

CABINET NOD TO RAISE GIRLS' MARRIAGE AGE TO 21

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The Centre has decided to raise the legal age of marriage of women from 18 to 21 years and is likely to move legislative amendments in the ongoing winter session of Parliament.

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday cleared a proposal to bring uniformity in the marriageable age of men and women, sources told news agency *PTI* on Thursday, adding that a Bill to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006, will be introduced during this session.

The proposed Bill may also contain amendments to various personal laws relating to marriage of various communities to ensure a uniform age of marriage.

As of now, the legal age of women to get married is 18, while that for men is 21.

Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani and Secretary, Ministry of Child Development, Indevar Pandey, refused to comment on the subject.

Last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the government would soon take a decision on the age of marriage of women. This followed a government decision to appoint a 10-member task force led by former Samata Party chief Jaya Jaitly. The panel submitted its report to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Ministry of Women and Child Development in December last year and recommended that the age of marriage of women be raised to 21. The panel's report has not been made public yet.

(With PTI inputs)

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