



Legislation for Forced Religious Conversions

Why in News?

Recently, The Rajasthan government informed [the Supreme Court](#) that it is **in the process of bringing in its own legislation** as it does not have any specific legislation regarding [religious conversions](#).

- The state emphasized that it follows the directives of the Supreme Court, various High Courts, and the Central Government on this matter.

Key Points

- According to a [Public Interest Litigation \(PIL\)](#) filed by an advocate the Centre and States have failed to control the menace of deceitful religious conversion, though it is their duty under [Articles 14, 21, 25 of the Constitution](#).
- The penal law does not cover religious conversion, many states have become the safe place for foreign funded individuals, and [Non-governmental Organizations \(NGOs\)](#) for illegal conversion.
 - In 2022, the Supreme Court issued notice to the Centre and others seeking their response to the plea for a direction to control fraudulent religious conversion and those carried out by **intimidation, threat, deceit, and through gifts and monetary benefits**.

Religious Conversion

- Religious conversion is the **adoption of a set of beliefs identified with one particular religious denomination** to the exclusion of others.
- Thus "religious conversion" would describe the **abandoning of adherence to one denomination** and affiliating with another.
 - For example, Christian Baptist to Methodist or Catholic, Muslim Shia to Sunni.
- In some cases, religious conversion "marks a **transformation of religious identity** and is symbolized by special rituals".

Article 14

- **Article 14** says that **no person shall be denied treatment of equality before the law** or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
- The right is **extended to** all persons whether **citizens or foreigners, statutory corporations, companies, registered societies or any other type of legal person**.

Article 21

- This declares that **no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty** except according to procedure established by law. This right is **available to both citizens and non-citizens**.
- The right to life is not merely confined to animal existence or survival but also includes **the right to live with human dignity** and all those aspects of life which go to make a man's life meaningful, complete and worth living.

Article 25

- The Indian Constitution under **Article 25** guarantees the freedom to **profess, propagate,** and **practice religion**, and allows all religious sections to manage their own affairs in matters of religion, subject to public **order, morality,** and **health.**
- However, no person shall force their religious beliefs and consequently, no person should be forced to practice any religion against their wishes.

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