

## GIRLS NOT BRIDES

### Read the text and complete the exercise below.

Girls Not Brides is the name of the largest association that campaigns on a worldwide scale to put an end to the problem of child brides. The name also reflects the objectives of the association: little girls should stay little girls and not become brides of men who are much older than them. Every year 14 million girls become child brides. They are often eight or nine years old, an age when their peers play or go to school.

### A tradition

India is the country which has a very high rate of child brides. The phenomenon has ancient roots. Historians do not know when it first began. It has become part of India's traditional custom and is almost taken for granted. Little girls are given up to marriage because that is how it has always been.

Today the phenomenon is widespread, especially among the poorer classes of the population and above all in rural areas. Poor families willingly give their underage daughters in marriage so as to avoid paying a dowry.

The religion of Islam encourages this phenomenon as it doesn't set any limits to the bride's age.

### Consequences

The consequences for little girls are serious:

- their physical development is interrupted by premature pregnancies;
- they are forced to leave school;
- they are subordinated for life to men who are much older than them.

### Remedies

A UN resolution of 2013 commits Member States to take concrete measures against the phenomenon of child brides.

The first step is to establish a law setting the minimum age by which one can marry.

For example, in the UK the law prohibits minors from marrying. Every State should adopt a similar law.

In 2006 the Indian parliament passed the Prohibition of Child Marriages Act, which prohibits women from marrying before the

## DID YOU KNOW?

There are 60 million women worldwide who married when they were underage.

India has about 40% of the world's child brides.

Niger has the highest child marriage rate in the world at about 76%.

Countries with the highest numbers of child brides are: Central African Republic, Chad, Bangladesh, Guinea, Mali, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Zambia and the Dominican Republic.

## ACTIVITIES

Answer the following questions about “Girls Not Brides”. Choose the correct letter.

1. How many underage girls get married every year?
  - a. About 14 million
  - b. 14 thousand
  - c. 14 million
  - d. Less than 14 million
  
2. What country has the highest percentage of child brides?
  - a. Sierra Leone
  - b. South Africa
  - c. India
  - d. Guinea
  
3. Where in India is the phenomenon of child marriages particularly widespread?
  - a. In the countryside
  - b. In coastal areas
  - c. In towns.
  - d. In the mountains
  
4. Why do poor Indian families allow their underage daughters to marry?
  - a. Because they are Muslims.
  - b. Because they live in rural areas
  - c. Because they can earn quite a lot of money.
  - d. Because it saves them having to pay a dowry
  
5. Which is one of the consequences of the phenomenon ?
  - a. Young girls are unhappy
  - b. Young girls feel isolated
  - c. Young girls live in slums
  - d. Young girls stop going to school
  
6. Who is resorting to drastic measures in order to fight against the problem of child brides?
  - a. The United Nations
  - b. The police.
  - c. The police and teachers
  - d. The USA
  
7. What does British law prohibit?
  - a. It prohibits Muslim weddings
  - b. It prohibits child marriages
  - c. It prohibits having children
  - d. It prohibits Indian weddings

When did India adopt the law against child marriages?

- a. In 2006
- b. In 2008
- c. In 2016
- d. In 2017

9. Who can marry at 21 in India ?

- a. Boys
- b. Women
- c. Everyone
- d. Men

10. Which of the following countries has the highest percentage of child marriages in the world?

- a. Somalia
- b. Mali
- c. Niger
- d. South Sudan