



Uttar Pradesh Assembly Passes 'Love Jihad' Law

Why in News?

Recently, The Uttar Pradesh Assembly passed the [UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion \(Amendment\) Bill, 2024](#), providing for a **maximum punishment of life** imprisonment to the offenders convicted under certain circumstances.

Key Points

- The law contains **stringent provisions with regard to fraudulent or forced conversions**.
- It provides for **20 years' imprisonment or life sentence** if it was found that conversion had taken place under **threat, promise of marriage or conspiracy**. It was placed in the category of **most serious crime** under the Bill.
 - The bill allows **any person to register an [First Information Report \(FIR\)](#) in cases related to [religious conversion](#)**, not only parents, victims, or siblings.
- These cases would not be heard by any court below the sessions court. Bill has also made the crime [non-bailable](#).
 - Anyone wishing to convert of their own volition for the purpose of marriage must submit an application to the concerned district magistrate two months in advance.

State Anti-Conversion Laws

- **Odisha (1967)**: First State to enact a law restricting religious conversions, prohibiting forceful conversions and fraudulent means.
- **Madhya Pradesh (1968)**: Introduced the Madhya Pradesh [Dharma Swatantraya Adhiniyam](#), requiring notification to the District Magistrate for any conversion activities under penalty of law.
- Arunachal Pradesh (1978), Gujarat (2003), Chhattisgarh (2000 and 2006), Rajasthan (2006 and 2008), Himachal Pradesh (2006 and 2019), Tamil Nadu (2002-2004), Jharkhand (2017), Uttarakhand (2018), Uttar Pradesh (2021), and [Haryana \(2022\)](#).
 - These states have enacted laws prohibiting various forms of religious conversions, with enhanced penalties for conversions involving SCs, STs, minors, and women.
- **Centre's Stand**: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs stated in an affidavit to the Supreme Court that the **right to religion does not include the right to convert others, especially through fraudulent or coercive means**.
 - They referred to the [Supreme Court's](#) interpretation of [Article 25](#) and emphasised that fraudulent conversion affects an individual's freedom of conscience and can disrupt public order.
 - The Centre has not clarified if it will introduce a special law on religious conversions as requested in the petition.

