

MORE CHILD MARRIAGES BEING FOILED IN ODISHA

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Rights & Welfare of Children - Schemes & their Performance, Mechanisms, Laws Institutions and Bodies

Odisha has witnessed a sharp increase in the number of child marriages prevented over the past four years, following increased awareness and better coordination among field-level staff.

As against 657 child marriages stopped in 2019, 1,108 were stopped in 2020. In the first five months in the current year, attempts to solemnize 726 such marriages have been foiled.

In 2017, 324 child marriages were stopped following the last-minute intervention from community, NGOs and field-level officials. In 2018, the number grew marginally to 411. However, the last two years saw a massive jump in the number of marriages being stopped.

This year, Ganjam recorded highest 125 preventions followed by Nabarangpur (111) and Malkangiri (90).

Action plan

According to the “Odisha strategic action plan to end child marriage”, the prevalence among girls was reported to be 21.3% against the national average of 26.8% whereas for boys it was only 11% against the national average of 20.3% (NFHS-4, 2015-16).

Fifteen districts including many southern districts have higher percentages than the State average. There are eight districts where the practice is higher than the national average.

Odisha witnessed a decline of nearly 16 and 11 percentage points (between NFHS 2005-06 and 2015-16), for girls and boys marrying before the legal ages of 18 and 21 years respectively.

“Still one in five women was married by the age of 18 in Odisha,” says the paper.

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