

Karnataka Right to Freedom of Religion Bill

The 'Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill' was recently passed by the state legislative council.

Key facts

- Karnataka's anti-conversion bill was passed by the legislative assembly in December 2021.
- The bill bans forced religious conversions by direct or indirect means.
- It gives specific procedures for undertaking a religious conversion.
- This bill gives penalty to anyone who forcibly convert minor, woman, SC/ST, or a person of unsound mind with 3 to 10 years imprisonment and a fine of Rs.50,000.
- Mass conversion (two or more people) could result in 3 to 10 years of imprisonment and Rs.1 lakh fine.
- Under this legislation, any individual seeking to convert their religion must submit a declaration at least 30 days before the conversion to the District Magistrate.
- The religious convertor is also required to submit a form to the DM at least 30 days before the intended conversion.
- After these submissions, the DM would notify the proposed religious conversion on the notice board of the offices of DM and Teshsildar.
- Within 30 days of the public notice, anyone can file an objection to the conversion.
- If any such objection occurs, the DM is required to conduct an inquiry to investigate the intension, purpose and cause of the proposed conversion.
- Any conversion that occurs while not following the procedure will be considered illegal and void.

Anti-conversion bills

Besides Karnataka, other states have also passed similar legislations. Their purpose is to ban unlawful religious conversions, protect those who are forced to convert from one religion to another through misinterpretation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurements, promise of marriage or any other fraudulent means. Other states that introduced anti-conversion bills are Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand.