 4, 25.7 percent of women aged 20-24, were married before the age of 18 years. That means one in every four children in the state of Telangana is a victim of child marriage.

To address the issue of child marriages, Plan India has been implementing 'Girls Advocacy Alliance' project in Telangana since 2016. The programme lays emphasis on the elimination of violence against girls and young women and their economic exclusion as policy priorities. The project closely works with government, religious leaders, CSOs and corporates on ending child marriages by promoting education for girls. GAA collaborated with reputed academic institutions and brought out research studies on factors contributing child marriages, situation of child brides, implementation of GO Ms. NO 13, PCMA and CMRA and conditional cash transfers in the state of Telangana. This helped policymakers with evidence-based advocacy and enabled key stakeholders to understand the gravity of the problem, and to take proactive steps to stop child marriages. GAA supported Govt of TS in bringing out 'child marriage free villages guidelines' for training village surpanches, manual on 'strengthening of protection committees' and to develop a State Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriages.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Telangana State and the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare for their tireless efforts in addressing the issue of child marriages and I am sure that the State Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriages document will serve as an effective tool to end child marriages in Telangana state before 2030 as was committed towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I reassure the support of Plan India to Govt of TS in making Telangana a 'Child Marriage Free State'.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Md Asif".

Mohammad Asif
Executive Director, Plan India

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
Title page	1
Foreword from the Executive Director, Plan India	3
Acknowledgements	4
Table of Contents	5
Abbreviations	6
State Action Plan – Note	8
Structure	9

Part One		
Section 1	Introduction	11
Section 2	Methodology and Conceptual Framework	15
Section 3	Prevalence of Child Marriages	18
Section 4	Drivers of Child Marriages	22
Section 5	Policies and Programs to End Child Marriages	27
Section 6	Challenges before Policy Makers & Implementers	30
Part Two		
Section 7	Action Plan Strategies	36
Section 8	Implementation Mechanism	51
Section 9	Monitoring and Evaluation	56
Part Three		
Section 10	Annexures – Results Framework	74

ABBREVIATIONS

ACDPO	Assistant Child Development Programme Officer
ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWW	Anganwadi Worker
AWC	Anganwadi Centre
BBBP	Beti Bachao Beti Pado
BC	Backward Caste
BRB	Bala Raksha Bhavan
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CESS	Centre for Economic and Social Studies
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.
CDPO	Child Development Protection Office
CMPO	Child Marriage Protection Officer
CMRA	Child Marriage Restraint Act
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Children
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWC	Child Welfare Committee
DCPO	District Child Protection Officer
DCPU	District Child Protection Unit
DCPS	District Child Protection Committee
DLHS	District Level Household Survey
EBC	Economically Backward Class
ECM	Early/Child Marriage
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GP	Gram Panchayat
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRC	Human Rights Committee
ICPS	Integrated Child Protection Scheme
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IEC	Information, Education and Communication material
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
JJ ACT	Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000
JOVT	Job-oriented Vocational Trainings
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
MCPC	Mandal Child Protection Committees
MDO	Mandal Development Officer

MEO	Mandal Education Officer
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPV	Mahila/women Police Volunteers
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NFHS	National Family and Health Survey
OBC	Other Backward Caste
PCMA	Prohibition of Child Marriages Act
PHC	Primary Health Care
PLF	Poverty Learning Foundation
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
PRD	Panchayti Raj Department
RDO	Revenue Divisional Officer
RKSK	Rastriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram
SAPPCM	State Action Plan for the Prevention of Child Marriages
SAARC	South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCPCR	State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
SCERT	State Council of Education and Training
SCPS	State Child Protection Society
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEM	Socio-Ecological Model
SHG	Self-Help Groups
SJPU	Special Juvenile Police Unit
SMECM	State Mission to End Child Marriages
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
ST	Scheduled Tribe
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VAO	Village Administrative Officer
VCPS	Village Child Protection Committee
VCPC	Village Child Protection Committees
VDP	Village Development Plan
VRO	Village Revenue Officer
WCD	Women and Child Welfare Department
WDCW	Women Development and Child Welfare Department

STATE ACTION PLAN TO PREVENT CHILD MARRIAGES

India has committed to eliminating child, early, and forced marriage by 2030 in line with target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. India agreed to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets the minimum age of marriage of 18. It ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993, which obligates states to ensure free and full consent to the marriage.

India is also a focus country of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Program to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriages. Representatives of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), including India, asserted the Kathmandu Call to Action to End Child Marriage in Asia in 2014. During its 2017 Universal Periodic Review, India agreed to consider recommendations to improve enforcement of legal provisions against child marriage².

In line with the Government of India's commitments, the nodal agency – The Department of Women Development and Child Welfare, Government of Telangana has been making remarkable efforts to end child marriages by 2030. The Honourable Chief Minister of Telangana, Sri. K. Chandrasekhar Rao, has also spoken out against this harmful practice and announced special programs to promote girl child education and prevent girl child marriage before 18.

To strengthen the implementation mechanism to end child marriages, the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare, Government of Telangana, has drafted a "State Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriages by 2030" with the technical support of Poverty Learning Foundation, Plan India, and Mahita.

Strategy:

Telangana State aims to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5.3 and ensure zero child marriages by 2030. To achieve the target, the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare is taking an integrated and holistic approach by working with key departments strengthening the implementation mechanism and monitoring the status from time to time, and provide all levels of opportunities to the girl children to utilize their full potential and contribute to the overall growth of the state.

Vision:

All girl children in the state, irrespective of their social identity, will have access to secondary education, healthcare, and employable skills, and enter the job market.

Aim:

Through a better understanding of the social, economic, and cultural factors driving child marriages, policymakers, policy implementers, and civil society leaders together put efforts to eventually eliminate child marriages by 2030.

Validity:

From the official notification data, the State Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriages will be valid till the end of 2025. After reviewing the situation and progress in 2025, with needed changes and strategies, it will continue till the end of 2030.

STRUCTURE

Limitations

The study has two potential limitations:

- Budgetary information does not give a complete picture due to the non-availability of data on budgetary allocations from stakeholder departments.
- Data used in explaining the prevalence of child marriages in Telangana is drawn from NFHS 4 and DLHS, which have data for ten erstwhile districts.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

PREVALENCE

DRIVERS

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

1. INTRODUCTION

Child marriage – marriage before the age of 18 – is a human rights violation. Despite laws against it, the harmful practice remains widespread. Child marriage can lead to a lifetime of suffering. Girls who marry before they turn 18 are less likely to remain in school and more likely to experience domestic violence. Young teenage girls are more likely to die due to pregnancy and childbirth complications than women in their 20s, and their children are more likely to be stillborn or die in the first month of life¹.



“Children must get the best possible start in life. Their survival, protection, growth and development in good health and with proper nutrition are the essential foundations of human development. We will make concerted efforts to fight infectious diseases, tackle major causes of malnutrition and nurture children in a safe environment that enables them to be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and able to learn”

The basic principle adopted by UN general assembly in 2002 and committed to create a **WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN**



In view of the UN declaration, the Government of India has committed to ensure quality growth for all its children irrespective of gender and ethnicity. After ratifying and accepting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC), several steps have been taken to ensure the well-being of children with quality services. The Indian Government has adopted the National Policy for Children 2013 to reiterate the commitment to the rights-based approach for children.

According to UNICEF, every year, around 12 million girls across the world are forced to into child marriage. About 650 million girls and women alive today were child brides. If a similar trend continues, another 150 million girls will become child brides before 2030². Child marriage puts forth a sequence of critical challenges for girls - adolescent pregnancy and pregnancy complications, leading to the death of girls aged 15-19 worldwide³. Survivors often suffer from pre-birth complications, fistulas, sexually transmitted diseases, stillbirth, and other physical ramifications inflicted upon them and their children .

Children born to child brides have a higher susceptibility to low birth weight, malnutrition, failure to thrive, and physical and cognitive underdevelopment, which can undermine their educational and economic prospects; thus leading to poverty and more child marriages⁵. Therefore, efforts must be undertaken to not only prevent child marriage but also to provide assistance to existing child brides and their children grappling with these demanding challenges—all of which dovetail into many SDGs⁶.

¹UNICEF, Child marriages, <https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-marriage>

²UNICEF (2020) “Child Marriages around the world” <https://www.unicef.org/stories/child-marriage-around-world>

³WHO (2012) “Child Marriages a Threat to Health” <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Life-stages/sexual-and-reproductive-health/news/news/2012/12/child-marriage-a-threat-to-health>

⁵World Vision, <https://www.worldvision.org/child-protection-news-stories/10-worst-places-child-marriage>
Berkeley School of Law and Save the Children (2018) “Towards the end of child marriages” https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Toward-an-End-to-Child-Marriage_Report_FINAL.pdf

⁶ Caranegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs (2019) “Prioritizing the Linkages Between Sustainable Development Goals to Eradicate Child Marriages” https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/ethics_online/prioritizing-linkages-between-sustainable-development-goals-eradicate-child-marriage

Of several challenges that are negatively influencing the wellbeing of children, child marriages are one of the issues challenging the Indian Government. India ranks fourth among the eight South Asian countries in terms of child marriage prevalence - says the recent report from UNICEF⁷. One in three of the world's child brides live in India. Of the country's 223 million child brides, 102 million were married before turning 15⁸.

This ancient practice still flourishes in several states of India, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. Uttar Pradesh is home to the largest population of child brides, with 36 million. In Telangana, eight million child brides were identified⁹. This practice is primarily driven by poverty, deeply embedded cultural norms, traditions, and pervasive discrimination against girls in society. Child marriages are still celebrated en-masse, in public festivals sometimes involving children under ten, who effectively are betrothed until puberty^{10 11}.

Every child has the right to be protected from this harmful practice, which has devastating consequences for individuals and for society. Preventing child marriage is now firmly on the global development agenda, most prominently through its inclusion in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.3, which aims to eliminate the practice by 2030. Although indicator 5.3.1 measures child marriage among girls, the practice occurs among boys as well. Regardless of gender, marriage before adulthood is a breach of children's rights¹².

Besides SDG 5.3, there are other goals, which have strategic linkages with goal 5.3. Unless we have a proper mechanism and action plan to address these goals, it will become a challenging task to zero down child marriages by 2030.

Following are the SDGs, either directly or indirectly, linked with child marriages:

In this context, it is to be noted that "equality in the family is the precondition for Sustainable Development Goal 5, which talks about –

- i. Elimination of violence and an end to harmful practices;**
- ii. Ensuring women's access to economic resources; and**
- iii. Shared responsibilities for unpaid care and domestic work.**

Besides, other SDGs that rely on gender equality in the family are –

SDG 3: Women having access to reproductive health care and family planning;

SDG 4: Girls are able to delay their marriage and complete their schooling;

SDG 8: Family- friendly policies and work-place regulations are in place.

⁷ UNICEF (2019) Ending Child Marriage - A profile of progress in India. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/ending-child-marriage-a-profile-of-progress-in-india/>

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ UNICEF, (2008) Child Marriage and the law, p. 23; see also UNICEF, "Early Marriage: Child Spouses," innocent digest no. 7, March 2001, p.

¹¹ CESS (2018) "Facing Constraints and Seizing Opportunities: Child Marriages in Telangana State", Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad, http://www.mahita.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Facing_Constraints_and_Seizing_opportunities_Child_Marriages_Study_Telangana.pdf

¹² Ibid

The other SDGs that are either directly or indirectly linked to end child marriages are –

- Goal 2:** Zero hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;
- Goal 5:** Gender equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- Goal 10:** Reduce inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries; and
- Goal 16:** Peace, justice and strong institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Several scholars, activists and donors including UN agencies agreed that it is not easy to end child marriages, as it itself is a culture and social norm among many communities. In such a situation, the efforts made by stakeholders like government officials, multilateral organisations and CSOs may not be sufficient, unless there is a strategic direction to address these critical drivers. It needs long-term investments into programmes that work and can be scaled up. Effective interventions to end child marriage must be comprehensive and cross-sectoral.

Government of India's Response to end Child Marriages:

To address the situation, the Union Government has endeavoured to curb the practice, has replaced the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 with a more progressive Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. It includes punitive measures against those who perform, permit and promote child marriage. With this Act, the states are vested with powers to formulate rules for implementation of this legislation and carrying out the provisions.

The National Plan of Action for children 2005 also includes goals on eradicating child marriage. One of the notable initiatives taken by India towards protection of children including the girl child has been the establishment of a National Commission for Protection of Child Rights in 2007 for proper enforcement of children's rights and effective implementation of laws and programs relating to children. Several National level policies formulated since 2000, including the National Population Policy 2000, the National Youth Policy 2003 and the National Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health Strategy have advocated delaying the age at marriage and the age of conceiving the first child¹³.

In this process, National Strategy Document on the Prevention of Child Marriage was drafted in 2013. Besides there are few other policy initiatives, for instance – Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 (amended in 1978), Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000, Domestic Violence Act 2000, Child policy 2003, Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 (GO.No:13), Adolescent and Youth policy 2007, Right to Education 2009, Girl Child policy 2013, Prohibition of Children from Sexual Offence Act 2012 and National Plan of Action for Children 2017 which were brought into enforcement.

Two flagship programmes - National Adolescent Health Strategy Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), and Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP), a programme to address the gender imbalance in sex ratios and child marriage in 100 districts across India were also launched.

Similarly, the State Government of Telangana launched Kalyana Laxmi/Shadi Mubarak to encourage girls' education and thereby end child marriages. Ending child marriages is one of the non-negotiable

¹³Press Information Bureau, Gol 2013, Child marriages in India, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=100741>
<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=100741>

commitments made by the Government of Telangana State. While making an announcement in the Legislative Assembly on “Kalyana Laxmi/Shadi Mubarak” Honourable Chief Minister, Sri. K Chandrasekhara Rao, said the scheme would help eliminate child marriage in the long run and promote girls’ secondary education¹⁴. This indicates the commitment of the state government. However, the results are far behind the expectations, as outlined in Section 3.

It is therefore, to be noted that, more effective and better jointed interventions and collaborations are needed to address child marriage and early childbearing. State government should have specific action plans to address the situation where all stakeholders work together.

Why should child marriages be prevented?

It is clear that child marriages, especially girls early marriage impacts the individual, society and the country in following ways¹⁵ :

- i. **Child marriage effectively ends a girl’s childhood, curtails her education, minimizes her economic opportunities, increases her risk of domestic violence, and puts her at risk for early, frequent, and very high-risk pregnancies.**
- ii. **Adolescent mothers are at higher risk of maternal mortality and morbidity than mothers just a few years older, and maternal mortality and morbidity come with a wide range of economic and social costs and impacts at the individual and household levels.**
- iii. **Girls under 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20s and face higher risk of pregnancy-related injuries, such as obstetric fistula.**
- iv. **Child brides are often unable to negotiate safer sexual practices and are therefore at a higher risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections**
- v. **The negative consequences of child marriage reach beyond the girls themselves: children of child brides are 60 percent more likely to die in the first year of life than those born to mothers older than 19, and families of child brides are more likely to be poor and unhealthy.**

The impacts of child marriage under five key domains are: fertility and population growth; health, nutrition and violence; educational attainments and learnings; participation in the labour force and type of work; and participation in decision making and investments, which are discussed by several scholars. Many governments have recognized the impact of child marriage on their economy. According to the International Centre for Research on Women and the World Bank, ending the practice of child marriage would save billions of dollars in annual welfare expenditures, resulting in global savings of more than \$4 trillion by 2030. In other words, the world cannot afford to allow child marriage to continue. In addition to the child rights imperative it also makes financial/economic sense to stop child marriage.

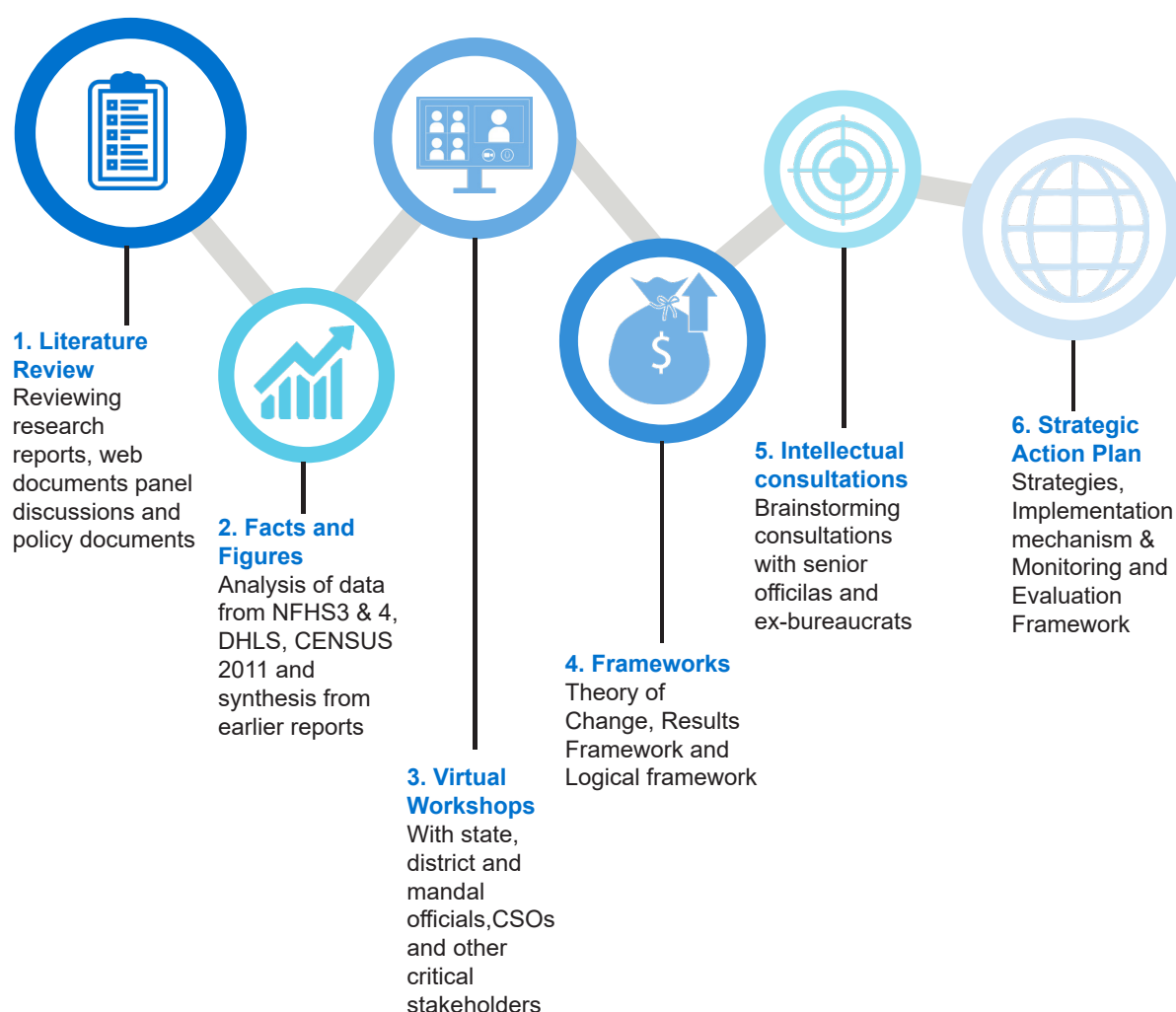
¹⁴The Hindu (<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Hyderabad/kalyana-lakshmi-shaadi-mubarak-amount-enhanced-to-100116/article23296621.ece>)

¹⁵<https://iwhc.org/resources/facts-child-marriage/>

¹⁶World Bank and ICRW (2017) Tea Economic Impact of Child Marriages, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/06/26/child-marriage-will-cost-developing-countries-trillions-of-dollars-by-2030-says-world-bankicrw-report>

2. METHODOLOGY & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The preparation of the **State Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriages** entailed a rigorous participatory process. It involved a bottom-up approach that considered the ground level realities to formulate the Strategic Action Plan. In order to accomplish the objectives of the study, a four-stage merging methodology framework was formulated as shown in the figure below



The merging methodology model¹⁷ has been applied to bring the evidence and draw the strategies. This process has 6 stages.

In the first stage, available literature on the subject has been reviewed and synthesized to understand the international and national policies on child rights with special focus on child marriages. Mainly, reports from UN agencies, international bilateral and multilateral agencies, policy research organizations like the Council for Foreign Relations were used. Besides, it brings ground realities, for instance, ideally accepted gender and social norms, lack of economic opportunities for lower-income groups, limited scope for adolescents to realize their aspirations and choices, lack of institutional capacities to implement programs to prevent child marriages, and lack of authenticated data and proper monitoring that are driving child marriages in the state. Relevant synthesis has been used to set the introductory sections in the State Action Plan.

At second stage, data analysis has been done to understand the prevalence (facts & figures) of child marriages in the state. In this context, data from NFHS 3&4, DLHS, Census 2011, UNICEF data bank and data from the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare has been accessed to draw the prevalence of child marriages.

Virtual workshops¹⁸ (through zoom meetings) and one to one interviews with all critical stakeholders were conducted during the third stage. One state level zoom meeting was organised in which 360 officials at different categories participated from 32 districts and shared their views, opinions and challenges in addressing child marriages at grass root level. As a part of information gathering, child brides were also interviewed to understand their perceptions about their future.

Key output from first (literature review), second (analysis of facts and figures) and third (virtual workshops) stage of work has been merged and logically segregated in to core sections – Strategies, implementation, mechanism and monitoring and evaluation framework. This is a part in fourth stage of work (frame works) , which was followed by constructing the theory of change, results framework and logical frame to finalise the verifiable activities to end child marriages by 2030.

The preliminary document has been placed before intellectuals for review and feedback. Based on the feedback, the draft strategic action plan has been worked-out at sixth stage of work. It was reviewed by the Plan India, Mahita and the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare.

¹⁷Merging methodology is a facilitation technique, which involves bringing the evidences and other relevant resources together, on equal footing, perspectives from relevant groups: researchers, child brides, parents, community, religious leaders, teachers, front line health functionaries, government officials at Mandal and district level, who have direct, and or indirect stakes in ending the child marriages.

¹⁸Originally, it was planned to organise the workshops at state and district level, with key stakeholders to understand their opinions and challenges in implementing the Act to prevent child marriages. However, due to sudden health emergency (Corona Pandemic), and adhering to specified protocols, physical workshops were replaced with virtual workshops with stakeholders.

Conceptual Framework

The strategy for the State Action Plan is informed by a socio-ecological model that takes into consideration a holistic approach and recognizes the various factors that come into play to create conditions for child marriages to thrive. One such theory that explains the interplay between the environmental, social, and individual factors on human behaviour is the Socio-Ecological Model. This model was developed by an American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1989. The Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) is a theory-based framework for understanding the interactive effects of individual and environmental factors on human behaviour.

There are five levels in the SEM model: individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy enabling environment:

- i. The individual level includes characteristics of an individual that influence behaviour like age, sex, knowledge, values, financial status, etc.
- ii. The interpersonal level includes formal and informal social support systems like friends and family, peers and co-workers that can influence one's behaviour
- iii. Institutional level includes the rules and regulations of organizations that can impact behaviour such as stigma, parental consent, office rules, referral systems, etc.
- iv. The community level includes relationships among organizations and institutions and informal networks like village associations, social and cultural norms, services and facilities in the community, etc., and
- v. The policy level includes the local, state, and national policies that shape human behaviour.

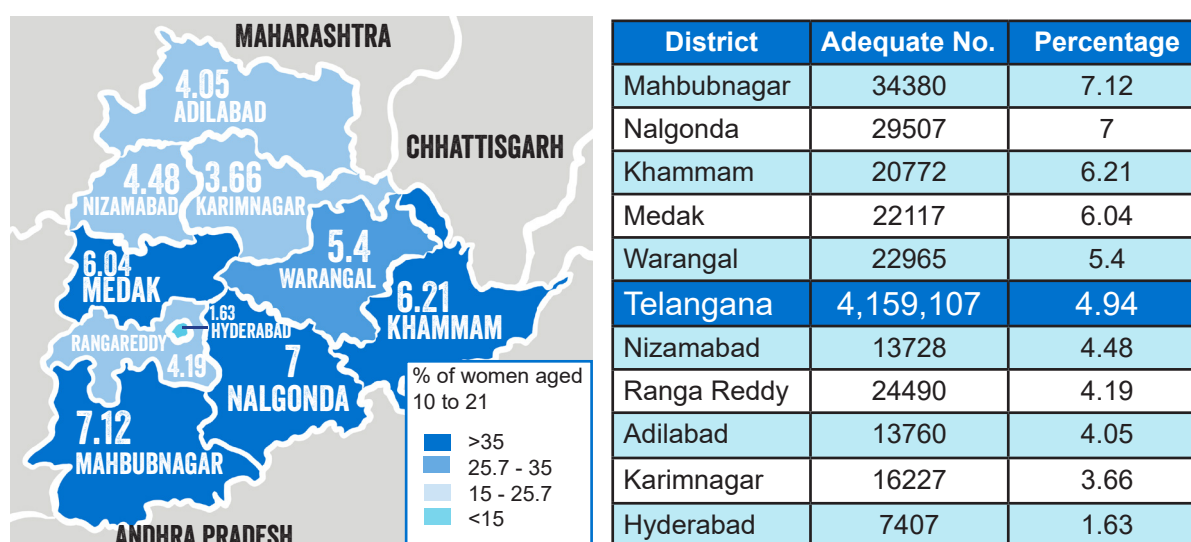
The model assumes that changes in the social environment will also create changes in individuals and therefore it is essential that interventions aimed at changing human behaviour should be directed at changing the five levels of the model (McLeroy et al., 1988). Applying the SEM model to understand child marriages is useful to identify the key drivers that influence the practice and how they all interact to make this practice still prevalent.

Broadly this State Action Plan has been drawn by using social norms approach, gender transformative approach, multi-sectoral approach, and socio-ecological framework approach to ascertain the best results by the end of 2030.

3. PREVALENCE OF CHILD MARRIAGES

In its recent report on child marriages in India, UNICEF¹⁹ stated that one in three of the world's child brides live in India. Of the country's 223 million child brides, 102 million were married before turning 15. Approximately one in four young women in India were married or in union before their 18th birthday.

The Census of India, National Family and health Survey (NFHS), and District Level Household Survey (DLHS) are the important government agencies enumerating the number of child marriages across the states in India. While drafting the programs, several state governments are using the same data.

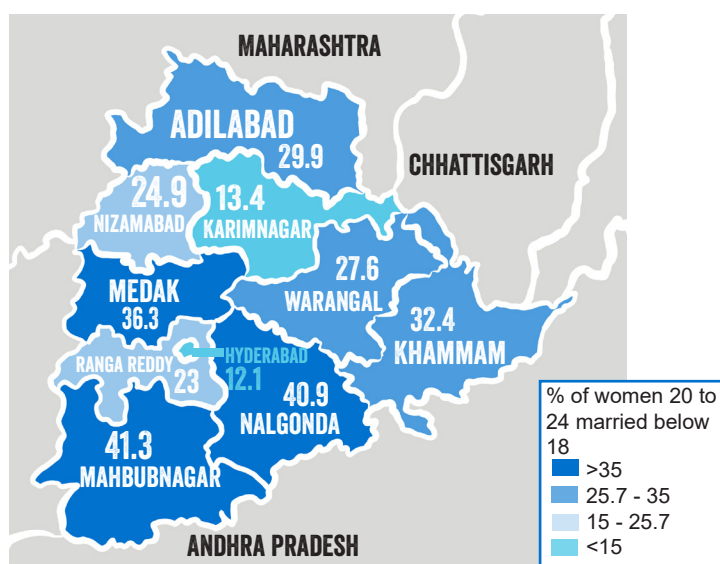


PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN 10-21 WHO WERE MARRIED BELOW THE AGE OF 18 IN TS (NFHS 4)

The Census data of 2011²⁰ says that in Telangana, 4.94% of women aged 10 to 21 were married below the age of 18. Mahbubnagar (7.12%), Nalgonda (7%), Khammam (6.21%), Medak (6.04%), and Warangal (5.4%) districts recorded above state average and rest of the five districts were below state average.

¹⁹UNICEF (2019) "Ending Child Marriages: A Profile of progress in India", UNICEF India, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/ending-child-marriage-a-profile-of-progress-in-india/>

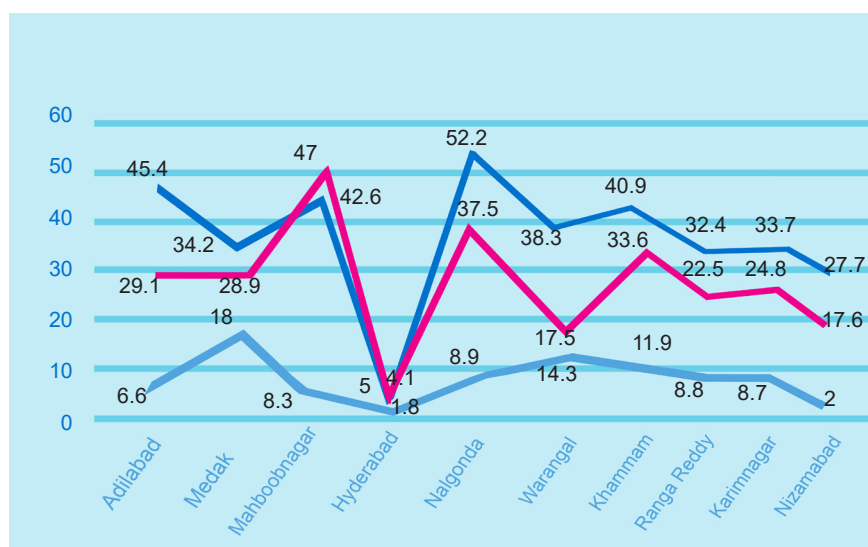
²⁰ Limitation: Census 2011 has data on erstwhile districts.



District	Percentage of women 20 to 24 married below 18
Mahbubnagar	41.3
Nalgonda	40.9
Medak	36.3
Khammam	32.4
Adilabad	29.9
Warangal	27
Telangana	25.7
Nizamabad	24.9
Ranga Reddy	23
Karimnagar	13.4
Hyderabad	12.1

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN 20-24 WHO WERE MARRIED BELOW THE AGE OF 18 IN TS (NFHS 4)

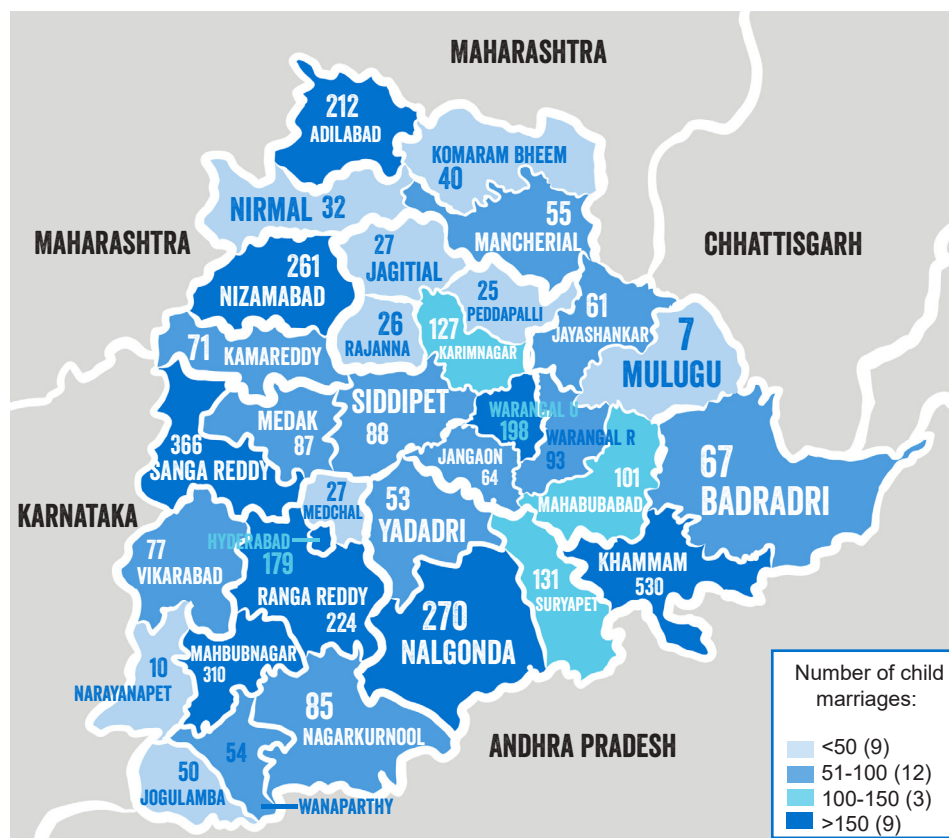
According to NFHS 4 (2015-16) 25.7% of women aged 20 to 24 were married below 18 in the state. It is important to note that the incidence of girl child marriages in seven districts are higher than the state average. Mahabubnagar (41.3%), Nalgonda (40.9%), Medak (36.3%), Khammam (32.4%), Adilabad (29.9%) and Warangal (27.6%) are the districts above state average. Nalgonda (24.9%), Rangareddy (23%), Karimnagar (13.4%) and Hyderabad (12.1%) are the districts below state average.



CHILD MARRIAGES IN TELANGANA AS REPORTED BY DLHS 2,3,4

DLHS series data sets (2002-04, 2007-08 and 2012-13) is showing the declining trends in child marriages in Telangana state. The first-round data (2002-03) shows Nalgonda, Adilabad, and Mahbubnagar have the highest number of child marriages. During the second-round (2007-08), the number of child marriages increased in Mahbubnagar, Nalgonda and Khammam. During the third round (2012-13) Medak, Warangal and Khammam districts have emerged as the top three districts with highest child marriages in the state. Overall, the comparison between DLHS 2, 3 and 4 indicates the declining trends across the districts.

As a part of its monitoring mechanism, the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare is collecting data from the districts across the state. It is evident that, in spite of focused policies and programs, in some of the districts, child marriages are very high. Except Mulugu (n.7), rest of the 32 districts have double and triple digits of child marriages. Twelve districts have more than 100 child marriages with Khammam district having 530 cases.

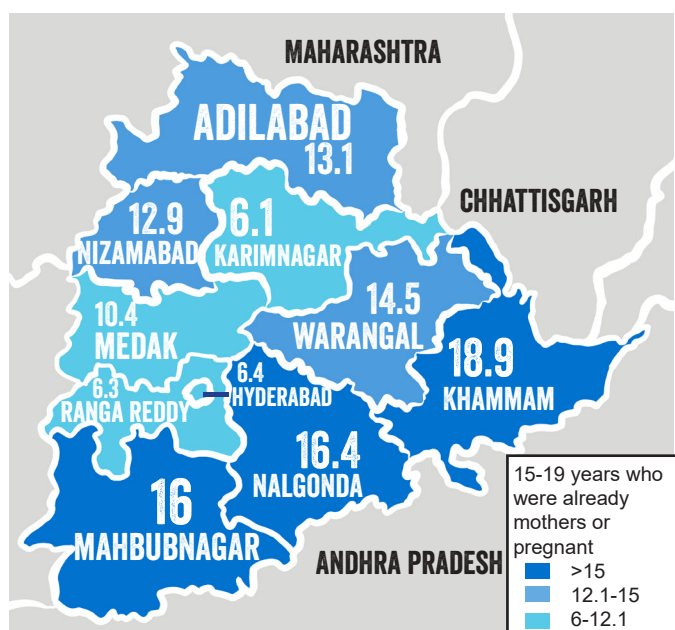


DISTRICT WISE NO. OF CHILD MARRIAGES REGISTERED WITH THE WD&CW FROM 2014 TO OCTOBER 2019 (SOURCE WDCW)

Census 2011 identified 4,159,107 women between 10 to 21 years of age in Telangana. Of this, it further identified 205,353 women (4.9%) got married before they reached the legal age of marriage. NFHS 4 says that 25.7% of the women in the age group of 20 to 24 years married before 18 years of age. Here it is important to note that six districts (erstwhile) are above the state average of 25.7%. Of the total child brides, 12.1 % (state average) are already mothers or pregnant. Three rounds of DLHS data sets (2002-03; 2007-08 and 2012-13) observes declining trends but yet the situation is alarming.

Census 2011 indicates that In Telangana state, the 52.57% literate women aged between 10 to 21, married below 18 years. It further says that 25.53% illiterates, 3.93% literates but below primary education, 18.56% completed primary but below middle schooling, and 18.56% who have completed middle but below secondary education were married before they reach legal age of marriage. It also evident that 0.29% who married before legal age but completed graduation. This indicates the need of making at least secondary education mandatory to girls.

The NFHS 4 highlights that in rural Telangana, out of the total married girls, 12.1% are already mothers, or pregnant at the time of NFHS survey (2015-16). Particularly districts – Khammam, Nalgonda and Mahabubnagar have the highest percentage of girls in this category. The consequences of early marriages results in increased risk for sexually transmitted diseases, cervical cancer, malaria, death during childbirth, and obstetric fistulas. Girls' offspring are at increased risk for premature birth and death as neonates, infants, or children.



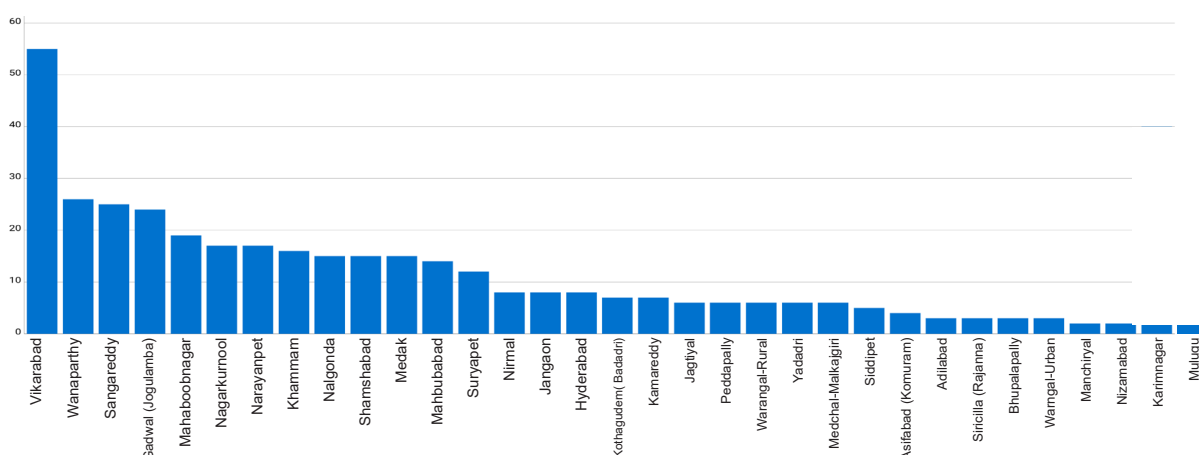
District	Already mothers or pregnant
Khammam	18.9
Nalgonda	16.4
Mahbubnagar	16
Warangal	14.5
Adilabad	13.1
Nizamabad	12.9
Telangana	12.1
Medak	10.4
Hyderabad	6.4
Ranga Reddy	6.3
Karimnagar	6.1

TELANGANA RURAL WOMEN (AGE 15-19) WHO WERE ALREADY MOTHERS OR PREGNANT AT THE TIME OF SURVEY

IMPACT OF A HEALTH EMERGENCY (COVID-19):

The COVID-19 crisis magnifies existing challenges and poses new ones in relation to the on-going child marriage preventive measures. As predicted by United Nation²¹, women and girls will have to experience “catastrophic impact”, which includes increasing levels of poverty and physical and sexual violence, interrupted education, and stress.

Recent reports by Save the Children & UNICEF²² have stated that the families less able to afford the basics, including food and water, less likely to access health care and education, and more at risk of child marriage, violence, exploitation and abuse. Besides increasing poverty levels and inequalities, school closure contributes to child marriages, particularly in rural areas where most families are under stress. In Telangana, few parents have taken advantage of pandemic-driven lockdown for 90 days (April, May and June 2020) and conducted child marriages. The data collected by the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare confirmed 365 incidents of child marriage in 33 districts.



NUMBER OF CHILD MARRIAGES IN 33 DISTRICTS BETWEEN APRIL AND JUNE 2020 DURING LOCKDOWN PERIOD
(SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF WD & CW)

The above statistics say that the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare needs to put extra efforts along with other stakeholders, including the Department of Education, police, Panchayat Raj, Health, Revenue and NGOs. Such collective effort is possible through adopting the State Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriages.

4. DRIVERS OF CHILD MARRIAGES

Poverty, social norms, lack of quality education, traditions and beliefs, and gender-based discrimination are the critical driving forces behind child marriages in Telangana state. Although each one of these factors influences child marriages, poverty stands as the prime reason²³.

Research says that structural factors such as economic, geographic and environmental are the key drivers. Besides, considerable influence of social norms and community perceptions are also promoting drivers. The cost of marriage plays a big role in families sliding further into poverty, and these high costs contribute to girls being forced to marry when other ceremonies are taking place in the family or when older siblings are being married²⁴.

IN TELANGANA STATE CHILD MARRIAGES ARE DRIVEN BY

- **Widely accepted gender & social norms**
- **Lack of economic opportunity for low income group women leads to generational poverty**
- **Limited scope for adolescents to realise their aspirations and choices**
- **Lack of institutional capacity to implement programs/schemes to prevent child marriages**
- **Strong political patronage/weakness in the enforcement mechanism**
- **Lack of authenticated data and proper monitoring**
- **Limitations in law**
- **Less accountability of policy implementing agencies**

²¹<https://news.trust.org/item/20200428134831-2a778>

²²Save the Children & UNICEF (2020) Children in monetary poor households and COVID-19: Technical Note, <https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/TechnicalNote-Children-living-in-monetary-poor-households-and-COVID-19.pdf>

²³ CESS (2018) "Facing Constraints and sizing opportunities: Child Marriages in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh", Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad.

²⁴ <https://unicef.in/Whatwedo/30/Child-Marriage>

The following synthesis is extracted from the second literature review:

1. CULTURAL PRACTICES

- Child marriages are used as a means of propagating the existing caste hierarchies, as when the children are married they would not be at an age where other considerations they might have would overrule this injunction their parents or other adults would put forth before them, a union which would be within their existing caste.
- Similarly, is the case of consanguineous marriages as well, which are done to ensure that the bloodlines remain pure and so that family assets remain within the family itself.
- Another consideration is that adolescent boys and girls would indulge in “*immoral practices*” as viewed by the orthodox societies still found in the rural areas of modern-day India, and marriage is a way to avoid this or view them as moral.
- Apart from this, married women and unmarried women are viewed very differently by society and child marriage is seen as a means of social security and a means of thwarting malicious intentions and crimes against girls.
- Child marriages are also undertaken in the name of following traditional practices put forth by ancestors and upholding cultural values which run in the family.

2. ECONOMIC FACTORS

- A child marriage would not be a grand and extravagant affair in comparison to an adult marriage and this is one of the factors which perpetuates child marriages, especially in the economically weaker sections of society. There are also instances where the wedding of the younger sibling is combined with an older sibling so as to avoid double expenditure on the ceremony, and this results in child marriage.
- Child marriages are usually a reflection of the fact that girls are still considered as property which can be passed on from her father and family to her husband and in-laws. They are done so that any expenditure on the education of the girl child can be avoided.
- The fact that child marriages are often accompanied by the exchange of dowry is indicative of the fact that a girl child is still looked at as a burden to the family that she is born into, and the more educated she is the more the family will have to spend in the form of dowry at the time of her wedding. She is seen as an extra mouth to feed and unable to be economically independent or contribute to the family income.
- Female children are also thereby denied their share in ancestral property, bypassing their property rights as they are already married and they fail to demand that their rights are fulfilled, hence benefitting the male heir of the family.

3. LACK OF EDUCATION, EMPOWERMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

- Secondary education is the right way for girls to avoid early marriage. However, lack of proper infrastructure, including girls' toilets, and lack of female teachers are some of the critical factors influencing the girls dropout rates. It is evident that girls dropout rate (2016-17) at secondary level is 16.86% (17.97% at India level) and at higher secondary level girls dropout rates is 13.20% (1.61% at India level)²⁵. Besides, many girls and their parents give the highest priority to secondary education linked with vocational education. Through that, they can enter the job market. Unfortunately, in the state, the skill gap in the supply and demand side exists.
- There is a severe lack of education and awareness regarding both – the pertaining ill effects of child marriages and the existing laws which are in place in order to protect children from them.
- There is no proper implementation of the laws which are in place due to a variety of reasons.
- There is also a lack of empowerment of women or girls, as a result of which they are unable to voice their needs and wishes, and are subjected to the will of their parents and guardians. The girl child has no agency and is subjected to the patriarchal gender norms which are prevailing in society.

In this context, the summary says that – widely accepted gender and social norms are the most critical factors and root causes that need to be addressed. Poverty, lack of access to quality secondary and higher secondary education with vocational skills, and other economic considerations are the contributing factors. Organised vested interests of elders, cast groups, networks, and political patronage mostly weaken or challenge the implementation strategy.

²⁵ Connected Learning Initiative (2017) “Report on Status of Secondary Education in Telangana”, <https://clix.tiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CLIX-Telangana-State-Report.pdf>

ASPIRATIONS OF CHILD BRIDES:

- **SMALL FAMILY NORMS:**

Many aspired for having a small family with two children, however awareness on family planning is very low. Mothers in law and husbands are the decision makers in determining the size of family. Many of them demanded proper counselling to their husbands and mothers-in-law on the consequences of early marriage, sexual life, and birth spacing. In this context, there is a need to improve the reach of primary health care and Anganwadi services to those girls who were married before 18 years of age.

- **ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE:**

Most of the child brides aspire for economic independence, however, their educational background does not support them. Some of them have said that they need vocational training on job-oriented programs including soft skills. Those who are not interested to pursue further education after marriage, strongly aspire to have a skill training course that will give them chance to earn. Therefore, job oriented vocational skill training has to be embedded into the present curriculum starting from secondary/higher education. The Department of Education has to rethink how best the existing curriculum at secondary and high schools can be linked with vocational training courses, including soft skills. It is essential to map the local skill training centres run by the government, corporates and NGOs and link them with the existing structure of education.

- **SCHOLARSHIPS TO PURSUE HIGHER EDUCATION:**

It is one of the widely discussed points. Some of the child brides have said that due to financial difficulties in the family, they were forced to drop out of school. If such support exists and is accessible to them, perhaps their parents would have not thought of early marriage and forced them to drop out of school. In such cases, it is important to think about conditional cash transfers, bicycles to girls in secondary education, hygienic sanitation facilities in schools, and embedded vocational education in secondary schools.

- **HEALTHY LIFE:**

The majority aspired to lead and provide a healthy life, particularly to their infants. Those who had early pregnancies demanded Anganwadi services. Those who are not pregnant are also looking for Anganwadi services. Particularly this category of child brides is either malnourished or anaemic. Here, primary health care has to focus more on adolescent girls (either married early or unmarried) provide proper knowledge about the menstrual cycle and hygiene, the importance of Iron Folic, family planning methods, pre- and post-natal care and immunization.

Demand for services: Anganwadi, Panchayat, PHC and Secondary education are the most demanded services by child brides. Particularly to Gram Panchayat, their demand is to get involved at the right

time to prevent child marriages. Those who are in urban areas demanded timely support from policy as well as from legal services. Members of Gram Panchayat have to be sensitized on the socio-economic consequences of child marriages and made accountable to prevent such incidents. If they act properly, most of the child marriages can be prevented.

- **DEMAND FOR INFORMATION:**

The majority of child brides have no or low awareness about their entitlements, Child Marriage Prevention act and other child protection measures. It is essential to include such an informative syllabus from the secondary education level. It is the issue between choice and chance of lifestyle of child brides. Their voice is not counted, they have lesser education opportunities, their husbands' age is also low to have matured thinking and take related decisions. In such circumstances, though there is a chance, they are not able to make choices in many issues related to their personal and family life.

The summary of aspirations of child brides²⁶ indicates the need of vocational education along with secondary education, information of health and healthy lifestyles and information on legal as well as other welfare entitlements.

²⁶PLF (2019) "Child Brides in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh", Poverty Learning Foundation, Hyderabad

5. POLICIES & PROGRAMS TO PREVENT CHILD MARRIAGES

To prevent child marriages, the Government of India has brought quite a few policies and programs. Child marriage was made illegal in India in 1929 by 'Child Marriage Restraint Act'. It was later replaced by the Prohibition of Child Marriages Act 2006 (PCMA) on which widespread awareness has been created.

Thereafter to strengthen implementation of PCMA, The Government of India has appointed 'Child Marriage Prohibition Officers' to prevent child marriages and to sensitize communities over this issue.

However, the results are not encouraging, because people feel that the traditions and socio-cultural norms are stronger than the law and the institutions and rarely report cases. Besides, there is limited capacity among officials and lack of willingness to go against the decisions made by the community and political representatives²⁷.

KALYANA LAXMI/SADHI MUBARAK

The State level machinery is putting their best efforts to prevent child marriages. Supporting the legal initiations and the efforts of the state level machinery, Telangana state has introduced a special program: *Kalyana Laxmi/Sadhi Mubarak*²⁸ during 2014. However, there is no ground-level evidence to say that because of this scheme, child marriages have come down in the state²⁹.

It has been observed that though there are many beneficiaries availing the scheme, the total number of child marriages remains high. It was observed that 40% of the brides who availed the scheme were illiterates and almost none of them possessed skill-oriented certificates/job diplomas. It is to be noted that the scheme is being handled by the Department of Social Welfare and not the Department of Women and Child Welfare.

While the schemes mandate that the girl is above the legal age of marriage, they do not address the multi-dimensional nature of child marriages. The various reasons which give rise to child marriage such as traditions, practices, poverty and lack of awareness are not addressed by these policies. They succeeded in triggering a change in action but do not address the much-required attitudinal change.

²⁷ CESS (2018) "Facing Constraints and Sizing the Opportunities – Child Marriages in Telangana", Centre for Social and Economic Studies, Hyderabad, http://www.mahita.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Facing_Constraints_and_Seizing_opportunities_Child_Marriages_Study_Telangana.pdf

²⁹ The scheme is made available to girls belonging to SC/ST and later extended to all the poor families in the state. The scheme initially was started with an incentive of Rs.51,000 and was later increased to Rs.75,116 in 2017 and further to Rs.1,00,116 in 2018. To avail the scheme the government has laid down a condition that the girl should be above 18 years of age and the combined income of the parents does not exceed Rs.2 lakhs in the case of SC/ST, BC and EBC families in urban areas and Rs.1.5 lakhs in the case of rural areas. The amount is directly credited towards the bank account of the girl's mother. A total of 5,32,451 people benefitted under the schemes of Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak since 2014.

BETI BACHAO, BETI PADHAO

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao recently operationalized for multi-sectoral action in the following districts –Warangal Urban, Hyderabad, Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar, Rangareddy, Adilabad, Karimnagar and Nizamabad. In these districts, the central government is undertaking measures to ensure the protection and survival of the girl child, as well as education and participation. Although this directly does not address the issue of child marriage, ensuring the education and empowerment of girls will result in tackling the problem to a certain extent. The mandate of the scheme also explicitly states

“Prevention of Early/Child Marriage may be done aggressively in order to highlight the importance of allowing girls to complete their school education and preferably opt for higher education/career/skill-building/vocational education etc”.

KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (KGBV)

KGBV scheme was launched by the Government of India in August 2004 to ensure access to quality education for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minorities in difficult areas. This scheme is being implemented in educationally backward blocks where the female rural literacy is below the national average and the gender gap in literacy is above the national average.

KGBVs are mainly mainstreaming out-of-school/dropout children and taking up enrollment drives in the villages, particularly drives in communities involving KGBV girls on child marriages, dowry system and motivating the parents of irregular, dropout and never enrolled girls to send their daughters to schools.

In Telangana state, during 2018-19, about 1,11,208 girls enrolled in 475 KGBVs. Of the total enrollment, 94,606 girls are in classes VI to X and 16,602 in intermediate first and second year in 172 KGBVs which were upgraded till class XII. The Government is providing free quality and holistic education including some vocational courses. Apart from academics, students are given free residential facilities with dormitories, textbooks, uniforms and nutritious meals. Given the age of girl students joining these schools, the State government provides health and hygiene kits to them³⁰. Of 475 KGBVs, 84 were upgraded to Intermediate level education³¹ to help the girl students' smooth transition from secondary education to Intermediate level education.

³⁰Telangana Today (2019) “KGBVs attracting more girl students in Telangana” 16 August 2019. <https://telanganatoday.com/kgbvs-attracting-more-girl-students-in-telangana>

³¹Government of Telangana (2019) School Education Department G.O.Rt.No.87, dated 28-06-2019 & proceedings from the Commissioner, School Education Department, No.2615/KGBV/T9/2018, dated 28-06-2019, http://183.82.97.97:8020/deshyd/New%20folder/84%20upgraded%20KGBVs_2019-20.pdf

GIRL CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME:

The Girl Child Protection Scheme of the Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana is aimed at preventing gender discrimination by empowering and protecting rights of girl children through direct investment from the Government. It aims to promote enrolment and retention of the girl child in school and to ensure her education at least up to the intermediate level, encourage girls to get married only after the age of 18 years, encourage parents with two girl children to adopt family planning norms, protect the rights of the girl child and provide social and financial empowerment to the girl child, eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls, strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child, and extend a special dispensation to Orphans/Destitute and differently abled girls³².

MAHILA POLICE VOLUNTEERS/SHE TEAMS

The Central government has issued guidelines for appointing Mahila/Women Police Volunteers (MPV) who will serve as a bridge between the police and those women subject to domestic violence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and child marriages among other things. In line with this, the Telangana Government has introduced a specially dedicated task force of women police known as the SHE teams who deal with issues of women safety. The team is currently operational in Hyderabad city and 4 districts of Telangana. In addition to taking legal action, the teams also provide awareness campaigns and also counselling sessions. However, the SHE teams are currently operational in only 4 districts but not in the areas where the incidences of child marriages are high.

SAKHI CENTRES

Sakhi Centres (One Stop Centres)³³ offer integrated services like medical, legal, psycho-social and temporary shelter under one roof. The objectives of the Scheme are: (i) to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof and (ii) to facilitate immediate, emergency, and non-emergency access to services including medical, legal, psychological and counselling support under one roof (iv) to fight against any forms of violence against women. Victims of child marriage can also access necessary support through these centres. Till 2019, 27 of 31 sanctioned centres have been established in Telangana.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

In addition to the above schemes and intervention policies, various Civil Society Organisations also support the departments in enforcing the rules of the Child Marriage Act. In Telangana, around 30 CSOs are working in different districts to eliminate Child Marriages.

CHILDLINE

CHILDLINE is a toll-free emergency helpline number (1098)³⁴ which any child can call in the case of any adversity or emergency. It is available 24-hours a day and 365 days a year. It is functional in 32 districts of Telangana State and manned by various NGOs and nodal agencies. They aim to provide extraction and rehabilitation services, free of cost to any child in need of the same.

CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEES

As a part of Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), Village level Child Protection Committees (VCPC) and Mandal level Child Protection Committees (MCPC) are functioning to protect the rights of children. The members in these committees from the community, including duty-bearers, are primarily responsible for creating and promoting a child friendly and safe environment wherein all children's well-being, safety and rights are protected. CPCs will be responsible for monitoring, reporting and responding to the issues of child protection. The cases of child marriage are reported to the DCPU and CHILDLINE through these CPCs.

³²Vikaspedia (2020) Girl Child Protection Scheme, [https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/women-and-child-development/child-development-1/girl-](https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/women-and-child-development/child-development-1/girl-child-welfare/state-wise-schemes-for-girl-child-welfare/girl-child-protection-scheme-of-andhra-pradesh)

[child-welfare/state-wise-schemes-for-girl-child-welfare/girl-child-protection-scheme-of-andhra-pradesh](https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/women-and-child-development/child-development-1/girl-child-welfare/state-wise-schemes-for-girl-child-welfare/girl-child-protection-scheme-of-andhra-pradesh)

³⁴https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/OSC_G.pdf
<https://www.childlineindia.org/a/about/childline-india>

6. CHALLENGES

BEFORE POLICY MAKERS AND IMPLEMENTERS

Preventing child marriages has been a historically slow and challenging task. The Indian Government passed “Sarda Act” in 1929, which made marriage illegal for girls before 18 years of age. Thereafter, several legislations have been brought into the forefront, for instance – Child Policy (2003); The Prohibition of Child Marriages (2006), Adolescent and Youth Policy (2007), Right to Education Act (2009), Girl Child Policy (2013), Juvenile Justice Act (2016), Compulsory of Registration of Marriages Act (2002), and National Plan of Action for Children (2017). Subsequently, the erstwhile Government of Andhra Pradesh has also brought certain programs, for instance, GO.MS No 13 to end child marriages by strengthening the education system.

In implementation, including the Women Development and Child Welfare department, other sectoral departments are facing certain challenges that have to be addressed. To make the State Action Plan more viable with a strong implementation mechanism, a little exercise has been done to understand the most critical challenges before the policy makers and implementers. For this purpose, the following key staff from sectoral departments and other stakeholders were virtually contacted:

i.	Women Development and Child Welfare (n. 72, DCPOs, CDPOs, ACDPOs, CM-POs, BRBs, Sakhi coordinators and AWW)
ii.	Panchayat Raj Members (n. 32, Sarpanches & members)
iii.	Education department (n. 42, MEOs, Headmasters, teachers including female teachers)
iv.	Health Department (n. 39, Doctors, ANMs, ASHAs)
v.	Revenue Department (n. 11, Joint Collector, MDOs and VROs)
vi.	Police Department (n. 11, Sub-inspectors, Circle Inspectors & Head Constables)
vii.	Self-Help Groups (n.31, Leaders & members)
viii.	Community Society Organizations (n.48)
ix.	Community Leaders (n. 14)
x.	Religious leaders (n. 14)
xi.	Parents (n. 41 families)

Women Development & Child Welfare

Women Development and Child Welfare Department is one of the key line departments tasked with the responsibility of implementing the Prevention of Child Marriage Act and also plays a crucial role in Government Order 13. The critical challenges before department staff at mandal and GP level are:

- Non-cooperation of local community members with the departments.
- Local political leaders, occasionally community and religious leaders' interference have forced the officials not to register/report the child marriages to higher bodies.
- Lack of standardized training to all CMPOs.
- Non-cooperation from other departments.
- Perceiving WDCW as relatively powerless to take strict action against them.
- Lack of awareness regarding their duties, especially at the mandal and village level.
- Severe dearth of counselling and rehabilitation facilities.

- viii. Lack of timely information.
- ix. Inconsistencies between the personal laws and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act has caused complications and varied judgments by different courts.
- x. Inadequate budget and sometimes under-utilisation of available funds is also a serious concern at enforcement agencies.
- xi. Absence of systems of birth and marriage registrations is another challenge in implementing the law.
- xii. Limitations in PCMA.

Panchayat Raj Department (Elected representatives from Gram Panchayat)

Gram Panchayat has to take a major role and responsibility in preventing child marriages in villages. Fundamentally, Gram Panchayat is the link between the community, the school, the Anganwadi, the health centre and the government. They play an active role in planning, implementation and monitoring of the institutions related to children and also in protecting child rights. However, the following challenges were expressed by the elected members –

- i. Lack of sensitivity among panchayat members on the importance of child rights,
- ii. Not aware of the PCMA and other laws preventing child marriages.
- iii. In review meetings, issues related to child rights, including child marriages is the least priority, assuming that it is the subject matter of school and Anganwadi,
- iv. Pressure from Parents as well as from community/caste leaders not to discuss such matters as it happens to be the family matter.
- v. Occasionally involvement of local political leaders and influential leaders.
- vi. Less participation and cooperation from the sectoral departments in addressing such cases.

School Education Department

Access to primary and secondary education is crucial to increase self-reliance among girls and delay early marriages. The School education department plays a crucial role in mobilising girl children to secondary schools by conducting regular campaigns and back to school programs. KGBVs are also playing an important role in retaining girls in secondary education. In spite of such efforts, staff in schools are facing certain critical challenges –

- i. Unwillingness of parents to transit their girl children from primary to secondary
- ii. Access to secondary/high schools.
- iii. Less or lack of proper infrastructure facilities, particularly girls toilets with running water, and drinking water.
- iv. No female teacher in the school.
- v. Lack of vocational training in the school, which is preferred by most of the parents.
- vi. Lack of proper tracking system to identify the families where girls are at risk of early marriage.
- vii. Local political pressure to ignore incidents of child marriage.
- viii. The school authorities do not have legal standing in the prevention of child marriages, making the lines a little blurry with regards to their role when they try to stop a marriage.

Health and Family Welfare Department

The front line health functionaries (ANMs and ASHAs) provide health services, including maternal and child health services to women in the village. They play a very small role in tracking the families where girls are under risk of early marriages. Their opinions and challenges are –

- i. Lack of proper coordination between the Health and Family Welfare Department and the Women Development and Child Welfare Department is the major challenge in collectively implementing the PCMA.
- ii. Lack of awareness among the parents and community leaders on negative health consequences of child marriages.
- iii. Political interference while front line health functionaries tried to react to such issues.

- iv. Harassment from the families and community leaders preventing them from reporting such issues to the higher authorities.
- v. Most of the child marriages take place during religious rituals and although information is available no one tries to stop such marriages because of fear about local leaders as well as the community and religious leaders' presence at such rituals.
- vi. No clarity on their role and responsibilities in preventing child marriages.

Revenue Department:

Under the chairmanship of the district collector, joint collector, Mandal Development Officer (MDO), Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO), Village revenue officer (VRO), Village Administrative Officer (VAO), Panchayat Secretary and CDPOs, the Revenue Department has to oversee the implementation of marriage registrations, and the PMCA properly. It also acts upon any information of the solemnization or proposed solemnization of any child marriage that may be received through any mode of communication, and initiates all necessary action, including addressing the Police and Officers concerned. Besides, it is associated and works in co-ordination with the respective Village / Mandal / Divisional / District Child Marriage Prohibition and Monitoring Committee, NGOs, SHGs, VDP, Mandal Samakhya, Zilla Samakhya and departments concerned. It also initiates legal action and promotes registration of cases under appropriate provisions of the Act, and rules for their violation. However, the challenges before the Revenue Department officials are –

- i. Political pressure to ignore such cases.
- ii. Lack of coordination between different stakeholders at village and mandal level.
- iii. Information on child marriages does not reach on time.
- iv. Lack of authenticated data/information.
- v. Non-cooperation from family heads, community leaders and religious leaders.
- vi. With religious and political leaders support, the mass solemnization of child marriages, on occasions such as Akshya Trutiya, Mahashivaratri, Birappa Pandaga, Samakka Sarakka Jatara, Sravana and Maga (Kalyanamastu Programme).
- vii. Decreased sensitivity and importance on this subject among revenue concerned officers.

Police Department:

The police department has an important role in preventing child marriages. They have to work in coordination with all sectoral departments, particularly with the WDCW and the Revenue Department. However their challenges are –

- i. Lack of information on time.
- ii. Pressure and non-cooperation from community leaders and local political people.
- iii. Pressure from parents, caste leaders and religious leaders during mass solemnizations of child marriages during rituals.
- iv. Absence of reliable data and information.
- v. Parents and caste leaders treat child marriage as their family matter and have arguments with the support of political leaders.
- vi. Lack of coordination between the sectoral departments at the village and mandal level.

Self Help Groups:

Self-help groups (SHGs), have the largest networks, the major form of delivery of microfinance in the state and have brought about dramatic changes in the lives of lakhs of women. With the support of the Government of Telangana, they have gone beyond provision of credit and assumed many non-traditional responsibilities of which one role is preventing child marriages. In pursuing their role, they face certain challenges –

- i. Pressure from parents, village elders, community leaders and political leaders.
- ii. No proper knowledge on roles and responsibilities in preventing child marriages.
- iii. Lack of capacity building to address such issues at the village and Mandal level.
- iv. No official system to track high risk families where probability of child marriages is high.

- v. Less cooperation and coordination between different stakeholders within the village who are supposed to work together.
- vi. Less community awareness.

Civil Society Organisations

Legally speaking, Civil Society Organizations do not have a fundamental role to play in the prevention of child marriages, except being on the 'Village Child Marriage Prohibition and Monitoring Committee' as specified by GO 13. However, the ground reality is far from this, with CSOs actively intervening and preventing child marriages, creating awareness among parents and children regarding the ill effects of child marriages and looking for the effective implementation of the law through the statewide network of Childline, capacity building of CMPOs and more. Their presence in the field and regular interaction with the community gives them a unique position of value as a trusted partner to prevent child marriages from taking place while minimizing conflict with the families. However, they face a myriad of issues including opposition from various sections of the community when it comes to the prevention of marriages. The challenges expressed by CSOs are –

- i. Lack of counselling to parents and community.
- ii. Lack of proper infrastructure in schools, including female teachers and girls toilets poses another challenge to motivate girls to take up secondary education.
- iii. Pressure from local political leaders, community/caste leaders and sometimes religious leaders.
- iv. Lack of intersectoral coordination.
- v. Poor models in rescue and rehabilitation activities.
- vi. Budget constraints to conduct village level campaigns on back to school programs and preventing child marriages.
- vii. Less support from the Village Child Protection Committees and the Mandal Child Protection Committees.
- viii. No authenticated data.

Community Leaders

Community leaders play a key role in the prevention of child marriages due to the influence exerted over the members of their community. They have greater role in preventing child marriages, and the challenges flagged by them are –

- i. No awareness on consequences of child marriages among the parents.
- ii. Parents have strong opinion that the present schooling system is not encouraging.
- iii. No coordination among the village level stakeholders in identifying the girls at risk.
- iv. Difference of opinion among the community leaders about the child marriages.

Religious Leaders:

Religious leaders have a huge role to play in ending child marriage since many people are guided by their religious beliefs. They can help change existing norms in their communities and be critical allies in preventing child marriage and work with other stakeholders. However, they too expressed certain factors that are influencing them –

- i. Political pressure, particularly during mass solemnizations of child marriages during annual rituals.
- ii. Difference of opinion within the religious leaders about child marriages and prevention.
- iii. No proper knowledge about the consequences of child marriages.
- iv. Force or pressure from religious hierarchy.
- v. Religious and traditional/cultural interpretations encouraging child marriages.

Parents:

It is the family's and parents' responsibility to decide when to perform the marriages of their children. Even though few families and parents are aware of negative consequences of child marriages, certain pressures forcing them to opt for child marriages –

- i. Economic pressures.
- ii. Keep the traditions and cultures alive.
- iii. Beliefs and pressure from caste leaders.
- iv. No visible benefits from sending girls (particularly) for secondary education.
- v. Fear of sex and pregnancy outside marriage.

PART TWO

ACTION PLAN STRATEGIES

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

7. ACTION PLAN

STRATEGIES

Despite significant measures taken by the state government to eliminate child marriages, the prevalence of child marriages still remains high (25.7% reported by NFHS 4). The drivers of child marriage are complex and require a holistic approach to address them. The strategies need to consider the role of different stakeholders and the inter-linkages between them to achieve the overall objectives. Thus, there is a need for implementation of a systematic approach towards strengthening policy-making and their implementation at various levels and ensuring coordination between all the stakeholders. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive state-level strategy and action plan which must be constructed taking into consideration the unique challenges of the state.

VISION

A society free from child marriages.

GOAL

To end child marriages in Telangana by 2030

OBJECTIVES

- i. To design a comprehensive policy framework that provides and ensures the application and implementation of interventions to end child marriages.
- ii. To facilitate the execution of key stakeholders' roles and responsibilities in order to ensure improved coordination.
- iii. To formulate interventions that reduce the vulnerability of girl children (through sensitization, mobilization, and outreach programs) and to provide them free will in decision making.
- iv. To devise a monitoring and evaluation framework that enables a timely assessment of the progress of the State Action Plan.
- v. To strengthen the implementation structures of existing policies by designing strategic activities with improved inter-departmental and stakeholder coordination.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE STATE ACTION PLAN

To begin with, the State Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriages focuses on creating an enabling environment by -

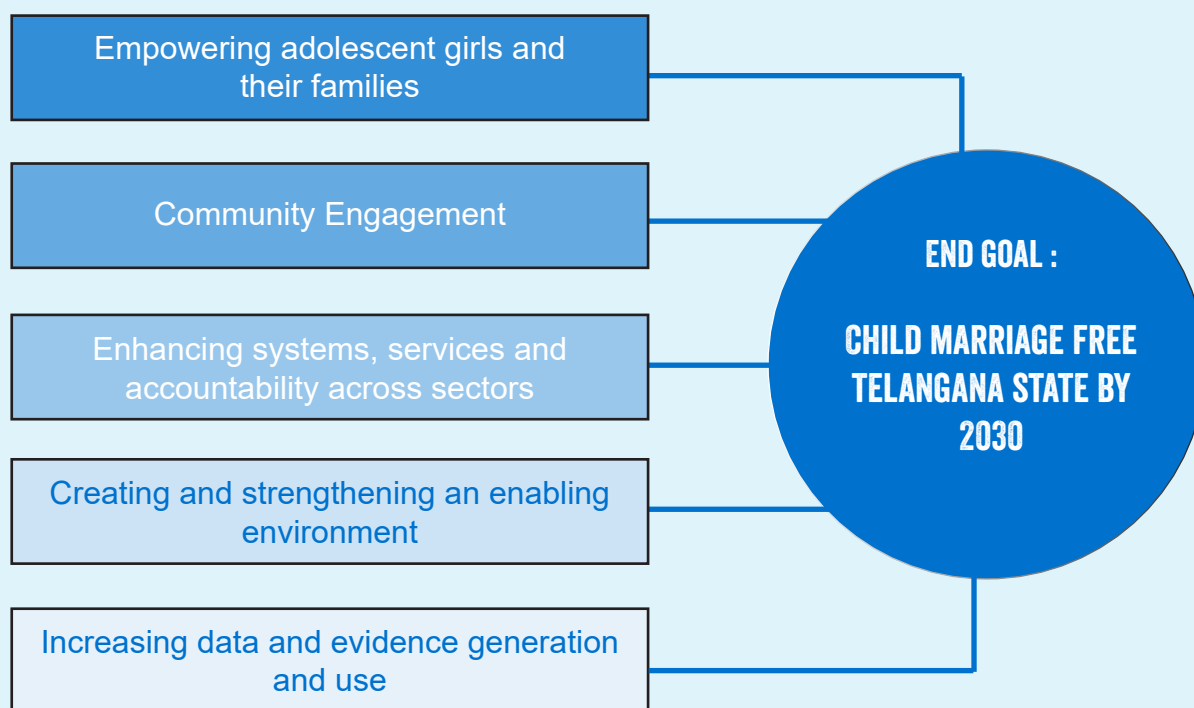
- i. Improving data and monitoring systems. Introducing mechanisms to enable regular monitoring of national laws and policies relating to child marriage to help assess progress. Listening and responding to the voices of child spouses and those at risk of child marriage when conducting situation analyses.
- ii. Assessing the role of customary and religious laws that condone child marriage and promoting dialogue with traditional and religious leaders to identify practical ways to reduce child marriage.
- iii. Training key government officials, judiciary, law enforcement officers and policy makers, at all levels, on the law and related gender equity and human rights to support the effective implementation and enforcement of the law and related policies
- iv. Supporting awareness-raising and public education programmes about the negative effects of child marriage, and related human rights of girls and women, to help change attitudes, and

strengthening the duties of parents, guardians and the community to protect vulnerable girls.

- v. Supporting civil society organizations, including financially, and ensuring that they have the skills and capacity to mobilize communities to end child marriage.
- vi. Creating opportunities for dialogue with men, including traditional and religious leaders, on women's capacity to mobilize communities to end child marriage.

PILLAR STRATEGY:

The drivers of child marriage are multidimensional, and the State Action Plan therefore requires multi-sectoral interventions, underpinned by well-coordinated responses from different stakeholders. In this context, the State Action Plan has to adopt five pillar strategies in order to achieve the goals of ending child marriage:



The following critical approaches will be used to underpin these five pillars in designing and implementing programmes³⁵:

- i. Social norms approach to address collective behaviour changes, foster community empowerment, and create positive social norms.
- ii. Gender transformative approaches which promote gender equality (the shared control of resources and decision-making) and women's empowerment, are central to interventions addressing the root causes of child marriage.
- iii. Multi-sectoral approach to address the different drivers and causes of child marriages through coordination of mandates to empower girls and work with communities, and strengthen health, education, child protection, the legal system and services.
- iv. Application of social ecological framework to reach all those who play a role: "girls at the centre", families, communities and their structures, service providers and policy makers

Based on these strategies, a theory of change has been developed identifying the problem, drivers, strategies, outcomes, and results pathway to achieve those outcomes.

THEORY OF CHANGE FRAMEWORK

The State Action Plan is based on a 'Theory of Change' (ToC) framework that identifies the root causes of the problems to be addressed and the interventions needed to achieve the intended outcomes and vision. It is a hypothesis of how we think change occurs.

The ToC was developed based on the analysis of the drivers of child marriages, taking a note on specific contexts in Telangana state across 32 districts. The analysis on strategies/ drivers of change is drawn from the evidence from earlier studies. By using context based predictive analysis, outcomes were drawn.

In the present context, the Theory of Change reflects six guiding principles:

It is important to state that the theory does not focus solely on preventing child marriage but also on mitigation and support of girls who are already married.

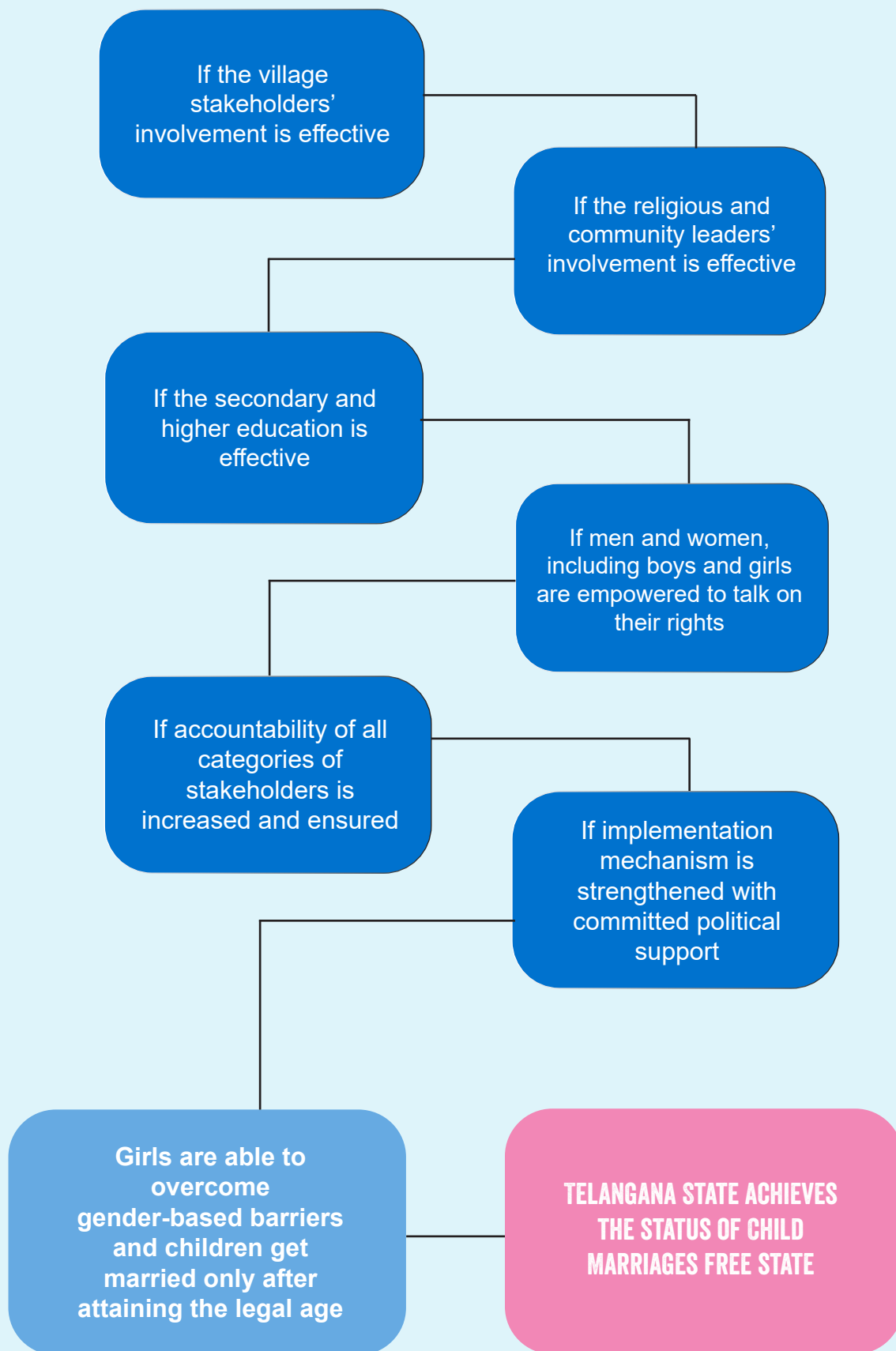
The focus on the impact of child marriages on girls does not mean the impact on boys should be neglected. However, focusing on girls is necessary in order to highlight the importance of gender equality.

The theory includes both forms of child marriages: formal and informal unions. In order to end child marriage, action by multiple actors at many levels is required.

Although change happens locally, national, regional and global actions are necessary in order to "create an environment that offers girls opportunities beyond the traditional roles envisaged for them." Both parties should freely and fully agree to their marriage. However, this is rarely the case where one of the spouses is under the age of 18.

³⁵Framework has been adopted from National Alliance to end FGM & ECM, <https://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/reports/national-costed-roadmap-ending-child-marriage-and-fgmc>

Broadly, the theory of change statement says –



VISION	CHILD MARRIAGE FREE TELANGANA STATE BY 2030					
IMPACT	CHANGED SOCIAL NORMS, ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF GIRLS AND EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF LAW RESULTS IN FASTER DECLINE OF CHILD MARRIAGES					
RESULTS	<p>Strong community mechanisms to encourage gender equal environment and promote reporting of possible cases of child marriages;</p> <p>Widespread public opinion and clear commitment to end child marriages;</p>	<p>Women empowered to question and negotiate for girls' education and act against child marriage;</p> <p>Men are responsive to understand child and women's rights;</p>	<p>Increased number of girls entering the job market and access potential benefits from skill training;</p> <p>Girls able to raise their concern on child marriages in different platforms and negotiating for their rights;</p>	<p>Enhance sustainability and impact of child marriage and adolescent empowerment programmes including increased capacity of service providers to deliver integrated and coordinated services;</p>	<p>Strong public opinion against child marriage and organized nexus strengthens and political patronage of child marriage declines;</p> <p>Increased birth and marriage registration;</p>	<p>Strong held accountable;</p> <p>Effective data bank to judge the progress;</p> <p>Enhanced vigilance at village level and increased reporting, action against missing girls and boys and child marriage;</p>
OUTCOMES	<p>Effective participation of all stakeholders at village level (especially Religious leaders, Community leaders, PRI functionaries, adolescent girls and boys, men and women) in campaigns to prevent child marriages and ensure early reporting about preparatin for child marriage, if any;</p>	<p>Families with conditional financial assistance will keep their children in secondary education and postpone child marriages;</p>	<p>Increase access to quality education and skill development programmes for girls;</p> <p>Girls and women are empowered to exercise their life choices;</p>	<p>Effective Implementation of programmes to promote adolescent empowerment;</p>	<p>Agenda building and public opinion (mass support) helps in countering political patronage;</p> <p>Political leaders gain more by aligning with the local agenda;</p>	<p>Enabling environment for reporting of child marriage cases;</p> <p>Consistent (zero down the loopholes);</p> <p>Stricter enforcement of laws;</p>
STRATEGIES (DRIVERS OF CHANGE)	<p>Community mobilization to change social norm;</p> <p>Promote dialogue and raise awareness of gender inequalities and their consequences, for women, men, girls and boys across economic status and social groups;</p>	<p>Create livelihood opportunities for low income group families through linking them with income generation programmes;</p> <p>Providing Conditional Cash Transfers to the families under poverty and where possiblity of child marriages may take place;</p> <p>Incentives to girls from poor families to</p>	<p>Empower girls and women with information on affordable and quality of secondary and higher secondary education and improve access to job skills and leadership programmes;</p>	<p>Strengthen governance system to prevent child marriage, violence against women and implementation of schemes/ programmes to promote adolescent empowerment;</p>	<p>Influence Parliamentarians and state legislators to set agenda to end child marriages;</p> <p>Sensitize them on legal provisions;</p> <p>Motivate them on strengthening the civil registrations;</p>	<p>Establish data lab to ensure authenticated data from grass root level; Strong and systematic monitoring and evaluation strategy (starting from village level to state level);</p> <p>Use SHGs for effective monitoring (Introducing workbook model);</p> <p>Integrating child marriage prevention</p>

		attend schooling after the elementary level and vocational training after secondary school;			Build capacities to demand accountability of implementing machinery;	and response into conflict (ex: Insurgency areas) and humanitarian crisis programmes (Ex: health emergencies);
DRIVERS OF PREVALENCE	Widely accepted gender & social norms;	Lack of Economic opportunities for lower income group families leads to generational poverty;	Limited scope for adolescents to realize their aspirations and choices;	Lack of institutional capacity to implement programmes / schemes to prevent child marriage;	Strong political patronage weakens the enforcement mechanism;	Lack of authenticated data and proper monitoring; Limitations in law; Less accountability of policy implementing agency;
PROBLEMS	25.7 % of women aged 20-24 years are married before the legal age of marriage. If similar trend continues, Telangana will not reach its goal of ending child marriages by 2030.					

KEY STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA	
Strategy 1: Community mobilisation to change social norms by promoting dialogues and raising awareness of gender inequalities and their consequences for women, men, girls and boys across economic status and social groups..	
Strategic Focus Area	Activities
<p>1. Leverage strengths of religious bodies, community leaders and trade associations to influence the mind set of communities to act against child marriage.</p>	<p>a) Hold rounds of consultation on development & standardisation of communication materials on the issue.</p> <p>b) Issue guidelines to various trade organisations/associations concerned with marriage arrangements for prevention of child marriages.</p> <p>c) Organise quarterly/ bi-monthly meetings with religious bodies, community leaders and trade associations throughout the year to discuss the consequences of child marriage and legal provisions to penalise the persons who take part in such marriage in any capacity.</p> <p>d) Recognise the active members of religious bodies, community leaders and trade associations who are able to report the incidents of child marriage and share their contribution as Child Rights Champions in large forums.</p>
<p>2. Empower men and women with information on consequences of child marriage and involve them in changing social norms.</p>	<p>a) Develop and disseminate information briefs and edutainment material about the implications and consequences of child marriage and use the same during the occasions of community gatherings at village/ mandal/ district level.</p> <p>b) Integrate resource material on child marriage into the existing capacity building programmes/ trainings for grass-root level committees at village including SHGs.</p>

<p>3. Engage with media to sensitise the community on negative consequences of stringent social norms against gender and to promote positive role models to break the gender norms.</p>	<p>a) Hold a sensitisation workshop for various forms of media – print and electronic, on how to report cases related to child marriage, upholding the rights of the child.</p> <p>b) Develop partnerships with media to advocate for girls' rights and to highlight stories which promote positive role models and break the gender stereotype.</p> <p>c) Use social media and other media to gather public against the issue.</p>
<p>4. Launching of gender transformative interventions to address the root causes of child marriages.</p>	<p>a) Initiate gender transformative intervention like annual activities led by women/ girls, women football match, girls cricket clubs etc. with village level institution like SHG, PRI.</p> <p>b) Collaborate with NGOs/ CSOs and initiate innovative activities or intervention to break the gender norms.</p>
<p>5. Engage with community level stakeholders that include opinion makers and Village Child Protection Committee (as gatekeepers) to adopt a stand against child marriage and provide rehabilitative support for those affected by it.</p>	<p>a) Share communication briefs and actionable points on child marriage for PRI and SHGs which they can pursue in their constituency with PRI members.</p> <p>b) Establish Standard Operating Procedures for rehabilitation of the rescued child bride in line with JJ Act.</p> <p>c) Identify existing barriers in providing rehabilitation and redressal services to girls affected by child marriage.</p> <p>d) Rehabilitation spaces for children affected by child marriage or at risk of child marriage, allocated in shelter homes, care homes, health institutions and facilities like safe homes run by established and recognised NGOs.</p> <p>e) Prepare policy recommendations for making the child marriage annulment procedure easy and fast.</p>

Strategy 2: Create livelihood opportunities for low income group families through linkage with income generation programmes.	
Strategic Focus Area	Activities
1. Providing Conditional Cash Transfers to the families under poverty and where possibility of child marriages may take place.	<p>a) Improve the implementation of the existing CCT and increase the number of beneficiaries under the scheme.</p> <p>b) Introduce scheme to financially assist mothers specially single mothers, widows etc. who are sending their kids to school.</p>
2. Incentives to girls from poor families to attend schooling after the elementary level and vocational training after secondary school.	<p>a) Review the existing scholarship programmes and other government schemes (for instance SABLA, Kalyana Lakshmi/Sahdi Mubarak) for girls and create provisions to cover more number of beneficiaries under those programmes.</p> <p>b) Engage with private partners, corporates, NGOs to introduce sponsorship programmes for girls for continuing their education at least up to intermediate.</p>
3. Strengthen the delivery of existing programmes and schemes related to skills and livelihood for enabling adolescents to access them.	<p>a) Identify barriers in accessing existing programmes and schemes related to skills and livelihood by adolescents, especially girls.</p> <p>b) Monitor progress on improvement in access to existing programmes and schemes related to skills and livelihood by adolescents.</p> <p>c) Engage with private partners, corporates and training institute to design demand driven skill development courses for adolescents.</p>
4. Promote government programs to improve economic empowerment of women.	<p>a) Create awareness about existing programmes on both wage employment and self-employment for the economic empowerment of women.</p> <p>b) Develop materials on entrepreneurship development and financial literacy.</p> <p>c) Work in collaboration with PRI and SHGs to identify most vulnerable families and link them with income generation programmes.</p>

Strategy 3: Create and expand opportunities for the empowerment of adolescent girls and boys to realise their rights..	
Strategic Focus Area	Activities
1. Ensure that all adolescents' girls and boys have access to and complete quality age appropriate schooling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase the number of schools with secondary education at the village level for girls. b) Develop a retention strategy for girls and boys between the age of 12-18 in schools. c) Improved access of residential schools like KGBVs and Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions for girls. d) Improve sanitation facilities including the provision of functional toilets and running water facilities in schools. e) Develop resource materials for integration of gender and child rights education in existing training of teachers in coordination with SCERT.
2. Preparing older adolescent girls and boys for livelihoods and school-to-work transitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Collaborate with CSOs and SHGs and provide training in JOVT for out of school girls and young mothers. b) Establish coordination between School Education Department and Employment Generation Marketing Mission for smooth transition of school to work aiming at employment after job training.
3. Build girls' agency and empower them to exercise life choices (legal rights, age-segmented and age-appropriate gender transformative life skills education and comprehensive sexuality education).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Form adolescent clubs at school, for school going children and at AWC for out-of-school girls and and undertake capacity building of the members to act as a change agent. b) Develop and disseminate guidelines for discussions on the rights and issues for children and women, legal rights, schemes and programmes for adolescents etc. c) Issue guidelines/orders to the secondary and higher secondary schools to display the IEC materials and initiate discussions on the issue of child marriage. d) Roll out the peer educator initiative in collaboration with education department and NGOs. Linkage with National Social Service (NSS) will ensure sustainability.

<p>4. Identify local role-models and champions, specially child marriage survivors to showcase their achievements despite challenges.</p>	<p>a) Identify local role models and organise interaction of role models with adolescent boys & girls.</p> <p>b) Use the media to highlight the stories of role models.</p> <p>c) Select a youth icon as brand ambassador for creating mass awareness generation and sensitisation on child marriage and it's consequences.</p>
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Strategy 4: Strengthen governance system to prevent child marriage, violence against women and implementation of schemes/programs to promote adolescent empowerment.	
Strategic Focus Area	Activities
<p>1. Empower the mechanism at the community level (PRI, SHG, etc.) and strengthen the systems that act as a safeguard against child marriage.</p>	<p>a) Sensitize PRI members by integrating the issue of child marriage in the training module of Panchayat Raj Department.</p> <p>b) Share communication briefs and actionable points which SHGs and PRI can pursue at the village level.</p> <p>c) Hold a special Gram Sabha on the issue of child marriage throughout the state.</p> <p>d) Introduce incentive/ awards for such committees across the state for reporting highest number of child marriages.</p> <p>e) Issue guidelines to facilitate child marriage-free Gram Panchayats aimed at GPs with high number of child marriage cases reported for the incentive.</p>
<p>2. Enhance legal awareness on various child protection and gender-related legislations.</p>	<p>a) Enhance legal awareness on various child protection and gender related legislations.</p> <p>b) Organise legal literacy camps on a regular basis at block and panchayat level.</p> <p>c) Sensitise judicial officers and public prosecutors in all districts, on child marriage, PCMA and annulment.</p> <p>d) Organise Public Hearing with SCPCR in high child marriage prone districts.</p>
<p>3. Increase scale and reach of ending child marriage and adolescent empowerment programs and laws especially for the most marginalised, leveraging, coordinating and stipulate the roles and responsibilities and accountability of different stakeholders at state, district, block and community level in policy and law enforcement.</p>	<p>a) Motivate the ASHA worker and AWW to create awareness on ill health effects of marriage and child bearing before the age of 18 with adolescent girls at village level and also help the local government to link those families with various schemes and programmes under social protection.</p> <p>b) Strengthen capacity of GP, SHGs, CPCs, Frontline workers like (AWW, ASHA, school teacher) to identify the high risk families for child marriage , play key role in awareness generation and sensitization.</p> <p>c) Build capacities of grass root level committees like Village Health Sanitation Committees and Child Protection Committees</p>

	<p>at village and mandal level, Standing Committees on social service at Gram Panchayat to spread awareness on child marriage and to increase reporting on the incidents of child marriage.</p> <p>d) Develop an SOP for stakeholders who are involved under provisions of PCMA Act and JJ Act to ensure prevention and protection of children from child marriage at the state and district level.</p>
4. Strengthen rehabilitation and redressal mechanisms for children affected by marriage.	<p>a) Facilitate the fast-track redressal system for those adolescents who want to nullify their marriage and explore provision of compensation through victim compensation scheme and provide legal aid.</p> <p>b) Build capacity of Child Welfare Committee members/district child protection units for rehabilitation of children rescued from incidents of child marriage.</p> <p>c) Strengthen capacities of the ASHAs and AWWs to engage with young married couples in order to motivate them to delay and promote spacing between births.</p>
5. Competency-based capacity development program of the CMPOs, Marriage Registration officers, DCPUs, and Special Juvenile Police Units on a continuous basis.	<p>a) Conduct a training need assessment for CMPOs, Marriage Registration Officers, DCPUs and SJPU and identify the skill gap to deal with the issue of child marriage.</p> <p>b) Develop training materials for sensitisation of CMPOs, Marriage Registration Officers and SJPU on issues related to child rights and organise sensitisation workshop.</p> <p>c) Prepare a training calendar for responsible stakeholders and planned continuous capacity development programmes to address the issue.</p>
6. Influence Parliamentarians and state legislators to set agenda to end child marriages.	<p>a) Analyse district-specific data on child marriage, and related factors like girls' dropout rate, MMR, IMR, low birth weight and malnourishment of children and develop prepare report cards for legislators and parliamentarians.</p> <p>b) Prepare advocacy brief and undertake advocacy campaign with public representatives.</p>

Strategy 5: Establish data lab to ensure authenticated data from grass root level; Strong and systematic monitoring and evaluation strategy (starting from village level to state level); Use SHGs for effective monitoring (Introducing workbook model); Integrating child marriage prevention and response into conflict (Ex: Insurgency areas) and humanitarian crisis programmes (Ex: health emergencies).	
Strategic Focus Area	Activities
1. Involve the village and mandal level mechanism to record and track vulnerable families for child marriage.	a) Strengthen the capacity of Gram Panchayat and the CPC at Village and mandal level by conducting at least by monthly meeting facilitated by DCPU. b) Ensure proper maintenance of records and registered of meetings and issues discussed. c) Link with village SHGs and identify the vulnerable families in the village and maintain a regular follow up of these families and their children. d) Use SHGs for effective monitoring (Introducing workbook model).
2. Revive the village level committees to implement the PCMA and track the implementation of child protection schemes and services.	a) Develop a management information system for PRI to track interventions related to addressing child marriage. b) Monitor and review progress by using the MIS. c) Strengthen registration systems for marriage to capture child marriages.
3. Create specific indicators for child marriage data bank at district (DCPU) and state level (SCPU).	a) Identify the gap and review the child marriage MIS at district and state level and link the indicators with management information system for PRI to track interventions related to addressing child marriage. b) Generate data & evidence and share it with concerned stakeholders on the district specific situation and progress by obtaining data from the district level MIS.
4. Partnership with research intuition/s, development partners and resource agencies to generate evidence on child marriage in the state.	a) Develop partnership to analyse data related to the issues of education, health and protection of children and prepare policy brief or advocacy brief as required time to time to implement the plan of action.

	<p>b) Conduct qualitative research to better understand changes taking place in the lives of the girls and to gain insights on the effectiveness of the different components of the action plan.</p> <p>c) Generate evidence on the gaps of programme and schemes.</p>
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8. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

The Ministry of Women and Development and Child Welfare, Government of Telangana is committed to end child marriages by 2030 by focusing on and adopting a multi-sectoral implementation approach on mission mode.

To achieve the intended results, the action plan document suggests the setting up of a Steering Committee at state level to take key decisions, review the progress of the implementation of the action plan. The Steering Committee will be chaired by the Hon'ble Minister of Women and Child Development and the Principal Secretary of Women and Child Development will be the advisor.

At implementation level, it is suggested to constitute a "State Mission to End Child Marriages" (SMECM). It will be chaired by the Commissioner, Women Development and Child Welfare which oversees the implementation of the State Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriages. Senior officers nominated by the concerned sectoral departments - Department of Education, Revenue Department, Health and Family Welfare, Panchayat Raj and Rural development, Police, and Law will be the members in SMECM.

SMECM is the institutional mechanism that will plan, implement and monitor the implementation of the activities specified in the State Action Plan. Since multiple departments have a critical role in ending child marriages in the state, the responsibility for implementation will be shared across departments with specific roles and responsibilities. As the highest administrative body, SMECM will be accountable for the success or failure of the State Action Plan. The responsibilities of the SMECM include:

- To provide direction and guidance for strategies and initiatives for the implementation a team down the line, and make go/no-go decisions,
- To evaluate the implementation of the action plan periodically,
- To allocate funding for the implementation of the action plan,
- In consultation with the Steering Committee, to review and approve changes to action plans and priorities,
- To assist the implementation when required (especially in an out-of-control situation) by exerting organizational authority and the ability to influence,
- To help resolve implementation boundary issues (between the sectoral departments and other stakeholders),
- To advise the district level teams on protocols, political issues, and potential sensitivities,
- To make the action plan visible within the organization,
- To encourage stakeholder involvement, build and maintain their ongoing commitment through effective communication strategies,
- To closely monitor the team working on M&E of the action plan and data lab to understand the trends, and

- To Communicate and coordinate with all categories of stakeholders, including sectoral departments.

Furthermore, the SMECM will be responsible for developing a communication platform to communicate with all stakeholders on key activities, best practices, events, training modules, etc. Most importantly, it will play a crucial role in maintaining and strengthening collaboration with regional and international organizations working towards ending child marriages.

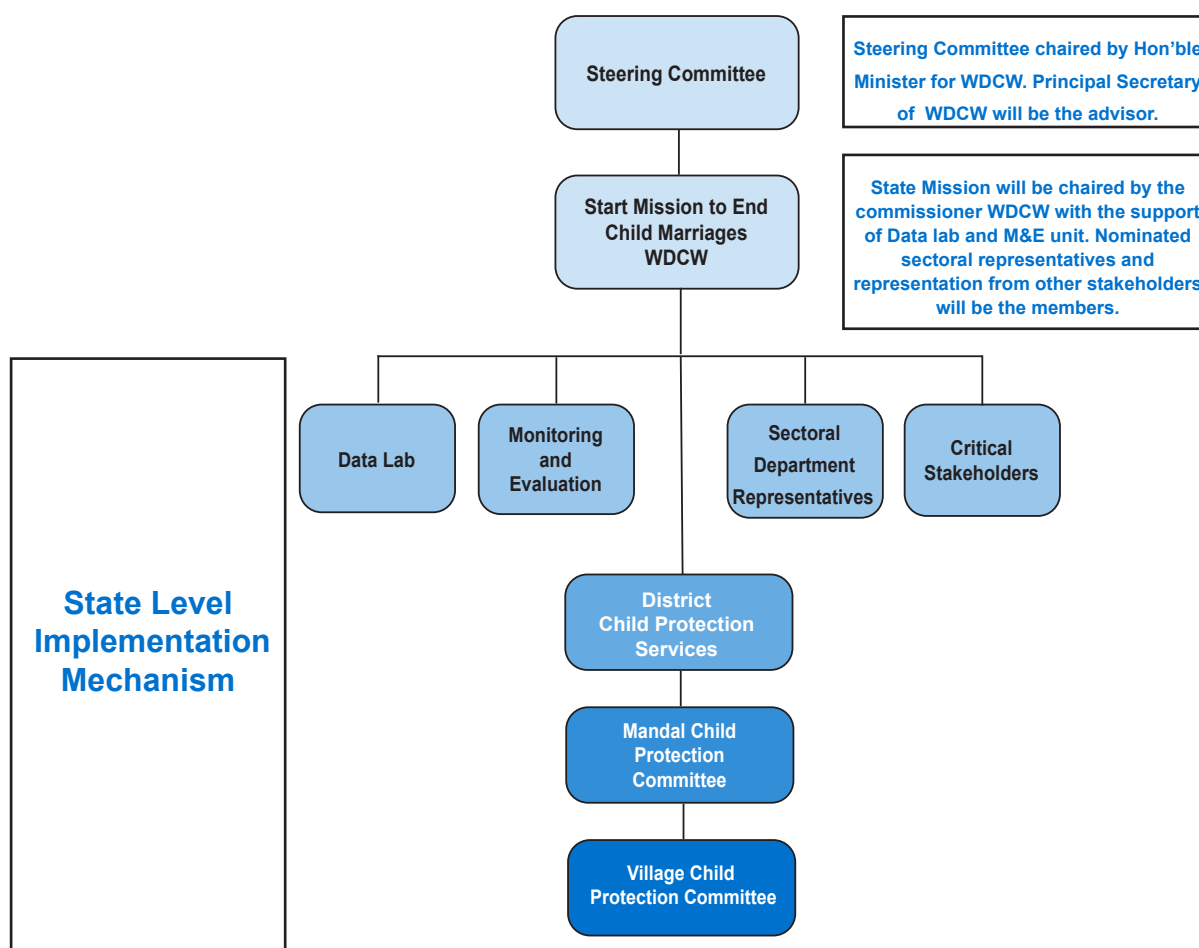
SMECM meets once in a quarter to review the progress and report to the steering Committee, which meets once in every quarter. The life period starts from the financial year 2021 and ends in 2030.

Data Lab:

To assist the SMECM, the data lab has to be set up in the WD&CW department. The Data Lab collects real-time data from all 32 districts in Telangana, analyses and prepares dashboard for the SMECM review. Ground level real-time data will be collected by SHGs using a workbook model, which will be reviewed and transferred to a State level Data Lab for further analysis and dashboard.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Monitoring and Evaluation is critical for quality and impact assessment of interventions addressing the prevention of child marriages. With the support of Data Lab, SMECM will play an instrumental role in monitoring the implementation of the state action plan. In order to measure the progress and impact of the action plan, it is essential that accurate baselines are identified and current data collection mechanisms are integrated into the M & E framework.



State Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriages puts forth a result-oriented action plan with a multi-tiered mechanism to oversee its implementation, along with a monitoring framework that will enable the state departments to identify vulnerable child brides over time and act in a preventive manner, rather than a reactive manner. In order to ensure the smooth functioning of all institutions involved in the SAPPCM, their roles and responsibilities are outlined below.

Key Stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities:

Key Stakeholders and Actors	Roles and Responsibilities
Women Development and Child Welfare Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nodal co-ordination ministry for implementation of the SAPPCM. It will provide overall leadership, support, and execution of the plan. It will be in charge for the overall implementation of the action plan and will act as the nodal co-ordinator between the other line department and key stakeholders. Building capacities of duty bearers from relevant departments is another important responsibility of WDCW, which will strengthen the implementation of the State Action Plan.
Department of School Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work in partnership with the department of WDCW and support in tracking school drop-outs and preventing child marriages. To play a key role in identifying vulnerable girl children in the school and support them in overall development and create awareness on child marriages. Ensure vocational education component in secondary school curriculum that will help in preventing child marriages. Ensure sufficient number of female teachers in all secondary schools so that chance for girl children to continue schooling. Ensure running water female toilets in all secondary schools to protect privacy of girl children.
Department of Health and Family Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work in partnership with the Department of WDCW and support in creating awareness about the negative impacts of child marriages on children's health and their future and ensure adolescents get proper nutritional and medical support as required. To create awareness on the effects of child marriage on girls physical and mental development and reinforce the importance of sex education to adolescent girls.

Revenue Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work in partnership with the department of WDCW and identify and prevent child marriages by ensuring registration of births and marriages. • To ensure that every birth, marriage and death is registered in the village records, to help in easy detection of cases of child marriage.
Rural Development and Panchayat Raj	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work in co-ordination with the department of WDCW and prevent and rescue victims of child marriage. • To act as agents of community awareness creation and play an active role in reduction of child marriages in villages.
Law Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work in coordination with the department of WDCW and play a role in effective enforcement of the PCMA and rehabilitation of the child bride. • To ensure that the regulation and rehabilitation measures are streamlined and implemented after rescue of the child bride.
Civil Society Organizations and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work as on-field partners for WDCW to prevent child marriages and serve as operational partners of WDCW to implement this action plan at the village, block, district and levels. • To provide technical support to the government for implementation of this action plan.
Community Leaders: Cultural and Religious Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To play a role as key advocacy agents against child marriages and contribute to changes in social and community norms on child marriage. • To generate awareness on prevention of child marriages and act as frontline workers to prevent child marriages and rescue child brides.
Self Help Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To play a key role in the identification and prevention of child marriages and play an active role in the Village Child Protection Committees. • To play a key role in regular monitoring of cases of child marriage and timely prevention of any such incidences.
Children; Girls and Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys and men to be change agents for girls, especially saying no to child marriage and all forms of gender-based violence in all settings. • Active partners in developing and implementing village, block, district and state plans of action to address child marriage and all forms of gender based violence.

Gram Panchayat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GP has to take lead role in monitoring the situation, organise regular interactions with stakeholders at GP level, coordinate with sectoral departments, council the parents who are opting child marriages, coordinate with community and religious leaders.
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Coordination and Collaboration

Overall implementation of the Action Plan will include the involvement of all the different stakeholders; government departments, development organizations, civil society organizations, NGOs, community and religious leaders, families, and children. The SAPECM will build on the existing committees in order to ensure better coordination and collaboration.

The key platforms for coordination of child protection in Telangana are:

Integrated Child Protection Services:

ICPS is an integrated framework of implementation that administers at national, state (SCPS), district (DCPS), and village levels (VCPS). It is based on the principles of 'protection of child rights' and 'best interests of the child'. Its primary function is to put in place both preventive and curative mechanisms for a child needing protection from exploitation, harassment, health hazards, etc. and ensure implementation at different levels.

District Child Protection Committees:

The District Child Protection Committee enables the effective functioning of ICPS at the district level. The primary function of DCPC is to coordinate the functioning of all Mandal Child Protection Committees and help them in developing plans and budgets. Under the SAPPCM, the district CPCs will also report to the project management unit on a quarterly basis.

Mandal Child Protection Committees:

The main function of the mandal Child Protection Committee is to coordinate the functioning of all Village Child Protection Committees in the Mandal. The committee provides assistance and training to VCPCs in preparing plans, increasing awareness about issues and resolving them.

Village Child Protection Committees:

Village Child Protection Committees (VCPCs) are headed by the village sarpanch. The committee consists of individuals and children in the village, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, local NGOs, Community Leaders, and Self-Help Groups. The primary role of VCPC is to ensure that all the children in their village are protected. The VCPC ensures that there is no child labor, child marriages, or any other form of violence against the children.

Apart from these committees, it is necessary to establish a unit that will be responsible for overseeing the overall coordination efforts to prevent child marriages in Telangana. Hence, for effective implementation of the action plan, it is suggested to establish a project management unit within the Women Development and Child Welfare department that will ensure proper coordination and cooperation. The Unit will be headed by an officer who has extensive knowledge and experience on Child Rights and Protection.

9. MONITORING & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The general objective of the Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the State Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriages is to provide space for a dialogue and decision making on the general status of the implementation, based on evidence-based data collected from programme interventions. M&E will ensure effective and efficient implementation of the priority actions and interventions at all levels. The specific objective is to inform whether changes need to be made to strategic areas of interventions and their respective activities.

A standardized framework (as shown below) includes the objectives, set targets for 2030 and define the Key Performance Indicators (KPI). This framework brings accountability of various stakeholders for meeting their targets.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1: COMMUNITY MOBILISATION TO CHANGE SOCIAL NORMS BY PROMOTING DIALOGUES AND RAISE AWARENESS OF GENDER INEQUALITIES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN, MEN, GIRLS AND BOYS ACROSS ECONOMIC STATUS AND SOCIAL GROUPS.							
OBJECTIVES	TARGET FOR 2030	ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE		INDICATORS	STAKEHOLDERS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
			SHORT TERM (UP TO 2023)	MEDIUM TERM (UP TO 2025)	LONG TERM (UP TO 2030)		
Strategy 1: Community mobilization to change social norms by promoting dialogues and raise awareness of gender inequalities and their consequences for women, men, girls and boys across economic status and social groups.							
1.1 Leverage strengths of religious bodies, community leaders and trade associations to influence the mindset of communities to act against child marriage.	All community leaders and religious leaders are aware of the legal and policy implications of child marriages.	a) Hold rounds of consultation on development & standardisation of communication materials on the issue. b) Issue guidelines to various trade organisations/ associations concerned with marriage arrangements for the prevention of child marriages. c) Organise quarterly / bi-monthly meeting with religious bodies, community leaders and trade associations throughout the year to discuss the consequences of child marriage and legal provisions to penalise the persons				WDCW, CSOs, Social Workers, Bala-Rakshak Coordinators.	Training programs, IEC material shared with these officials; Minutes of Meetings and reports from consultation meetings.
					Standardised IEC materials; Number of meetings organised.		

		who take part in such marriage in any capacity. d) Recognise the active members of religious bodies, community leaders and trade associations who are able to report the incidents of child marriage and share their contribution as a Child Rights Champion in the large forums.							
1.2. Empower men and women with information on consequences of child marriage and involve them in changing social norms.	Community as a whole is empowered to prevent and eliminate child marriages.	a) Develop and disseminate informational briefs and educational materials about the implications of and consequences of child marriage and use the same during the occasions of community gatherings at village/ mandal/ district level. b) Integrate resource materials on child marriage in the existing capacity building programmes/ training for grass-root level committees at villages including SHGs.							

<p>1.3. Engage with media to sensitise the community on the negative consequences of stringent social norms against gender and to promote positive role models to break the gender norms.</p>	<p>The media plays an influential role in the community to prevent child marriages.</p>	<p>a) Hold a sensitisation workshop for various forms of media – print and electronic, on how to report cases related to child marriage, upholding the rights of the child.</p>					Number of sensitisation workshops.	WDCW, Police Department, Revenue Department, Legal Department, and CSOs.	a. SOP prepared and shared with the media and communication materials. b. Number of promotional materials printed, promoted and distributed.
							Media coverage and propaganda on child marriages.	Revenue Department, WDCW.	Number of partnerships developed and advocacy campaigns conducted.
							Social media movements on prevention of child marriages		Number of public opinion polls and awareness campaigns conducted.
							Extra curricular activities towards women empowerment.	WDCW, Health Department, Police Department, Education Department, Panchayat Raj Institution.	Number of women participants in annual activities.
<p>1.4. Launching of gender transformative interventions to address the root causes of child marriage.</p>	<p>Women are empowered to make their own decisions especially related to age of marriage.</p>	<p>a) Initiate gender transformative intervention like annual activities led by women/ girls, women football match, girls cricket clubs etc. with village level institution like SHGs, PRIs recognised NGOs</p>							
		<p>b) Collaborate with NGOs/ CSOs and initiate innovative</p>							

2.3. Strengthen the delivery of existing programmes and schemes related to skills and livelihood to enable adolescents access to them.	Last mile outreach of programs and policies for preventing child marriages	a) Identify barriers in accessing existing programmes and schemes related to skills and livelihood by adolescents, especially girls.						WDCW, Skill Development Department, CSOs, NGOs.	Number of revisions or alterations made to existing schemes for skills and livelihoods development for girls.
		b) Monitor progress on improvement in access to existing programmes and schemes related to skills and livelihood by adolescents.						WDCW, Skill Development Department, CSOs, NGOs.	Number of beneficiaries of skill and livelihood training programs for adolescents.
		c) Engage with private partners, corporates and training institute to design demand driven skill development courses for adolescents.					Number of skill-institutes for adolescents.	WDCW, Corporates, NGOs.	Number of partnerships developed with private partners and corporates for skill development.
2.4. Promote government programs linked to improve economic empowerment of women.	Re-enforce the resolve of the government to work on eliminating child marriages	a) Create awareness on existing programmes on both wage employment and self-employment for economic empowerment of women.						WDCW, private NGOs, agencies.	Number of awareness programs conducted on employment schemes.
		b) Develop materials on entrepreneurship development and financial literacy.					IEC material on entrepreneurship and financial literacy.	WDCW, SHGs and Skill Development Department.	Number of training material developed on entrepreneurship and financial literacy.
		c) Work in collaboration with PRI and SHGs to identify most					Number of families that are linked with	WDCW, PRI and SHGs.	Number of vulnerable families identified and linked to income

		vulnerable families and link them with income generation programmes.						income generation programmes.		generation programmes.
Strategy 3: Create and expand opportunities for the empowerment of adolescent girls and boys to realise their rights										
3.1. Ensure that all adolescents' girls and boys have access to and complete quality age appropriate schooling.	Education curriculum includes modules on creation of awareness of child marriages.	a) Increase the number of schools with secondary education at the village level for girls.						a) Number of secondary schools at village level.	WDCW, Education Department.	Number of new schools established at village levels.
		b) Develop a retention strategy for girls and boys between the age of 12-18 in schools.						b) Number of dropouts.	WDCW, Education Department.	Number of girls and boys who complete secondary and higher education.
		c) Improved access of residential schools like KGBVs and Social Welfare Residential Educational Institution for girls.						c) Enrollment rate.	WDCW, Education Department.	Number of girls enrolled and continuing education in residential schools.
		d) Improve sanitation facilities including the provision of functional toilets and running water facilities in schools.						d) Gender and child right modules in teacher training programs.	WDCW, Education Department.	Number of functional toilets with running water facilities in schools.
		e) Develop resource materials for integration of gender and child rights education in existing training of teachers in coordination with SCERT.							WDCW, Education Department.	Number of resource materials developed and training programs conducted for teachers.

3.2. Preparing older adolescent girls and boys for livelihoods and school-to-work transitions.	Improve employability and employment options for adolescent girls and streamline the transition process from school to work.	a) Collaborate with CSO and SHGs and provide training in JOVT for out of school girls and young mothers. b) Establish coordination between the School Education Department and the Employment Generation Marketing Mission for smooth transition of school to work aiming at employment after job training.					JOVT for out of school and young mothers.	WDCW, Education Department, CSOs and SHGs.	Number of training programs conducted for out of school girls and young mothers.
							Employment rate.	WDCW, Education Department, Skill Development Department, corporates.	Number of employment opportunities created for graduates from schools.
3.3. Build girls' agency and empower them to exercise life choices (legal rights, age-segmented and age-appropriate gender transformative life skills education and comprehensive sexuality education).	Girls are empowered to make their own decisions and have autonomy on decisions.	a) Form adolescent clubs at school for school going children and at AWC for out-of-school girls and build capacities of the members to act as a change agent.					a) Number of clubs for adolescent girls b. Number of IEC materials for adolescents on child rights.	Education Department.	Number of adolescent clubs formed for girls in schools
		b) Develop and disseminate guidelines for discussions on the rights and issues for children and women, legal rights, schemes and programmes for adolescents etc.						WDCW, Education Department and Legal Services Department.	Guidelines developed and disseminated on rights issues of children.
		c) Issue guidelines/or- ders to the secondary and higher secondary schools to display the						WDCW, Education department.	IEC materials displayed and notes on discussions on issues of child marriages in

		IEC materials and initiate discussions on the issue of child marriage.						Education Department, NGOs.	schools.
		d) Roll out the peer educator initiative in collaboration with education department and NGOs.							Number of programs carried out in collaboration with education department and NGOs.
3.4. Identify local role-models and champions specially the child marriage survivors to showcase their achievements despite challenges.	Local role models inspire girls to succeed in their lives.	a) Identify local role models and organize interaction of role models with adolescent boys & girls.					a) Number of role models/ youth icons for sensitisation and awareness generation on child marriages.	Education Department, WDCW.	Number of programs carried out through local role models in schools.
		b) Use the media to highlight the stories of role models.						WDCW, Public Relations Department.	Number of promotions and programs carried out in digital and print media.
		c) Select a youth icon as brand ambassador for creating mass awareness generation and sensitization on child marriage and it's consequences.						WDCW.	Number of youth leaders selected and appointed as brand ambassadors.
Strategy 4: Strengthen governance system to prevent child marriage, violence against women and implementation of schemes/ programmes to promote adolescent empowerment.									
4.1. Empower the mechanism at community level (PRI, SHG etc.) and strengthen the systems that act	Community level institutions are empowered to actively prevent and eliminate child marriages.	a) Sensitise PRI members by integrating the issue of child marriage in the training module of Panchayat Raj Department.					a) Number of IEC materials at PRD. b) Number of Gram Sabhas that included the issue of child marriage	WDCW, PRI.	a) Number of trainings carried out for Panchayati Raj Departments. b) Records of meetings and trainings conducted

as a safeguard against child marriage.					b) Share communication briefs and action points which SHGs and PRI can pursue in the village. c) Hold special Gram Sabha on the issue of child marriage throughout the state. d) Introduce incentive/ awards for such committees across the state for reporting and preventing highest number of child marriages. e) Issue guidelines to facilitate child marriage-free gram panchayats aiming at GPs with high no. of child marriage cases reported for the incentive.				incentives for prevention of child marriages.	WDCW, PRI.	Communication briefs developed and distributed for SHGs and PRI uted for SHGs and PRI.
										WDCW, PRI.	Number of Gram Sabhas conducted to discuss on the issues of child marriages.
										WDCW, PRI.	Number of awards /incentives distributed for reporting and preventing child marriages.
										WDCW, PRI.	Guidelines developed and issued to GPs.
4.2. Enhance legal awareness on various child protection and gender related legislations.	Legal awareness on child marriage laws and policies is created among the communities.								a) Number of Awareness sessions on child marriage legislations at the GP level. b) Number of legal officials.	WDCW, PRI, Legal Services Department.	Guidelines developed and issued to GPs.
										WDCW, PRI, Legal Services Department.	Number of awareness sessions created on child protection legislations conducted at mandal and panchayati levels

<p>4.3. Increase scale and reach of ending child marriage and adolescent empowerment programs and laws especially for the most marginalised, leveraging, coordinating and stipulate the roles and responsibilities and accountability of different stakeholder -ers at state, district, block and community level in policy and law enforcement.</p>	<p>Enhance the outreach of child protection laws and child marriages.</p>	<p>c) Sensitise judicial officers and public prosecutors in all districts, on child marriage, PCMA and annulment.</p>						WDCW, PRI, Legal Services Department.	Number of awareness and training programs conducted for judicial officers and public prosecutors.
		<p>d) Organise Public Hearing with SCPCR in high child marriage prone districts.</p>						WDCW, PRI, Legal Services Department.	Number of public hearings conducted in high marriage prone districts.
		<p>a) Motivate the ASHA worker and AWW to create awareness on ill health effects of marriage and child bearing before the age of 18 with adolescent girls at village level and also help the local government to link those families with various schemes and programmes under social protection.</p>						WDCW, PRI, Health Department.	Number of training sessions conducted for ASHA and AWW workers.
		<p>b) Strengthen capacity of GP, SHGs, CPCs, Frontline workers like (AWW, ASHA, school teacher) to identify the high risk families for child marriage , play key role in awareness generation and sensitization.</p>						WDCW, PRI, Health Department.	Number of training programs conducted for GP, SHGs, CPCs, frontline workers to strengthen their capacities.
								Capacity building programs for Frontline workers.	

4.4. Strengthen rehabilitation and redressal mechanisms for children affected by marriage.			c) Build capacities of grass root level committees like Village Health Sanitation, Committees and Child Protection Committees at village and Mandal level, Standing Committees on Social service at Gram Panchayat to spread awareness on child marriage and to increase reporting on the incidents of child marriage.						WDCW, PRI, Health Department, PRI, Police Department.	Number of training programs conducted for Village Health Sanitation Committees and Child Protection Committees.
			d) Develop an SOP for stakeholders who are involved under provisions of PCMA Act and JJ Act to ensure prevention and protection of children from child marriage at the state and district level.						WDCW, PRI, Legal Services Department.	SOP developed and implemented for PCMA and JJ act.
	Redressal and Rehabilitation mechanisms are streamlined and strengthened for victims of child marriage.		a) Facilitate the fast-track redressal system for those adolescents who want to nullify their marriage and explore provision of compensation through victim compensation scheme and provide legal aid. b) Build the capacity of					Status reports of victims of child marriages.	WDCW, PRI, Legal Services Department.	Streamlining and regulation of redressal and rehabilitation mechanisms.
								Number of	WDCW, PRI.	Number of capacity

<p>4.5. Competency based capacity development programme of the CMPOs, Marriage Registration officers, DCPUs and Special Juvenile Police Units on continuous basis.</p>	<p>All Child Marriage Prevention Officers are capacitated to prevent and eliminate child marriages.</p>	Child Welfare Committee members/district child protection units for rehabilitation of children rescued from incidents of child marriage.					capacity building programs.	WDCW, PRI.	building programs conducted for Child Welfare Committee members and district child protection units.
		c) Strengthen capacities of the ASHAs and AWWs to engage with young married couples in order to motivate them to delay and promote spacing between births.					Number of Asha and AWW workers trained on child marriage prevention module.	WDCW, PRI, Health Department.	Number of capacity building programs conducted for ASHA and AWWs on child births and spacing between pregnancies.
		a) Conduct a training need assessment for CMPOs, Marriage Registration officers, DCPUs and SJPU and identify the skill gap to deal with the issue of child marriage.					Needs assessments for all officials implementing child marriage prevention act.	WDCW, PRI, Revenue Department	Results of needs assessment conducted for CMPOs, marriage registration officers, DCPUs and SJPU.
		b) Develop training materials for sensitisation of CMPOs, marriage registration officers and SJPU on issues related to child rights and organise sensitization workshop					Training materials on child marriage prevention for officials.	WDCW, PRI.	Training materials developed and distributed.
		c) Prepare a training calendar for responsible stakeholders and planned continuous capacity development					Capacity building programs conducted.	WDCW.	Development of training calendar.

		b) Generate data & evidence and share it with concerned stakeholders on the district specific situation and progress by obtaining data from the district level MIS.						Data and knowledge sharing mechanisms.	WDCW, PRI	Reports developed and shared at the district level.
										Number of partner-ships developed and established to monitor the data of MIS.
5.4. Partnership with research intuition/s, development partners and resource agencies to generate evidence on child marriage in the state.	Evidence based research reports are generated and help inform policy makers on issues related to girls and child marriages.	a) Develop partnership for analysis of data related to the issues of education, health and protection of children and prepare policy brief or an advocacy brief as required time to time to implement the plan of action.						Policy and advocacy briefs pertinent to child protection and development.	WDCW, PRI, NGOs	Number of partner-ships developed and established to monitor the data of MIS.
		b) Conduct qualitative research to better understand changes taking place in the lives of the girls and to gain insights on the effectiveness of the different components of the action plan.						Research articles and reports on child marriages and gender specific issues.	WDCW, NGOs	Number of research reports developed and dissemination of findings.
		c) Generate evidence on the gaps of programme and schemes.						Reports and documentation on programs and schemes	WDCW, NGOs	Publication of materials and reports on gaps of programmes and schemes of child marriages.

PART THREE

ANNEXURES - RESULTS FRAME WORK

ANNEXURES

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

It brings together several distinct streams of results under state action plan, which function synergistically to reach the expected goal by 2030.

Results Framework
Strategic Action Plan to End Child Marriages in Telangana
Time frame: 2020 to 2030 (ten years)

IMPACT	Girls fully enjoy their childhood which is free from the risk of early marriage; they experience healthier, safer and more empowered life transitions while in control of their own destiny, including making choices and decisions about their education, sexuality, relationship formation/marriage and childbearing.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	To accelerate action to address child marriage by enhancing investments in and support for married and unmarried girls and making visible the corresponding benefits of this support; engaging key actors – including young people as agents of change – in catalysing shifts towards positive gender norms; increasing political support, resources, policies and frameworks promoting positive change; and improving the data and evidence base.

IMPACT INDICATORS:
1. Percentage of women aged 20–24 married/in-union before age 18
2. Percentage of women aged 20–24 married/in-union before age 15, among all women aged 20–24 married/in-union before age 18
3. Percentage who gave birth before age 20 among all women aged 20–24 married/in-union before age 15,
4. Percentage who gave birth before age 18
5. Percentage of adolescent girls of lower-secondary school-age that are out of school
6. Percentage of women aged 15–19 who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods
7. Percentage of births to girls aged 15–19 attended by skilled health personnel

OUTCOME 1: Community Leaders (especially Religious leaders, Community leaders, PRI functionaries, opinion makers, adolescent girls and boys, men and women) are active participants in eliminating gender inequalities and changing social norms thereby ensuring strong prevention and early reporting on child marriages.

OUTCOME 1 INDICATORS:
a) All stakeholders at village level uphold gender equitable attitudes.
b) Gender Transformative programs are mainstreamed in community level activities

OUTPUT 1.1 :

Guidelines, SOPs and IEC material are developed and shared with Media, PRI functionaries, Community leaders, NGOs and SHGs

OUTPUT INDICATOR 1.1 :

Number of trainings and awareness sessions conducted with community leaders, PRI functionaries, NGOs and SHGs

OUTPUT 1.2 :

Rehabilitation and Redressal mechanisms for girl children are streamlined and adolescent girls have easier access to such facilities

OUTPUT INDICATOR 1.2 :

Number of rehabilitation spaces created in shelter homes and number of adolescent girls who are at risk of child marriage or victims of child marriage accessing such programmes.

OUTCOME 2 : Livelihoods opportunities are enhanced thereby leading households to demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours towards investing in and supporting adolescent girls

OUTCOME 2 INDICATORS:

Number and proportion of households which are gainfully employed in income generation activities

OUTPUT 2.1 :

Economic incentive helps households delay the age of marriage of girls in the household

OUTPUT INDICATOR 2.1 :

a) Number of beneficiaries of the Conditional Cash Transfer programs

b) Number of girls who are enrolled into secondary and higher education

c) Number of girls who availed scholarships in schools

OUTCOME 3 : Expansion of opportunities for empowerment of boys and girls**OUTCOME 3 INDICATORS:**

a) Number and proportion of adolescent girls in programme areas who have enrolled in secondary and higher education

b) Percentage point difference in exam-pass rates between boys and girls in programme areas

OUTPUT 3.1 :

Improved access to schools and improved gender sensitive infrastructure in schools

OUTPUT INDICATOR 3.1 :

a) Number of schools available at village level for secondary and higher education

OUTPUT 3.2 :

Recreational/Safe spaces created for girls for awareness creation and discussion forums on their rights, schemes and programmes and to discuss their issues

b) Percentage point difference in exam-pass rates between boys and girls in programme areas

OUTPUT INDICATOR 3.2 :

Number of adolescent girls clubs formed and peer education interventions undertaken by education department in collaboration with NGOs

OUTCOME 4 : Governance systems are strengthened and schemes and programs are implemented for empowerment of adolescents and prevention of child marriages and violence against women

OUTCOME 4 INDICATORS:

SOPs, IEC and Training materials prepared and disseminated for stakeholders and law enforcement officers

OUTPUT 4.1 :

Enhanced awareness of legal provisions and laws to all enforcement officers and community leaders

OUTPUT INDICATOR 4.1 :

Number of capacity building/training programs conducted for GP, SHG, CPC, Teachers and Frontline workers

OUTCOME 5 : A robust Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy with integrated data labs and integration of child marriage prevention and rescue programs.

OUTCOME 5 INDICATORS:

Reports and evidence based data generated by state from database on child marriage to inform policy and programming

OUTPUT 5.1 :

Evidence from grassroot levels and strong database maintenance by village/town level functionaries on girls and child marriages

OUTPUT INDICATOR 5.1 :

Dashboards reflecting real time data from the village level/town level

OUTPUT 5.2 :

Partnerships and collaborations established for feeding policymakers to formulate effective policy interventions

OUTPUT INDICATOR 5.2 :

- a) Number of partnerships established between government, NGOs and research organizations
- b) Research reports and policy briefs generated from the agencies

