



# FACTSHEET

# MINORITIES IN INDIA

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## Factsheet: Minorities in India

*There is a need for course correction on false narratives around Indian minorities, particularly Christians. One cannot gloss over the affirmative actions on socio-economic development framework intended to uplift minorities and achieving inclusivity.*

The Westminster Hall in the U.K. will provide floor for a debate on the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in India. The debate is slated for 24th February, 2022<sup>1</sup>. The misinformation propagated by Western media houses, such as The New York Times (NYT), on the state of Christians and their missionaries in India is not just factually incorrect considering ground realities in India but also detached from the countries history.

The report by NYT, '*Arrests, Beatings and Secret Prayers: Inside the Persecution of India's Christians*', published in December 2021, has made serious allegations on the rising crimes against Christian minorities in India and how religious minorities in general do not feel safe in Modi's India<sup>2</sup>.

In this context, there is a need to put issues in perspective with evidence from 2014 till date. We also present several key affirmative actions taken by the government of India and state governments to uphold the rights of minorities in India. These can be studied under the ambit of Article 29 and Article 30 of the Indian constitution.

### Minorities in India

India is one of the most ethnically and culturally unique countries in the world. Its experience in dealing with various minorities offers important insights for other countries. Under Section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jain, and Zoroastrians (Parsis) have been designated as minority communities. According to the 2011 Census, minorities account for around 19.3 percent of the country's overall population. Muslims account for 14.2 percent, Christians for 2.3 percent, Sikhs for 1.7 percent, Buddhists for 0.7 percent, Jain for 0.4 percent, and Parsis for 0.006 percent of

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<sup>1</sup> 'Westminster Hall To Hold A General Debate On The Persecution Of Christians And Religious Minorities In India' (*committees.parliament.uk*, 2022) <<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/202/backbench-business-committee/news/161076/westminster-hall-to-hold-a-general-debate-on-the-persecution-of-christians-and-religious-minorities-in-india/>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>2</sup> 'Arrests, Beatings And Secret Prayers: Inside The Persecution Of India'S Christians' (*nytimes.com*, 2022) <<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/22/world/asia/india-christians-attacked.html>> accessed 20 February 2022

the population <sup>3</sup> Even though India's Hindu majority is constantly vilified, India's minorities have grown and flourished since independence. Since 2014, India has launched a number of new welfare schemes for the country's minorities in order to achieve this goal. In the table below, a summary of some of the schemes is highlighted.

### Special Schemes for Minorities in India

Scheme	Target minorities	Description	Nodal Ministry	References
Maulana Azad National Fellowship (MANF)	Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Muslim, Sikh, Zoroastrian (Parsi)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The scheme provides five-year fellowships in the form of financial assistance.</li> <li>The Fellowship will cater to the students pursuing regular and full time research studies leading to award of M.Phil/Ph.D degree within India only.</li> </ol>	Ministry of Minority Affairs	Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. Maulana Azad National Fellowship   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: < <a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/maulana-azad-national-fellowship-minority-students-scheme">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/maulana-azad-national-fellowship-minority-students-scheme</a> > [Accessed 18 February 2022].
Padho Pardesh	Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Muslim, Sikh, Parsi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheme of Interest Subsidy on Educational Loans for Overseas Studies at Masters, M.Phil and Ph.D level for the Student.</li> <li>The loan for overseas studies for specific courses should have been sanctioned by the bank under IBA model scheme.</li> </ol>	Ministry of Minority Affairs	Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. Padho Pardesh   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: < <a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/padho-pardesh-scheme-interest-subsidy-educational-loans-overseas-studies-students-belonging-minority">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/padho-pardesh-scheme-interest-subsidy-educational-loans-overseas-studies-students-belonging-minority</a> > [Accessed 18 February 2022].

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/sites/default/files/MsDP%20%28FAQs%29.pdf>

Naya Savera	Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsis, Jains and Muslims	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Free Coaching and Allied Scheme for the candidates/students belonging to Minority Communities.</li> <li>2. Students under the scheme will have to attend all classes and they will be eligible to get a stipend of Rs. 2500 per month.</li> </ol>	Ministry of Minority Affairs	Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. Naya Savera   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: < <a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/free-coaching-and-allied-scheme-minority-communities-students">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/free-coaching-and-allied-scheme-minority-communities-students</a> > [Accessed 18 February 2022].
Nai Udaan	Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsis, Jains and Muslims	Financial Support for Minority Students clearing Prelims conducted by UPSC, State Public Service Commissions (PSCs) and Staff Selection Commission.	Ministry of Minority Affairs	Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. Nai Udaan   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: < <a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/support-students-clearing-prelims-conducted-upscsscstate-public-service-commissionpsc-etc">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/support-students-clearing-prelims-conducted-upscsscstate-public-service-commissionpsc-etc</a> > [Accessed 18 February 2022].
Seekho aur Kamao	Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsi, Jain and Muslims	The scheme will aim at upgrading the skills of the minority youths in various modern/ traditional vocations depending upon the educational qualification, present economic trends and the market potential, which can earn them a suitable employment or make them suitably skilled to go for self-employment.	Ministry of Minority Affairs.	Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. Seekho aur Kamao   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: < <a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/seekho-aur-kamaolearn-earn-scheme-skill-development-minorities">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/seekho-aur-kamaolearn-earn-scheme-skill-development-minorities</a> > [Accessed 18 February 2022].

<p>USTAAD (Upgrading the skills and training in traditional Arts/ Crafts for development)</p>	<p>Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsi, Jain and Muslims</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aims at upgrading Skills and Training of minority communities by preservation of traditional ancestral Arts and Crafts.</li> <li>2. It envisages boosting the skill of craftsmen, weavers and artisans who are already engaged in the traditional ancestral work.</li> </ol>	<p>Ministry of Minority Affairs</p>	<p>Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. USTTAD   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: &lt;<a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/usttad-upgrading-skills-and-training-traditional-arts-crafts-development">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/usttad-upgrading-skills-and-training-traditional-arts-crafts-development</a>&gt; [Accessed 18 February 2022].</p>
<p>Nai Manzil</p>	<p>Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsi, Jain and Muslims</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The scheme is to provide education and market driven skills training for youth from minority community.</li> <li>2. Minority youths in the age group of 17 to 35 years who are school-dropouts or educated in the community education institutions like Madarsas, are provided an integrated input of formal education (up till Class VIII or X) and skill training along with certification</li> <li>3. Minimum 30% seats are earmarked for minority girls.</li> </ol>	<p>Ministry of Minority Affairs</p>	<p>Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. Nai Manzil   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: &lt;<a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/nai-manzil-social-assesment-and-social-management-framework">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/nai-manzil-social-assesment-and-social-management-framework</a>&gt; [Accessed 18 February 2022].</p>
<p>Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram</p>	<p>Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsi, Jain and Muslims</p>	<p>The scheme seeks to provide better socio-economic infrastructure facilities to the minority communities.</p>	<p>Ministry of Minority Affairs</p>	<p>Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: &lt;<a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/pradhan-mantri-jan-vikas-karyakram-pmjvk-0">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/pradhan-mantri-jan-vikas-karyakram-pmjvk-0</a>&gt; [Accessed 18 February 2022].</p>

Nai Roshni	Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsi, Jain and Muslims	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The objective of the scheme is to empower and instil confidence among minority women, including their neighbours from other communities living in the same village/locality, by providing knowledge, tools and techniques for interacting with Government systems, banks and other institutions at all levels.</li> <li>2. It includes various training modules like Leadership of women, Educational Programmes, Health and Hygiene, Swachch Bharat, Financial Literacy, Life Skills, Legal Rights of Women, Digital Literacy and Advocacy for Social and behavioural change.</li> </ol>	Ministry of Minority Affairs	<p>Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. Nai Roshni   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: &lt;<a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/nai-roshni-scheme-leadership-development-minority-women">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/nai-roshni-scheme-leadership-development-minority-women</a>&gt; [Accessed 18 February 2022].</p>
Jiyo Parsi	Parsi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The main objective of the scheme was to arrest the declining trend of the Parsi population by adopting a scientific protocol and structured interventions, in order to stabilize their population and thereby increasing the population of Parsis in India.</li> <li>2. The scheme also offers cash assistance to encourage Parsi couples to have children. The scheme is applicable to all couples, irrespective of their financial status</li> </ol>	Ministry of Minority Affairs	<p>Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. Jiyo Parsi   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: &lt;<a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/jiyo-parsi-central-sector-scheme-containing-population-decline-parsis-india">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/jiyo-parsi-central-sector-scheme-containing-population-decline-parsis-india</a>&gt; [Accessed 18 February 2022].</p>

Humari Dharohar	Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsi, Jain and Muslims	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A scheme to preserve rich heritage of minority communities of India under the overall concept of Indian culture.</li> <li>2. The aim of the scheme is also to support the promotion of various forms of expression which are unique to each community such as calligraphy. Therefore the government will help promote such forms of expression.</li> </ol>	Ministry of Minority Affairs	Minorityaffairs.gov.in. 2022. Hamari Dharohar   Ministry of Minority Affairs   Government of India. [online] Available at: < <a href="https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/%E2%80%9Chamari-dharohar%E2%80%9D-scheme-preserve-rich-heritage-minority-communities-india-under-overall-concept">https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/schemesperformance/%E2%80%9Chamari-dharohar%E2%80%9D-scheme-preserve-rich-heritage-minority-communities-india-under-overall-concept</a> > [Accessed 18 February 2022].
Gharib Nawaz Employment Scheme	Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsi, Jain and Muslims	The main aim of this scheme is to provide short term job oriented skill development courses to minorities' youth in order to enable them for skill based employment.	Ministry of Minority Affairs	Maef.nic.in. 2022. Gharib Nawaz Employment Scheme   Official Website of The Maulana Azad Education Foundation, Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India. [online] Available at: < <a href="https://maef.nic.in/gharib-nawaz-employment-scheme">https://maef.nic.in/gharib-nawaz-employment-scheme</a> > [Accessed 18 February 2022].
Begum Hazrat Mahal Girls scholarships	Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsi, Jain and Muslims	Previously named Maulana Azad National Scholarship. The purpose of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to meritorious students, who cannot continue their education due to lack of financial support.	Ministry of Minority Affairs	Bhmnsmaef.org. 2022. Begum Hazrat Mahal National Scholarship Portal. [online] Available at: < <a href="https://bhmnsmaef.org/maefwebsite/">https://bhmnsmaef.org/maefwebsite/</a> > [Accessed 18 February 2022].

Several schemes have been enacted for minorities in India. For example, students from minority communities get scholarships fellowships to support their studies at all levels of education. These schemes aim to empower the minority communities by assisting them in improving their skills and capabilities by providing development programs. These are intended to help them become employable for industries and services. These affirmative actions are aligned with the Indian constitution. These are inclusive and are aimed towards the overall growth of the Indian economy and society.



## Misuse of minority rights.

India has made tremendous efforts to facilitate the growth and development of minorities in the country. It is a fundamental right of minorities and institutions to practice their religion, propagate their culture, and uphold religious values. However, many instances in the last decade (2014 to present) have led to abuse of these rights and constitutional power vested in minorities. While motivated publications have been misleading the global discourse by stating that Indian minorities are unsafe in India, there is little truth to back such tall claims. Criminal activities and attempts to threaten internal peace and security by minority institutions, such as Christian missionaries, are subject to retribution under the Indian Penal Code. Western media often misrepresent such cases to spread motivated discourses and portray India as intolerant towards its minorities. Against this backdrop, there is a need to review acts of crime committed by missionaries under the garb of religious freedom, right to education, and growth and development of the poor. Heinous crimes like child sexual abuse, rapes of nuns by clergy members, forced conversions, and child trafficking must not be overlooked.

### Forceful conversions:

1. In January 2022, a Hindu girl, Lavanya forcefully ended her life after her missionary school authorities gave her subdued treatment for allegedly not converting to Christianity<sup>4</sup> in the Indian southern state of Tamil Nadu.
  
2. On October 12, 2021, in Karnataka, four people named Prakash, Jyoti, Ravichandra and Manohar were accused of converting Hindus from lower castes to Christianity. An FIR was filed against the accused persons on October 12, 2021, in Kundapura taluk of Udupi district<sup>5</sup> in the state of Karnataka.

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<sup>4</sup> 'BIG BREAKING: Madras HC Handovers M Lavanya's Forced Conversion Case To CBI' (*newsbharati.com*, 2022) <<https://www.newsbharati.com/Encyc/2022/1/31/Madras-HC-handovers-M-Lavanya-s-forced-conversion-case-to-CBI.html>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>5</sup> Hindustan Times. 2021. *Four arrested over 'forced conversions' in Karnataka*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/four-arrested-over-forced-conversions-in-karnataka-101633975687364.html>>

3. On Aug 21, 2021, Madhya Pradesh resident Ramesh Masih was forced to convert to Christianity by his father-in-law and was offered £200 per month if he accepted the demand to convert to Christianity<sup>6</sup>.
4. During the pandemic (March 2020 to present) around 100,000 people converted to Christianity and churches adopted 50,000 villages in the name of development, livelihood, and sustenance of those villages. Missionaries planted more churches than in the last 25 years as the need for medical aid and meals amidst the financial crises pushed the economically weaker section of the society to fall for the vicious conversion trap<sup>7</sup>.
5. In November 2021, nine persons were arrested in Madhya Pradesh's Jhabua district for forceful conversion of tribal people<sup>8</sup>.
6. In December 2021, Father Arun Kujur and Pastors Basant Lakra, Salmon Tigga, and Dino Kujur, were arrested on complaint of a tribal committee about the rampant forced conversions<sup>9</sup>.
7. In Dec 2021, two families in Gumla district of Jharkhand were tortured to bow down to Christian missionaries demands and convert to Christianity. Family members were ostracised for six months by the villagers to force them to convert, they were continuously receiving threat calls and constantly pressured to eat beef by the Christian missionaries. Out of the 55 families dwelling there, almost 30 families have converted to Christianity<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Hindustan Times. 2021. *Man files complaint against in-laws for 'trying to convert him to Christianity'*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/man-files-complaint-against-in-laws-for-trying-to-convert-him-to-christianity-101634814326007.html>>

<sup>7</sup> Organiser. 2021. *Christian persecution or Christian Conversions during the Covid pandemic in India?*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.organiser.org/christian-persecution-or-christian-conversions-during-the-covid-pandemic-in-india-2750.html>>

<sup>8</sup> The Indian Express. 2021. *Madhya Pradesh: 9 arrested for religious 'conversion attempt' in Jhabua*. [online] Available at: <<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/bhopal/mp-9-arrested-for-religious-conversion-attempt-in-jhabua-7619435/>>

<sup>9</sup> '4 Held In Chhattisgarh For Allegedly Trying To Convert Tribals To Christianity' (*Hindustan Times*, 2022) <<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/4-held-in-chhattisgarh-for-allegedly-trying-to-convert-tribals-to-christianity-101640145402555.html>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>10</sup> 2021. [online] Available at: <<https://www.opindia.com/2021/12/jharkhand-dalit-family-forced-to-consume-beef-ostracized-by-christian-villagers-for-not-accepting-christianity/>>

8. In February 2021, a priest from Bihar converted around 24 Korwa tribe families to Christianity in a short span of one year<sup>11</sup>.
9. A Hindu woman named Shalini Kaushal accused her parents and seven others of forcing her to convert to Christianity in Gujar Kheda village, Indore, Madhya Pradesh. In her complaint she stated that her parents took her to a Christian community hall named Satyaprakashan Sanchar Kendra, where she was beaten. She added that there were many other Hindus forcefully converting there. Sisters and Pastors said people went there by their own will but were not allowed to leave on their own<sup>12</sup>.
10. In December 2017, 7 Christian preachers were arrested in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh for running a forcible conversion campaign. Villagers claimed that the missionaries were distributing copies of the Bible as a part of the conversion spree. Since there was very little uptake of the Christian faith and the campaign did not gain much traction, the preachers launched violent attacks on a few scheduled caste villagers and forced them to convert<sup>13</sup>.
11. In March 2018, slum dwellers in Agra, Uttar Pradesh were lured to convert to Christianity by Missionaries who offered them petty eatables like samosas. Further, they were promised a house, better lifestyle and education for their children. A passer-by saw this and intervened later an FIR was filed against the missionaries<sup>14</sup>.
12. In December 2017, in district Satna, Madhya Pradesh, a catholic priest along with 40 other members were detained on the charges of forceful conversion of Hindus to Christianity. The complaint was lodged by Dharmendra Kumar Dohar, who said he

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<sup>11</sup> 2021. [online] Available at: <<https://www.opindia.com/2021/02/jharkhand-christian-priest-targets-and-converts-family-members-of-particularly-vulnerable-tribal-group-to-christianity/>>

<sup>12</sup> The Wire. 2021. *Indore: Woman Alleges Forced Conversion, Police Arrest Parents and Seven Others*. [online] Available at: <<https://thewire.in/government/indore-woman-alleges-forced-conversion-police-arrest-parents>>

<sup>13</sup> News, C. and News, a., 2021. *7 Christian preachers jailed for 'forcible' conversion bid in UP | Agra News - Times of India*. [online] The Times of India. Available at: <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/7-christian-preachers-jailed-for-forcible-conversion-bid-in-up/articleshow/61940544.cms>>

<sup>14</sup> DNA India. 2021. *Missionaries try to lure Agra slum dwellers to convert to Christianity with samosas*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-missionaries-try-to-lure-agra-slum-dwellers-to-convert-to-christianity-with-samosas-2592454>>

was given £50 and a copy of the bible to convert to Christianity<sup>15</sup>.

13. Missionaries also popularise videos of their conversion activities on popular social media platforms. A few instances have been listed here:

- A video of a Christian priest got viral on the internet where a man has been seen lying unconscious on the floor struggling to breathe. Christians around can be seen chanting 'Hallelujah'. The priest goes on to show that Jesus can only resurrect the man, signalling to the masses that conversion can even bring back the dead to life<sup>16</sup>.
- A Christian pastor, Prophet Bajinder Singh, was seen in a viral video using an innocent child for his propaganda and carrying out forced conversions. In the video, the boy was seen crying and telling people that his sister's speech is debilitated and now her speech was recovered by Jesus. Such videos on social media promote superstition and abuse of minor children<sup>17</sup> by Christian minorities across India.

### **Sexual abuse of nuns:**

14. In October 2020, a Jacobite priest, Father Reji Palakkadan was remanded to judicial custody for raping a 22 year old in Idukki district, Kerala<sup>18</sup>.

15. In February 2019, a catholic priest, Robin Vadakkumchery was sentenced to 20 years in prison for raping a minor, 16 year old girl in Kerala. The incident came to surface when the girl gave birth in February 2017<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> A., 2021. *MP: Catholic priest arrested, 40 others detained for alleged forced conversion*. [online] ANI News. Available at: <<https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/mp-catholic-priest-arrested-40-others-detained-for-alleged-forced-conversion201712152237030001/>>

<sup>16</sup> [https://vimeo.com/650992689?embedded=true&source=vimeo\\_logo&owner=143614517](https://vimeo.com/650992689?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=143614517)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z89SPc5b51Q>

<sup>18</sup> 'Jacobite Priest Accused Of Sexual Assault In India - UCA News' (*ucanews.com*, 2022) <<https://www.ucanews.com/news/jacobite-priest-accused-of-sexual-assault-in-india/89892#>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>19</sup> Swati Gupta and Helen Regan C, 'Catholic Church's Problems With Abuse Are Playing Out In India Amid Summit' (*CNN*, 2022) <<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/02/21/india/india-catholic-church-abuse-intl/index.html>> accessed 20 February 2022

16. In September 2018, Father Franco Mukkal was arrested for raping a nun 13 times between 2014 and 2016. He was later released on bail<sup>20</sup>. Thereafter he moved to Punjab. He was acquitted in Jan 2022 for the lack of proper evidence<sup>21</sup>. This acquittal has come under close scrutiny.
17. In November 2018, Father Kuriakose Kattuthara was found dead under mysterious circumstances. He was a key witness in a case of sexual abuse against a powerful Bishop, Franco Mukkal in Jalandhar, in the north Indian state of Punjab<sup>22</sup>. Mukkal was accused of raping a nun thirteen times during 2014 to 2016.

**Child abuse, abduction and trafficking:**

18. In July 2021, in the Ranchi chapter of Missionaries of Charity, a congregation of Christian religious organisations, two nuns, Sister Consalia and Anima Indwar from 'Nirmal Hriday' shelter home, were arrested for selling three children and giving away the fourth. The first child was sold for £1200 and the other two for £500 each. Sister Consalia confessed the crime.
19. In July 2019, police arrested T.J. George for sexually abusing minor children in an orphanage in Kochi, Kerala. Seven children fled the orphanage and lodged a complaint with the police who took further penal action<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Swati Gupta and Helen Regan C, 'Catholic Church's Problems With Abuse Are Playing Out In India Amid Summit' (*CNN*, 2022) <<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/02/21/india/india-catholic-church-abuse-intl/index.html>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>21</sup> Suresh N, 'Power, Lust And Church: Mulakkal Verdict Brings Focus Back On Sex Abuse In Convents Despite 'Checks' (*NewsLaundry*, 2022) <<https://www.newsLaundry.com/2022/01/19/power-lust-and-church-mulakkal-verdict-brings-focus-back-on-sex-abuse-in-convents-despite-checks>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>22</sup> 'A Sexual Abuse Case Is Tearing Apart The Catholic Church In India' (*buzzfeednews.com*, 2022) <<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/nishitajha/india-catholic-church-bishop-mulakkal-father-kuriakose>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>23</sup> 'Kerala Priest Held After 7 Children Flee Orphanage, Accuse Him Of Sexual Abuse' (*Hindustan Times*, 2022) <<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/in-kerala-christian-priest-held-on-charges-of-being-a-pedophile/story-unxafiJLQIfQPdR0NvuYWO.html>> accessed 20 February 2022

20. In March 2018, Paul Henry Dean, a sexual predator and a Catholic priest from Australia who assaulted hundreds of young disabled children in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh was convicted of his crimes, arrested for a day, and later released after he paid a petty fine (AUD 235)<sup>24</sup>.
21. In April 2018, a 45 years old pastor was arrested for brutally raping and assaulting a minor, 11 year old girl in Vallampadu, Andhra Pradesh<sup>25</sup>.
22. In July 2017, Father Sali Joseph, who headed a children's home in Wayanad district, Kerala was arrested on account of child sexual abuse of minor boys. He was later acquitted of all charges in Feb 2022<sup>26</sup> owing to Church pressure tactics.
23. In August 2016, a pastor from Hyderabad, M James, was arrested as he forced children under his care into begging on the streets<sup>27</sup>.
24. In Dec 2017, 17 kids who were victims of child conversion were rescued in Hyderabad. The couple behind the racket was from Andhra Pradesh. They were targeting minors from backward classes to convert to Christian faith. The couple started a shelter home named Nazareth Orphan Children & Home for the Aged. And started admitting children below the age of 14 to provide education and shelter. The kids were taught Christian Literature and Prayers in the shelter home.

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<sup>24</sup> 'Australian Convicted Of Sexually Abusing Indian Boys Fined \$235 And Released' (*abc.net.au*, 2022) <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-16/australian-convicted-of-sexually-abusing-indian-boys-released/9555018>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>25</sup> 'Vallampadu: Pastor Rapes 11-Year-Old, Arrested Under POCSO' (*Deccan Chronicle*, 2022) <<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/crime/270418/vallampadu-pastor-rapes-11-year-old-arrested-under-pocso.html>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>26</sup> 'Sexual Assault: Kerala: Court Acquits Christian Priest In Sexual Abuse Case | Kozhikode News - Times Of India' (*The Times of India*, 2022) <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kozhikode/priest-arrested-for-sexually-assaulting-two-minor-boys/articleshow/59648897.cms>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>27</sup> 'Pastor Arrested For Turning Children Into Beggars | Hyderabad News - Times Of India' (*The Times of India*, 2022) <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/Pastor-arrested-for-turning-children-into-beggars/articleshow/53760362.cms>> accessed 20 February 2022

### **Destruction of Hindu temples and symbols of Hindu culture:**

25. Missionaries, after they convert students and young children, give them tasks like desecrating and urinating on Hindu Idols to prove their loyalty and complete their conversion<sup>28</sup>.
26. Hindu people get mail to attain 'Moksha' as explained by Jesus. Jesus is also portrayed as an avatar who is supreme of all gods and Lord Ram, Lord Ganesha, Lord Shiva all are reincarnations of Jesus. Missionaries discourage people from celebrating Ganesh and Durga Pooja and on the other hand, they warmly embrace Yeshu Bhajans. Father Joy Chencheri in 2011 portrayed Jesus as a kathakali Artist to make the villagers believe that Jesus is among the 33 crore Hindu gods<sup>29</sup>.
27. In Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh minor children from the Dalit community were forced to consume beef and read the Bible. The case is of St. Francis Sevadham, when the father of the victims, complained to the National Commission for Protection of Children's Rights (NCPDR) that the children were thrown out of the school on their refusal to follow the directions of the missionary. Pork is also served to the children in Sevadham, cattle are butchered inside the premises and some youngsters complain that their necks were choked when they refused to wear crosses.

### **Unlawful occupation and land grabbing**

28. In November 2020, The Seventh Day Adventist Church's Hope Centre in Andhra Pradesh's Valluru village was found to be constructed on prohibited land. Canadians Rita and Grant Corbett had donated \$1.5 million in construction of the centre. One

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<sup>28</sup> 'Christian Missionary Techniques: From Inculturation To Indoctrination – Akshita Bhadauria' (*BHARATA BHARATI*, 2022) <<https://bharatabharati.in/2021/10/03/christian-missionary-techniques-from-inculturation-to-indoctrination-akshita-bhadauria/>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>29</sup> 2021. [online] Available at: <<https://www.opindia.com/2021/09/inculturation-indoctrination-techniques-missionaries-conversion-hindus-christianity/>>

of the biggest land frauds committed by Church authorities till date<sup>30</sup>.

29. In February 2020, the District Collector of Adimalathura in Kerala submitted a report of illegal and unlawful land grabbing by a Latin Catholic Church in the region. The Church has encroached on land and sold it off as small parcels to local fisherman families. As per the report, the encroachment area is vulnerable to high tidal waves that wash away and erode establishments every year<sup>31</sup>.

30. In February 2018, the Diocese of Mangalore, in Karnataka, was accused of land grabbing and profiteering in the name of lower caste converted Hindus. The land was acquired free of cost from the government for the rehabilitation of native Hindus who had converted to Christianity but was used for other purposes<sup>32</sup>. The target community for conversion were Tulu speaking families which were uprooted from their culture, language, and tradition.

31. The Church continues to be the single largest owner of non-agricultural land in India. As per reports, Churches keep taking more and more space or graveyards which have no effective return for the public land.

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<sup>30</sup> 'Church Committed Land Fraud In Andhra', Canadian Donors Allege, Fight To 'Repair Damage' (2022) <<https://theprint.in/india/church-committed-land-fraud-in-andhra-canadian-donors-allege-fight-to-repair-damage/548563/>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>31</sup> 'Land Grab By Church: Report Submitted To Government' (*thehindu.com*, 2022) <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/land-grab-by-church-report-submitted-to-government/article30730050.ece>> accessed 20 February 2022

<sup>32</sup> 'Christians Vs The Church: Mangalore Diocese Accused Of Land Grabbing And Profiteering By Locals' (*swarajyamag*, 2022) <<https://swarajyamag.com/insta/christians-vs-the-church-mangaluru-diocese-accused-of-land-grabbing-and-profiteering-by-locals>> accessed 20 February 2022



## **Concluding Observations**

India's constitution and social tenets are grounded in its unique cultural, religious, linguistic heritage. As a Republic, India has made concerted efforts to maintain peace among various religious, cultural faiths and groups. The Constitution of the Republic of India makes key provisions to uplift and maintain peace among all the religious communities, numerous policies and programmes have been implemented to ensure minorities are well accommodated. However, no democracy can guarantee tranquillity among religions, and escape the challenges of a pluralistic society. When the world's biggest democracy is accused of suppressing its minorities, it is essential to see both sides of the coin and acknowledge that its government and other stakeholders empowers minorities for their growth and development. The narratives spun by Western media about religious minorities in India need to be corrected, keeping a broad view and moving beyond the rhetorics of current-day sensationalism.

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