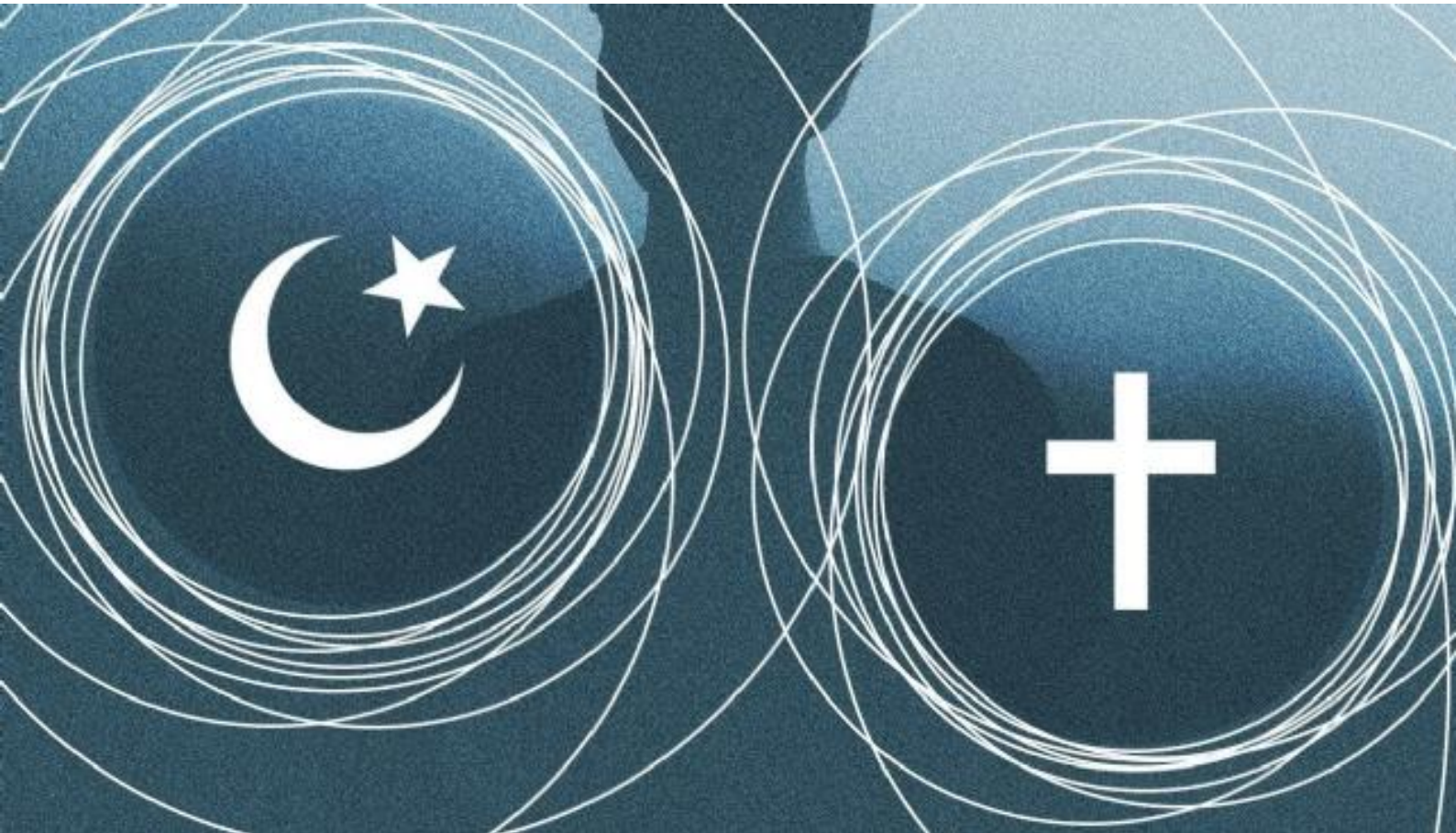


Explainer: Forced Religious Conversions in India



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Executive Summary

- The Apex court of India said, “Forced religious conversion is a serious issue and against the Constitution of India asserting that the purpose of charity should not be conversion.”
- Many individuals and entities were getting financial assistance from foreign countries and were working continuously to forcibly convert people.
- There are instances of people lured or forced to convert to Islam and Christianity.
- Since ancient times, people were converted to other religions forcibly in the name of crusades or Jihad.
- Thomas, a Christian disciple travelled to India in the first century after Christ’s crucifixion and converted people on the pretext of service to Christianity.
- Over 23 countries have laws that penalise the act of apostasy. In some states, apostasy is a crime only when individuals renounce a specific religion.
- In India, there is no law against coerced and fraudulent conversions at the National level. Moreover, eight states have laws which prohibit conversion through coercion, fraud or inducement.

Background and Context

The Supreme Court of India on December 05, 2022 said that “forced religious conversion is a serious issue and against the Constitution of India asserting that the purpose of charity should not be conversion.”

In a plea submitted at the apex court it was stated that “it is a nationwide problem which needs to be tackled immediately. The injury caused to the citizens is extremely large because there is not even one district which is free of religious conversion by 'hook and crook'”.

The petition further demands the Law Commission of India to draft a report and a bill to prevent religious conversion by intimidation and monetary reward.

Supreme Court bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar said, "The purpose of charity should not be conversion. Allurement is dangerous."

The term "forced conversion" is used for the conversion of religion based on the unwillingness of the subject.

A pan-India racket of individuals and entities is working day and night to forcibly convert people, many a times they were busted by police and other agencies.

These rackets get assistance from overseas through hawala as well as international donations through trust and private channels.

The paper focuses on forced religious conversion by any means of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.

Case Studies

Hindu to Islam conversion cases

| Date | Place | Name of the persecuted | Name of the Persecutor | Brief |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--|
| November 14, 2022 | Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh | Nidhi Gupta | Mohammad Sufiyan | A Hindu girl Nidhi Gupta was hurled from the fourth floor of an apartment by Mohammad Sufiyan because she refused to convert to Islam and marry Sufiyan. He had been putting pressure on Nidhi for a long time. Tired of Sufiyan whims Nidhi's family sent her to her maternal grandmother's house for a while, but when she returned Sufiyan started threatening her again. When Nidhi, her mother and uncle confronted Sufiyan at his home about pressuring Nidhi. Sufiyan pushed Nidhi from the rooftop to the ground. Nidhi was rushed to the trauma centre at King George Medical University, where she was pronounced dead. ¹ |
| January 19, 2022 | Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh | Name withheld as per law | Arbaaz and Sadiq | A 15-year-old Hindu girl was gang-raped by Arbaaz, who pretended to be Vishal and his accomplice, Sadiq. Minor girl was lured for marriage by Arbaaz and was likewise made to embrace and convert to Islam. The Harsud police station has accused the defendant of various |

¹ <https://hindi.opindia.com/national/nidhi-gupta-murder-case-accused-sufiyan-arrested-after-encounter-up-police/>

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| | | | | offences, including rape and sexual assault. ² |
| November 12, 2021 | Agra, Uttar Pradesh | Varsha Raghuvanshi | Faheem alias Armaan Qureshi | A Hindu girl Varsha Raghuvanshi was forced to cook and eat meat by her muslim husband Faheem and In-laws. Faheem first lured Varsha and then married her, after this he along with his family started harassing Varsha, she was beaten up because of being a Hindu, her in-laws called Varsha ‘Kaafir ki Aulad’ (infidel’s child). Faheem also demanded a car and 5 lakh INR from Varsha’s family. Even after all this, she was regularly forced to convert and embrace Islam, when she denied Faheem killed her and then hanged her body from snare calling it a suicide. ³ |
| October 26, 2020 | Faridabad, Haryana | Nikita Tomar | Tausif | Nikita Tomar, a 20-year-old girl, was shot and killed in Faridabad by Tausif and Rehman for rejecting Tausif’s marriage proposal and refusing to convert to Islam. When Nikita resisted their attempts to kidnap her, Tausif drew out his gun and shot her. His companion Rehman also assisted him. Someone captured the incident on video and shared it online. ⁴ |

² <https://english.newstracklive.com/news/madhya-pradesh-khandwa-love-jihad-case-rape-and-forced-conversion-sc103-nu764-ta322-1206125-1.html>

³ <https://hindi.opindia.com/national/hindu-woman-varsha-raghuwanshi-suspicious-death-agra-court-denied-bail-to-accused-family/>

⁴ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/faridabad/2020-nikita-tomar-murder-case-court-awards-life-imprisonment-to-tausif-rehan/articleshow/81706959.cms>

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------|--------|--|
| March 16, 2018 | Barmer, Rajasthan | Name Withheld | Gulzar | <p>A Muslim man kidnapped an 18- year-old girl, converted her to Islam, and took her to Jammu and Kashmir. The victim said that, she was coerced to sign a blank piece of paper that later became her marriage contract. She stated that she was assaulted for rejecting Islam, made to eat beef, and forced to perform namaz.</p> <p>She went on to reveal that after being converted, Gulzar and his brother Iqbal had plans to sell her in Dubai.⁵</p> |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------|--------|--|

Islamic Entities Involved in Conversions

| Name of Entity | Headquarter/ Dominance | Leadership | Detail |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Islamic Da'wah Centre | Delhi, India | Mohammad Umar Gautam- Chief | As per Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) of Uttar Pradesh (UP), outfit receives funds from Pakistan's ISI and other foreign agencies (Gulf and UK based) for converting poor people to Islam and raise a sense of enmity in the society. ATS claims to have a list of 1,000 people who were "forcefully converted" by Mohammad Umar Gautam. ⁶ |
| Therbiyathul Islam Sabha | Kerala, India | | The outfit was established in 1936 in Kerala. It is a religious centre authorised by the Kerala government. The outfit is accused in Akhila Asokan alias Hadiya's forced conversion as well as numerous other incidents of forced conversion. ⁷ |
| Popular Front of India (PFI) | Delhi, India | OMA Abdul Salam | This organisation is banned in India for five years from 2022. India Today |

⁵ <https://www.opindia.com/2019/01/love-jihad-in-barmer-girl-claims-blackmail-forced-conversion-attempts-and-plan-to-sell-in-dubai-by-muslim-husband/>

⁶ <https://theprint.in/india/5-lakh-forced-into-islam-funds-from-gulf-uk-what-up-ats-found-in-conversion-racket-probe/750310/>

⁷ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/nia-seeks-details-on-forced-conversions/article19656998.ece>

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | | | (Media house) carried out a sting operation on conversions of PFI in Kerala. The then PFI's women wing head Zainaba A.S. accepted that PFI's sister organisation <i>Sathya Sarani</i> has carried out massive conversions. The then law minister of the GOI Ravishankar Prasad also supported the sting operation against massive forceful religious conversions under PFI run NGOs. ⁸ |
|--|--|--|---|

Hindu to Christian Conversion Cases

| Date | Place | Name of persecuted | Name of persecutor | Brief |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|
| December 02, 2022 | Ahmednagar Maharashtra | Name Withheld | Father James | A 14-year-old Sikh boy was forced to convert to Christianity at De Paul English medium School. The boy claimed his hair was cut and pagdi was thrown away by deputy principal Father James when he refused to convert. Prior to the incident, one of the school teachers named Ruby told the boy to take off his Kada (bangle worn by Sikhs). FIR has been registered by Rahuri police and accused have been booked under IPC sections 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), 298, 153A and 506. ⁹ |

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFFnyyD3M68>

⁹ <https://hindupost.in/crime/sikh-boy-forcibly-converted-to-christianity/#:~:text=A%2014%2Dyear%2Dold%20Sikh,after%20he%20refused%20to%20convert>

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| <p>August 14, 2021</p> | <p>Gumla, Jharkhand</p> | <p>Name Withheld</p> | <p>Paulina Bilung, Akash Dungdung, Nisha, Sheila, Phoolmani Surin, Urmila, Santoshi, Janki, Shital Ram, Gangi Devi, Akash Dungdung and Sushila Devi</p> | <p>A Dalit Hindu woman filed a complaint at Kurkura police station against some villagers who were constantly torturing her family members to convert to Christianity, the assailants even sexually abused her 16-years-old daughter who is currently in the state of shock. Gumla police filed FIR under section 323, 341, 295, 504, 448, 506, 509 of IPC. Section 4 of Jharkhand freedom of religion Act, section 8 of POCSO Act.¹⁰</p> |
| <p>July 19, 2019</p> | <p>Nagappatinam, Tamil Nadu</p> | <p>Vimala Devi</p> | <p>Husband Shankar and In-Laws</p> | <p>Vimala Devi, a mute Hindu woman staged a protest outside Nagapattinam collector's office against the inaction of police on a complaint filed by her against her husband Shankar and In-laws. Vimala said her husband moved to Singapore after 15 days of marriage and after that her in-laws forced her to convert to Christianity. Vimala's husband Shankar also refused to stay with her after she refused to convert to Christianity.¹¹</p> |

¹⁰ <https://www.opindia.com/2021/09/jharkhand-villages-torture-hindu-family-to-convert-to-christianity/>

¹¹ <https://www.indiafaith.in/Encyc/2022/3/16/Forced-Conversion-Woman-stages-protest-outside-Dist-Collector-office.html>

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| July 26, 2022 | Chitradurga, Karnataka | Marappa | Ramachandrapa, Manjunath, Sankappa and Sudhakar | Marappa filed a complaint at Hosadurga police station against his father-in-law Ramachandrappa and other relatives named Manjunath, Sankappa and Sudhakar for forcing him to convert to Christianity, he said he was not allowed to see his new born baby and wife for being a Hindu. He claimed that he was threatened, blackmailed and even assaulted by wife's family members to convert to Christianity. Marappa said during his wedding he was forced to take a dip in holy water and declare that he has converted to Christianity, they also torn and burnt Hindu gods' pictures asking him not to worship them, even though he was also married as per Christian customs. ¹² |
| January 19,2022 | Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu | Lavanya Muruganatham | Sacred Heart Girls Higher Secondary School | A 17-year-old Hindu girl Lavanya Muruganatham ended her life after her missionary school authorities gave her subdued treatment for not converting to Christianity. Lavanya consumed pesticide to kill herself, she was taken to a hospital in Coimbatore, she regained consciousness and later died after 10 days of undergoing treatment. Her dying declaration while being treated in the hospital had stated that she was being harassed and humiliated, being made to clean toilets by the school authorities because she had refused to convert to Christianity. ¹³ |

¹² <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mangaluru/karnataka-man-told-to-convert-to-christianity-to-see-baby/articleshow/89130787.cms>

¹³ <https://swarajyamag.com/politics/lavanya-suicide-case-are-the-authorities-and-tamil-media-on-a-crusade-to-protect-the-church-in-tamil-nadu>

Christian Entities Involved in Conversions

| Name of Entity | Headquarter/ Dominance | Leadership | Detail |
|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| <i>International Mission Board (IMB)</i> ¹⁴ | USA | Dr. Paul Chitwood - President ¹⁵ | This is an American Christian organization whose members were constantly engaged in converting non-Christians living in India to Christianity. Their primary target is Hindu and works to spread deep hatred towards Hindu deities. In this organization, there is a provision of a separate fund for carrying out the activities of religious conversion. ¹⁶ |
| <i>Joshua Project</i> | Colorado Springs, USA | | It is a Christian missionary organization that aims to contact “unreached people”, (i.e) those who haven’t heard and don’t follow Christianity. It works to maintain a database of unreached people to coordinate with various missionaries. They believe that they are doing Christ’s work of conversion, a sovereign nation’s laws do not apply to them. ¹⁷ |
| <i>Oasis World Ministries</i> ¹⁸ | Based in USA | Tom Elie - Founder & President ¹⁹ | The organization’s vision is to see introduce Jesus Christ to the masses, and to equip Christians to share their faith with confidence and compassion. Their mission is to witness 40 million people express a desire to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord by 2030. ²⁰ |

¹⁴ <https://www.imb.org/>

¹⁵ <https://www.imb.org/leadership/>

¹⁶ <https://thecommunemag.com/christian-missionary-organization-pours-in-175-billion-for-converting-non-christians-in-india/>

¹⁷ <https://missionkaali.org/dr-raju-abraham-joshua-projects-conversion-spy-master-in-india/>

¹⁸ <https://www.oasisworldministries.org/>

¹⁹ <https://www.oasisworldministries.org/president>

²⁰ <https://www.oasisworldministries.org/vision>

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|---|
| Church of South India (CSI) ²¹ | Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India | A. dharmaraj rasalam - Leader/Moderator ²² | National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) Chairperson Priyank Kanoongo has written to the Tamil Nadu government requesting to initiate necessary action and inquiry against CSI Monahan School Girls Hostel in Royapettah of Chennai. The commission has leveled forced conversion charges against the school run by the Church of South India (CSI) in Chennai. ²³ |
| Evangelical Church of India (ECI) ²⁴ | Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India | | The vision and mission of ECI is to identify, discipline and transform the receptive people or groups of India, evolve strategies to motivate, train, equip and empower frontline evangelists and native missionaries to reach the unreached people of India and multiply churches. Now the goal of ECI is to disciple 10 million souls among the responsive people groups and to plant 100 thousand Local Churches by the year 2056 which will be the centenary year of ECI. ²⁵ |

²¹ <https://www.csi1947.com/>

²² <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2020/01/new-moderator-elected-for-the-united-church-of-south-india.aspx>

²³ <https://hinduexistence.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/letter-of-chairperson-ncpcr.png>

²⁴ <https://www.ecionline.org/>

²⁵ <https://www.ecionline.org/about/about-us/>

Modus Operandi

Since ancient times, people have been converted to other religions forcibly or unwillingly; sometimes in the name of crusade and sometimes in jihad. Although it wouldn't be wrong to refer to it as a religious conflict, Hindus were among its biggest victims globally.

In the seventh century, Arab traders brought Islam to India for the first time. Kerala and Bengal were their epi-centers in South India and Afghanistan in West India. As time went on, the Islamic invaders began to persecute Hindus, which led many people to migrate from their mainland or forced to convert to Islam. Propaganda of Sufi saints and suppression by Muslim invaders plays a major role in spreading and increasing Islam in India. During this period, various forms of taxes were imposed on non-Muslims living under Mughal rule. Because of these taxes, many non-Muslim people accepted Islam.

Muslim invaders have used the power of sword to force Indian religions to convert throughout India's history. For a very long time, Islamic invaders have been harassing, assaulting, forcibly marrying, and converting innocent people.

Forced conversion is a phenomenon involving a number of distinguishable processes. For instance, marriages between Muslim men and non-Muslim women, resulting in the growth of Muslim communities, and the immigration of thousands of foreigners into Indian subcontinent over the centuries.²⁶

Also, in the first century after Christ's crucifixion, Thomas, one of disciple, traveled to India with Christian message and propagated it in India. After the death of Thomas, Roman Catholicism was established in India with the arrival of St. Francis Xavier in 1542, who went to the poor Hindu and tribal areas of India and started converting people to Christianity in the name of service. Christian missionaries took advantage of the illiteracy and poverty of the tribal people to convert them, which is still going on.

²⁶ <https://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/eatonapproachconversion.pdf>

ISLAM

TACTICS OF CONVERSION

- Reach Out**

Islamists reach out to neighbours, friends and colleagues (esp. Hindu) to convert them to Islam
- Influence**

Primarily soft approach of Islamists is to organise events like 'Prophet Muhammad for everyone' or distribute translated Quran and Islamic philosophy to non-muslims.
- Involvement**

Islamists engage with people by using emotional approach where they are in minority and aggressive in majority.
- Mislead**

Books and pamphlets were distributed door to door criticising non-Islamic religions and suggesting people to embrace Islam.
- Enticement**

Islamists initially use enticements like inviting non-muslims on religious festivals, marriage (Nikah) or other family gatherings and later threats to convert and Embrace Islam.
- Convert**

The trapped non-muslims then forced to convert and accept or practice Islam

CHRISTIAN

TACTICS OF CONVERSION

- Reach Out**

Missionaries primarily targets the illiterate, poor and needy people (esp. Hindus) to lure them to convert to Christianity
- Influence**

Missionaries tempt poor hindu childrens by promising that jesus will solve all thier problems, gifting them Bible copies along with other toys.
- Convince**

Christian missionaries distribute free booklets, promise good education, health check-up to people saying, 'Embrace Christianity because Jesus is the only saviour'.
- Enticement**

Enticements given to people affected by natural calamities like tsunami, earthquakes or luring unemployed youth with promises of high-salaried jobs in their ecosystem and foreign countries
- Behave like Hindus**

Christian missionaries trap Hindus to convert by pretending that there is no difference in customs and attire
- Convert**

The trapped Hindus then made to convert and blindly accept and practice Christianity

Global Safeguards

Forced religious conversion is a major concern around the world, and all countries are somehow dealing with it. As per United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) “Many countries maintain legislation that regulates religious conversions, including apostasy laws. At least 23 countries maintain laws that penalise the act of apostasy. In some states, apostasy is a crime only when individuals renounce a specific religion.”²⁷

As per the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) article 18 “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”²⁸

However, here the question arises is that, does right to freedom of religion or belief also includes the right to forcefully religious conversion of others. can it be psychologically, financially, and materially enforced?

Globally, there are many countries globally that have imposed certain laws and regulations on forceful religious conversions like United States of America, where the first amendment of the constitution states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."²⁹ In USA definition of freedom of religion has changed over the time, and it is also one of the most pressing issues in American culture. The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that the federal government may impose restrictions on religious freedom, but only when it has a "compelling interest" to do so in order to protect the common good and prevent individuals from doing harm to others.³⁰

Similarly, In the United Kingdom, there is no particular law that prohibits or regulates religious conversion. People are free to practice any religion they choose or to change their religion if they wish. There are, however, laws that protect individuals from being subjected to coercion, intimidation, or physical harm in order to convert them to a particular religion. For example, Article 9 of Human Rights Act 1998 - the right to freedom of religion and belief gave the right to an

²⁷ https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/Legislation%20Factsheet%20-%20Conversion%20Laws_0.pdf

²⁸ [un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf)

²⁹ <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/#:~:text=Congress%20shall%20make%20no%20law,for%20a%20redress%20of%20grievances.>

³⁰ <https://www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/1006786/download>

individual to hold both religious and non-religious beliefs, it is an absolute right and cannot be challenged by the state. The article also includes that nobody can be forced to have a particular religion.³¹ Some Asian countries have laws against forced conversions i.e, Pakistan, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. In Nepal, forcible conversion results in up to six years imprisonment.³² Similarly Sri Lanka have punishment of up to seven years and and in Myanmar two years. There is a law in Bhutan too, but they don't specify any punishment, instead, they simply state that no one can convert another person without their will. Whereas in Pakistan, the dominant religion is Islam with 95 percent of total population. There are laws on the provincial level as well as central for forced religious conversion but many instances show the laws only remain on papers. Thousands from minorities i.e, Hindu, Christian, Sikh and others are converted every year.³³ The laws are only to protect the majority community and harass, persecute and discriminate against the minorities.

India's Anti-Conversion Law

After independence, the Indian Parliament proposed a variety of anti-conversion laws, but none of them were adopted. The Indian Conversion (Regulation and Registration) Bill was initially submitted in 1954 with the intention of ensuring "the license of missionaries and the registration of conversion with government officials," but the bill was unsuccessful in gaining the support of majority members. After that, in 1960, the Backward Communities (Religious Protection) Bill was presented with the intention of prohibiting Hindus from converting to "non-Indian religions," which the bill defines as include Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. The Freedom of Religion Bill was introduced in Parliament in 1979. Lack of political support prevented Parliament from passing these measures which called for "formal limitations on inter-religious conversions."³⁴ According to the Indian Union Law Minister in 2015, a law against coerced and fraudulent conversions could not be passed at the national level. It is also claimed that the Constitution gives the state the authority to uphold law and order. Such legislation may, however, be passed by state governments.³⁵

| S. No | State | Implemented (as on) |
|-------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Odisha | 1967 |
| 2 | Madhya Pradesh | 1968 |

³¹ <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/civil-rights/human-rights/what-rights-are-protected-under-the-human-rights-act/your-right-to-freedom-of-religion-and-belief/#:~:text=Article%209%20protects%20your%20right,to%20have%20a%20particular%20religion.>

³² <https://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/muluki-ain-general-code-2020.pdf>

³³ <https://appgfreedomofreligionorbelief.org/media/APPG-Pakistan-Minorities-Report.pdf>

³⁴ <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/l1/lglrd/2018298841/2018298841.pdf>

³⁵ <https://perma.cc/D4JD-SEBB>

| | | |
|---|-------------------|------|
| 3 | Arunachal Pradesh | 1978 |
| 4 | Gujarat | 2003 |
| 5 | Chhattisgarh | 2006 |
| 6 | Himachal Pradesh | 2006 |
| 7 | Jharkhand | 2017 |
| 8 | Uttarakhand | 2018 |

Source: Library of Congress³⁶

Several states established "Freedom of Religion" legislation to ban religious conversions carried out through coercion, fraud, or inducements. These laws prohibit conversions to other religions.

| | Odisha | Madhya Pradesh | Arunachal Pradesh | Chhattisgarh | Gujarat | Himachal Pradesh | Jharkhand | Uttarakhand | Uttar Pradesh |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|---|
| Latest year of enactment | 1967 | 1968 | 1978 | 2006 | 2003 | 2019 | 2017 | 2018 | 2020 |
| Prohibition on conversion | | | | | | | | | |
| By force, fraud, or allurement | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| By marriage | No | No | No | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Procedure for conversion – Declaration to District Magistrate or equivalent officer | | | | | | | | | |
| By individual seeking to convert | Advance notice (time not specified) | Nil | Nil | Within one month after conversion | 10 days after conversion | One month advance notice | 7 days after conversion | One month advance notice | 60 days advance notice |
| By priest / religious convertor performing the conversion | 15 days advance notice | Within seven days after conversion | After conversion (time not specified) | 30 days advance notice | Advance notice (time not specified) | One month advance notice | 15 days advance notice | One month advance notice | One month advance notice |
| Penalties for causing / abetting conversion | | | | | | | | | |
| Imprisonment | Up to 1 year | Up to 1 year | Up to 2 years | Up to 3 years | Up to 3 years | 1-5 years | Up to 3 years | 1-5 years | 1-5 years |
| Fine | Up to Rs 5,000 | Up to Rs 5,000 | Up to Rs 10,000 | Up to Rs 20,000 | Up to Rs 50,000 | Amount not specified | Up to Rs 50,000 | Amount not specified | Rs 15,000 or more |
| Penalties for causing / abetting conversion (of a minor, woman, or person belonging to SC or ST) | | | | | | | | | |
| Imprisonment | Up to 2 years | Up to 2 years | Up to 2 years | Up to 4 years | Up to 4 years | 2-7 years | Up to 4 years | 2-7 years | 2-10 years |
| Fine | Up to Rs 10,000 | Up to Rs 10,000 | Up to Rs 10,000 | Up to Rs 20,000 | Up to Rs 1,00,000 | Amount not specified | Up to Rs 1,00,000 | Amount not specified | Rs 25,000 or more |
| Penalties for violating procedure for conversions | | | | | | | | | |
| Imprisonment | Nil | Up to 1 year | Up to 1 year | Up to 1 year | Up to 1 year | 3 months – 1 year (individual) 6 months – 2 years (convertor) | Up to 1 year | 3 months – 1 year (individual) 6 months – 2 years (convertor) | 6 months – 3 years (individual) 1 – 5 years (convertor) |
| Fine | Rs 1,000 | Up to Rs 1,000 | Up to Rs 1,000 | Up to Rs 10,000 | Up to Rs 1,000 | Amount not specified | Up to Rs 5,000 | Amount not specified | Rs 10,000 or more (individual) Rs 25,000 or more (convertor) |

Source: PRS Legislative Research

³⁶ <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llgldr/2018298841/2018298841.pdf>

Concluding Observations

The above analysis makes it quite evident that there is freedom of religion in almost all the countries but that freedom of religion does not allow one to convert anybody unwillingly or forcibly. In countries like Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka etc. the ecosystem is constantly working to convert people of different religions with assistance from international fundings. Countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, are concerned that their young populations are declaring themselves atheists. The population statistics of the United Kingdom shows that between 2011 and 2021, the population of Christians declined by 13 percent while the population of Islam believers increased from 5 percent to 6.7 percent.

The paper debunks the argument that minorities are being persecuted and are under threat in India. There are certain instances where people belonging to the minority community misuses the protection and rights allotted by the constitution. As per 2011 census, Christians are in majority in Indian state of Nagaland (88 percent), Mizoram (87 percent), Meghalaya (75 percent), and Arunachal Pradesh (30 percent), also in Goa, Kerala, and Andaman & Nicobar Island Christians have a significant population base. While Muslims are in majority in Lakshadweep (98.5 percent), Jammu and Kashmir (68.31 percent) and have a significant population base in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

As India is a diverse country with multi ethnicities. Article 25 of the Indian constitution provides freedom of conscience and the right of all individuals to freely profess, practice and propagate religion. Central government did not impose any legislation or penalties on religious conversion but few state governments have enforced the laws and regulation against forced religious conversion.

The practice of forced religious conversion in India is on an alarming stage and dangerous for the national security and sovereignty, says supreme court of India. It is need of the time to deal with the threat of forced religious conversion impartially.

