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Freedom of Religion or Belief as a Human Right in India

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ABSTRACT

India is a model for religious harmony where people of different religions live peacefully and in harmony. It has a great heritage." Religion is a question of conviction or trust. The Indian constitution guarantees the right to freedom of religion under Articles 25 to 28 because it acknowledges the significance of religion in Indian society. Every person has the freedom and right to choose and practice any religion they choose, according to the Indian Constitution, which also envisions a secular society. The Apex Court has determined that secularism is the fundamental framework of the Constitution in a number of cases, the most significant of which was the Kesavananda Bharati case. The major religions practiced by Indians are Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Christianity. There are laws in India that are specific to certain religions, and the Goa Civil Code is the only uniform civil code in existence for a state. Because of the Constitution's support for religious harmony, Indians are tolerant of and loving toward all of the nation's major religions India is a secular nation without a recognized state religion. That being said, this also implies that all religions and faiths are treated equally in India. The term appears in the Constitution's Basic Structure as well. The 42nd Amendment to the Constitution added it. In India, there is no distinction between the powers of the various religious groups. "The right to freedom of religion is not only a constitutionally guaranteed right, but it is also a duty that must be upheld for the general welfare and advancement of society.

Keywords: Freedom of religion, Article, Constitution, Secularism.

I. INTRODUCTION

India has been home to many different religions and sects for centuries; its diversity of faiths and sects is unparalleled worldwide. India has upheld its centuries-old pledge to accept and permit the growth and prosperity of every religion within its borders. It has long dealt with the cathartic and pleasant situations that arise from the presence of such diversity and has developed a unique method of handling Indian multiculturalism, which the west is currently struggling with. The majority of Indians, or roughly 53% of the population, see this diversity as a strength

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rather than a liability for the country. Despite the fact that a large number of different religions may not be aware of one another's beliefs or find a common ground, India has opted for pluralism as opposed to exclusivist. The Indian Constitution fortifies Indians' religious beliefs and permits each community to freely practice its chosen religion without interference. India is the only secular nation in South Asia due to its devotion to constitutional values and pluralism.³

Identity crisis has always been a major worry for humans. Because we were all born with the desire to belong to something or someone bigger than ourselves. In particular, God is something more than human; he is divine. People who shared the same conception of God united and began adhering to shared traditions and values. They also had similar opinions about their culture. They created religion and gave themselves an identity. Many academics have provided definitions of religion that are largely acceptable. Although religion is its defining feature, one common model of religion that is taught in religious courses was put forth by CLIFFORD GRETZ, who effectively referred to it as a "cultural system".⁴

Law is a body of rules and regulations that govern how people behave in public spaces. The law is becoming ingrained in every aspect of human existence in the modern world. Human behavior is governed by both law and religion. While religion is meant to be approved by God, law is approved by the state. The state is crucial in promoting moral principles in the community. Additionally, it ensures that the same will be protected. In the democratic era, religious freedom is now guaranteed as a legal right. India is widely recognized as the birthplace of various religions and as the land of philosophy, spirituality, and civilization. A specific system of faith, beliefs, and worship is called a religion.

A group of people's faith and beliefs are referred to as their religion. There are numerous distinct religions, and they all adhere to unique traditions and beliefs. Considering the Indian context, we can draw the conclusion that Indians have a strong sense of faith and belief in their respective religions, perceiving them as providing purpose and meaning to their lives. Articles 25–28 of the Indian Constitution address the freedom of religion in that country. Every Indian citizen has the right to freedom of religion, which allows them to practice, profess, and spread any religion they choose. They are also free to preach about their religion because of this right. Additionally, it provides the chance to share it with everyone without worrying about government interference. Each and every individual is free to accept the religious doctrine of any given dominion. The primary purpose of this right is to give everyone the chance to freely and openly

³ Milind Parab, Freedom of Religion under Indian Constitution, <https://articles.manupatra.com/article-details/Freedom-of-Religion-under-Indian-Constitution>

⁴ Sweekriti Nakhat, Right to freedom of religion, <https://www.ijarnd.com/manuscripts/v3i7/V3I7-1186.pdf>

express their true feelings regarding their religion.⁵

The Indian right to practise religion has always been contentious because of conflicts with other fundamental rights, social and political issues, unclear laws, etc. However, one thing is certain: in our nation, the freedom of religion is extremely important. All Indian citizens are entitled to this fundamental right, which is safeguarded by Articles 25 to 28 of the Indian Constitution.⁶

(A) What is religion?

Religion, according to German philosopher Immanuel Kant, is "the recognition of all our duties as divine commands." Religion is "a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with the ultimate problems of human life," according to American sociologist Milton Yinger. The terms "religion" and "matters of religion" are not defined in the constitution. Therefore, the task of defining the judicial meaning of these terms falls to the Supreme Court. A religion is a systematized set of practices, beliefs, and systems that are generally associated with the belief in and worship of a supreme being, such as a personal god or another supernatural entity.⁷

Religion can include a variety of activities, such as sermons, rituals, prayer, meditation, holy places, symbols, trances, feasts, and cultural beliefs, worldviews, texts, prophecies, revelations, and morals that have spiritual significance for followers of the particular faith. There are many distinct interpretations of what religion is, even though this is a basic definition. Not every religion is based on the idea that there is one or more gods or other supernatural beings. Religion, according to renowned psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, is a way of granting wishes. Modern psychology, however, acknowledges that religion can have a significant impact on a person's life and experiences and can even enhance health and wellbeing. Indeed, research has demonstrated that religion can aid in the development of wholesome routines, behavior regulation, and emotional understanding all of which have an impact on one's health. Religion is the relationship between people and things they believe to be absolute, spiritual, divine, holy, sacred, or deserving of special respect. It is also widely believed to include how individuals handle their final worries regarding their lives and what will happen to them when they pass away. In many religious traditions, this relationship and these concerns are expressed in terms of one's attitude toward gods or spirits; in more humanistic or naturalistic religions, these concerns are expressed in terms of one's attitude toward the natural world or the larger human

⁵ Id.

⁶ What is Right to Freedom of Religion under Indian Constitution? blog.finology.in/Legal-news/right-to-freedom-of-religion

⁷ Right to Freedom of Religion: Articles 25-28 of the Indian Constitution, https://blog.ipleaders.in/right-to-freedom-of-religion-articles-25-28/#Freedom_of_Religion_in_India_Art_25

community. People are regarded as having spiritual or moral authority, and texts are considered to have scriptural status in many religions. Worshipers and believers engage in, and are frequently commanded to carry out, devotional or contemplative activities like prayer, meditation, or specific rituals. Among the essential components of the religious life are participation in religious institutions, moral behavior, worship, and right belief.⁸

(B) Religion versus Spirituality

There are distinctions between spirituality and religion, despite their similarities. Whereas religion is centered on a set of organized practices that a larger group shares, spirituality is an individual practice and belief. Being spiritual does not necessarily mean being religious.

(C) Why people believe in religion

Although the reasons behind people's religious beliefs are not entirely understood, several theories have been proposed by researchers.

(D) The Study of Religious Belief Psychology

As per the latest Gallup poll, 47% of American adults identify as members of a religion. A number of theories have been put forth by psychologists to explain why people believe in religion. Although Freud thought that religious belief was a kind of pathological wish fulfillment, other scientists have suggested that people are often predisposed to believe because of the way their brains function. The search for patterns, meaning, and purpose in life may be the reason behind people's turn to religion for the foundation of their belief systems. Since people typically identify with the religion in which they were raised, parenting and cultural influences also have a significant impact. The desire to be a part of something bigger than oneself is fueled in part by the human need to belong and the need for social connection.⁹

II. WHAT IS SECULARISM

Being secular entails growing in tolerance, knowledge, and regard for various religions. It is thought that late medieval Europe is where the word "secularism" first appeared. The KT Shah demanded in 1948, during the debate in the Constituent Assembly, that the word "Secular" be added to the Preamble to the Constitution. Even though the assembly members accepted the secular nature of the constitution, the Preamble did not mention it. Later, in 1976, the Preamble of the 42nd Amendment Act was amended to include the word "Secular" by the Indira Gandhi administration. The most extensive modification to the Constitution is the 42nd Amendment

⁸ Religion, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/religion>

⁹ What Is Religion? <https://www.verywellmind.com/religion-improves-health-2224007>

Act, popularly referred to as the "Mini Constitution."¹⁰

1. S. R. Bommai v. Union of India, AIR 1994 SC 1918

In this particular case, the bench of nine judges decided that the fundamental element of the Indian Constitution is secularism. It also noted that politics and religion are incompatible. The State violates the mandate of the Constitution if it pursues unsecular policies or actions. Everyone is equal in a state and ought to be treated as such. There is no place for religion in matters of state. While everyone in India is entitled to the freedom of religion as a fundamental right, the State views religion, faith, and belief as irrelevant.¹¹

III. RIGHT TO RELIGION IN INDIA

Before delving into each article on the right to religion separately, let us grasp some important aspects of the right to religion in India:

1. Freedom of conscience: Everyone is entitled to the freedom to openly profess, practice, and spread any religion they so choose, including the freedom to have or reject religious beliefs without external or governmental intervention.
2. Equality of all religions: The Indian Constitution forbids discrimination based on religion and encourages secularism. Since all religions are regarded equally, the state is not allowed to favor or discriminate against any one of them.
3. Freedom of worship: Anyone can go to any place of worship, including churches, mosques, gurudwaras, temples, and other places of worship, and can worship there or offer prayers. Unless these religious practices are deemed to be against public order,

The state is not allowed to regulate or prohibit them.

4. Regulation of religious affairs: In order to guarantee proper administration and prevent misuse, the state may control and manage religious institutions, such as churches, mosques, and temples. However, it must do so in compliance with the law and may not interfere with religious practices.
5. Freedom from coerced conversions: People are free to spread their religion, but coerced conversions are prohibited. A violation of someone's right to religion is defined as coercion, inducement, or fraud to change their religion.
6. Rights to culture and education: Religious and linguistic minorities in India are entitled

¹⁰ Right to Freedom of Religion: Articles 25-28 of the Indian Constitution, <https://blog.ipleaders.in/right-to-freedom-of-religion-articles-25-28/>

¹¹ Id.

to the preservation of their unique script, language, and way of life. Additionally, they are free to create and run any kind of educational institution they choose.

1. Bijoe Emanuel v. State of Kerala (1986) 3SCC 615

The Children belonging to Jehovah community witnessed expulsion from the school refusing to sing the National Anthem. The directive from the director of education. The children in this instance stood up respectfully when the national anthem was being sung at their school, but they did not participate in singing it. Kerala has made singing the national anthem in class mandatory. Due to their failure to sing the National Anthem, the children were expelled from school and found in violation of the National Honours Act of 1971. The Kerala High Court's ruling to uphold the expulsion was upheld by the Supreme Court, which overturned the Kerala High Court's ruling and ruled that the individuals in question had not committed any crimes. They were fully protected under Article 25 of the Indian Constitution, as demonstrated by their standing in respect of the National Anthem, which indicates their full respect for it.

However, it is important to note that the right to religion is not absolute and is subject to certain reasonable restrictions in the interest of public order, morality, and health.¹²

IV. ARTICLES ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION UNDER CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

1. Article 25 (Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice, and propagation of religion)

Article 25 under the Constitution guarantees the freedom of conscience, the freedom to profess, practice, and propagate religion to all citizens.

- Article 25's freedoms are contingent upon morality, public health, and order.
- Additionally, this article stipulates that the State may enact laws:
 - That controls and prohibits any secular activity related to any religious practice, be it financial, economic, political, or otherwise.
 - It addresses social welfare and the reformation or public opening of Hindu religious institutions to all segments of the Hindu population. This means that those who practice Buddhism, Jainism, or Sikhism are considered Hindus, and Hindu institutions should be interpreted as such. It shall be recognized that even Sikhs who wear and carry kirpans

Are part of the sikh religious community.

¹² What is Right to Freedom of Religion under Indian Constitution? blog.finology.in/Legal-news/right-to-freedom-of-religion

Example, The Right to Celebrate Festivals: Article 25 guarantees people the freedom to observe religious holidays and festivals without interference. Diwali, the festival of lights, is one such occasion that is extensively observed in India.

2. Article 26 (Freedom to manage religious affairs)

The following rights are granted by this article to all religious denominations, subject to public order, morality, and health regulations.

- The freedom to establish and uphold institutions with altruistic and religious goals.
- The autonomy to oversee its own religious matters.
- The rights to own both moveable and immovable property, as well as the authority to manage it in compliance with the law.

Example, The Sikh Gurdwara Act

Since the Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925 was passed to improve the management and governance of gurdwaras in India, it is related to Article 26 of the Indian Constitution. The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) is a statutory body that was established under the Sikh Gurdwara Act to oversee and manage a number of Sikh religious institutions, including gurdwaras. The Sikh community is acknowledged as a religious denomination by this Act, which also grants them the freedom to conduct their religious affairs as they see fit.

3. Article 27 (Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion)

According to this article, taxes that directly support the upkeep and/or promotion of a specific religion or religious denomination are prohibited.

4. Article 28 (Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions)

This article allows religious instruction to be taught in educational institutions maintained by religious groups.

- Educational institutions administered by the State but established under any endowment or trust which requires that religious instruction be imparted in such institutions are exempt from the above clause (that no religious instruction shall be provided).
- This stipulates that no religious instruction shall be provided in State-run educational institutions.
- It is imperative that no individual receiving State aid or attending an educational

institution recognized by the State be required to participate in religious instruction or worship within those institutions unless they have provided their consent. When it comes to minors, the guardians ought to have approved the same.

Examples based on these clauses (consecutively) are:

Examples,

(1) In India, religious instruction or prayers are not permitted in government-funded elementary schools. The school is required to uphold a secular atmosphere and abstain from endorsing any particular religion.

(2) Outside of school hours, a student enrolled in an Indian government school has the option to receive religious instruction at a house of worship such as a temple, mosque, church, or gurdwara. The school is not allowed to impose religious instruction or meddle in this decision.

(3) Religious education may be offered as an elective in an Indian private school that is fully self-financed or partially supported by the government. It must guarantee, though, that students and their parents are free to choose whether or not to attend these classes, and that no student is forced to do so against their will.¹³

V. SEPARATION OF RELIGION FROM STATE

The foundation of government is secularism. A man made an offer in this regard to address religious dignitaries on behalf of the state. Secularism's premise is that decisions and actions should be free from the influence of religious beliefs or customs. A further expression of secularism is the demand for the freedom from religious doctrine and authority. When the founders of the constitution were drafting it, they felt that a secular government was necessary to keep religious tensions at bay. They therefore went to considerable lengths to establish a state devoid of any religious goals. The word "Secular" was added to the preamble by the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976. India's constitution provides its citizens with a number of fundamental rights. The freedom of religion is one of the fundamental rights protected by the constitution. Given that India is a secular country, all of its citizens are free to practice any religion they choose. Nevertheless, the Indian constitution and legal system do not specify the nature of the state-religion relationship. All religions must be acknowledged and accepted by the state and its institutions, according to the laws.¹⁴ The laws respect pluralism and enforce religious laws rather than parliamentary laws. India's current material code of law is unfair, and the country's

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ Supra

laws on certain topics like marriage and divorce variate depending on the religion of the people. While non-Muslim groups such as Christians, Sikhs, and Hindus follow customary law, Indian Muslims follow a system based on sharia. In India, the attempt to view discriminatory religious law has given rise to a number of issues, including polygamy, the value of child marriage, unequal inheritance rights, and more. We can describe India as a country with a diverse population in terms of caste, community, religion, and culture. People from various races, castes, and subcastes, as well as those adhering to diverse customs, have lived in this country for eons. India is completely neutral, unbiased, and impartial when it comes to allowing people to practice their religious beliefs and customs. No citizen of India shall be denied the freedom to openly profess, practice, and spread any religion they so choose. This is guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. The idea of secularism is highly valued in the constitution. The legal system gives significant weight to secularism.

VI. INDIA'S POPULATION BY RELIGION, 2024

India holds the unique distinction of being the birthplace of several significant religions, including Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Hinduism. Simultaneously, the nation is home to a number of indigenous faiths and tribal religions that have managed to hold their ground despite the influence of major religions for centuries. The country is unique due to the regional coexistence of many religious groups, and the Indian Census demonstrates this concept of unity in diversity.

A little over 966 million (79.80%) of the 1.21 billion people counted as followers of Hinduism, 172 million (14.23%) as Muslims or followers of Islam, 27.8 million (2.3%) as Christians, 20.8 million (1.72%) as Sikhs, 8.5 million (0.70%) as Buddhists, and 4.5 million (0.37%) as Jains at the 2011 census. Furthermore, it has been reported that more than 8 million people identify as followers of faiths other than the six major religions, including tribal religions.

	Religion	Percentage 2011	Estimated 2024	State Majority
1	Hindu	79.80%	111 Crore	29
2	Muslim	14.23%	22 Crore	2
3	Christian	2.30%	3.22 Crore	4

4	Sikh	1.72%	2.38 Crore	1
5	Buddhist	0.70%	98 Lakh	—
6	Jain	0.37%	52 Lakh	—
7	Other Religion	0.66%	92 Lakh	—
8	Not Stated	0.24%	34 Lakh	—

(A) Religion in India by state

Religion as a percentage of States

	State	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikhs	Buddhist	Others	Majority
1	Andhra Pradesh	90.87%	7.33%	1.38%	0.02%	0.01%	0.39%	Hindu
2	Arunachal Pradesh	29.04%	1.95%	30.26%	0.24%	11.77%	26.74%	Christian
3	Assam	61.47%	34.22%	3.74%	0.07%	0.18%	0.32%	Hindu
4	Bihar	82.69%	16.87%	0.12%	0.02%	0.02%	0.28%	Hindu
5	Chhattisgarh	93.25%	2.02%	1.92%	0.27%	0.28%	2.26%	Hindu
6	Goa	66.08%	8.33%	25.10%	0.10%	0.08%	0.31%	Hindu

7	Gujarat	88.57 %	9.67%	0.52%	0.10%	0.05%	1.09%	Hindu
8	Haryana	87.46 %	7.03%	0.20%	4.91%	0.03%	0.37%	Hindu
9	Himachal Pradesh	95.17 %	2.18%	0.18%	1.16%	1.15%	0.16%	Hindu
10	Jharkhand	67.83 %	14.53 %	4.30%	0.22%	0.03%	13.09 %	Hindu
11	Karnataka	84.00 %	12.92 %	1.87%	0.05%	0.16%	1.00%	Hindu
12	Kerala	54.73 %	26.56 %	18.38%	0.01%	0.01%	0.31%	Hindu
13	Madhya Pradesh	90.89 %	6.57%	0.29%	0.21%	0.03%	2.01%	Hindu
14	Maharashtra	79.83 %	11.54 %	0.96%	0.20%	5.81%	1.66%	Hindu
15	Manipur	41.39 %	8.40%	41.29%	0.05%	0.25%	8.62%	Hindu
16	Meghalaya	11.53 %	4.40%	74.59%	0.10%	0.33%	9.05%	Christian
17	Mizoram	2.75% %	1.35% %	87.16%	0.03%	8.51%	0.20%	Christian
18	Nagaland	8.75% %	2.47% %	87.93%	0.10%	0.34%	0.41%	Christian

8								n
19	Orissa	93.63 %	2.17%	2.77%	0.05%	0.03%	1.35%	Hindu
20	Punjab	38.49 %	1.93%	1.26%	57.69 %	0.01%	0.62%	Sikh
21	Rajasthan	88.49 %	9.07%	0.14%	1.27%	0.02%	1.01%	Hindu
22	Sikkim	57.76 %	1.62%	9.91%	0.31%	27.39%	3.01%	Hindu
23	Tamil Nadu	87.58 %	5.86%	6.12%	0.02%	0.02%	0.40%	Hindu
24	Telangana	85.10 %	12.69 %	1.27%	0.09%	0.09%	0.78%	Hindu
25	Tripura	83.40 %	8.60%	4.35%	0.03%	3.41%	0.21%	Hindu
26	Uttar Pradesh	79.73 %	19.26 %	0.18%	0.32%	0.10%	0.41%	Hindu
27	Uttarakhand	82.97 %	13.95 %	0.37%	2.34%	0.15%	0.22%	Hindu
28	West Bengal	70.54 %	27.01 %	0.72%	0.07%	0.31%	1.35%	Hindu

Union Territories

	UTs	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikhs	Buddhist	Others	Majority
1	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	69.45%	8.52%	21.28%	0.34%	0.09%	0.32%	Hindu
2	Chandigarh	80.78%	4.87%	0.11%	13.11%		1.13%	Hindu
3	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	93.93%	3.76%	1.49%	0.06%	0.18%	0.58%	Hindu
4	Daman & Diu	90.50%	7.92%	1.16%	0.07%	0.09%	0.26%	Hindu
5	Delhi	81.68%	12.86%	0.87%	3.40%	0.11%	1.08%	Hindu
6	Jammu and Kashmir	28.44%	68.31%	0.28%	1.87%	0.90%	0.20%	Muslim
7	Lakshadweep	2.77%	96.58%	0.49%	0.01%	0.02%	0.13%	Muslim
8	Puducherry	87.30%	6.05%	6.29%	0.02%	0.04%	0.30%	Hindu ¹⁵

India's Hindu Population by 2024

The 1.21 billion people living in the world as of the 2011 census, slightly over 966 million

¹⁵ Population of India by Religion 2024, <https://www.findeasy.in/indian-states-by-religion/>

(79.80%) identified as Hindus. In India, about 110 crore, or 1.1 billion, people practice Hinduism as of 2024. In India the vast majority of people identify as Hindu. Approximately 94% of all Hindus worldwide are found in India. It is one of only two countries with a majority of Hindus, the other being Nepal. With the exception of Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Jammu & Kashmir, and Punjab, the majority of Hindus reside in 29 States and Union Territories.

India's Muslim population by 2024

The 1.21 billion people counted in the 2011 census, 172 million (14.23%) identified as Muslims or adherents of Islam. In India, there will be about 22 crore, or 220 million, Muslims by 2024. India has one of the largest Muslim populations in the world, second only to Indonesia. The majority of Muslims in Jammu & Kashmir and Lakshadweep are devout Muslims. Assam (34.22%), West Bengal (27.01%), Kerala (26.56%), Uttar Pradesh (19.26%), and Bihar (16.87%) all have sizeable Muslim populations.

India's Christian Population by 2024

A little over 27.8 million (2.3%) of the 1.21 billion people living in the world as of the 2011 census are Christians. In India, 3.22 crore people identify as Christians in 2024. In Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya, three states in the Northeast, Christianity has become the predominant religion. Arunachal Pradesh (30.26%), Kerala (18.38%), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (21.28%), Manipur (41.29%), and Goa (25.10%) have a higher proportion of Christians than the overall population of their respective states or union territories.¹⁶

India's Sikh Population by 2024

A little over 20.8 million people (1.72%) of the 1.21 billion people living in the world as of the 2011 census are Sikh. Important Sikh-populated States and Unions include Punjab (57%), Chandigarh (13.11%), Haryana (4.91%), Delhi (3.40%), Uttarakhand (2.34%), and Jammu & Kashmir (1.87%). In India, about 2.4 crore people will practice Sikhism in 2024.

India's Buddhist Population by 2024

In India, there are 8.5 million (0.70%) Buddhists according to the 2011 census. There are sizable Buddhist populations in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and the northeastern states. In India, 10 million, or one crore, people practiced Buddhism in 2024.

India's Jain Population by 2024

Out of the 1.21 billion people counted in the 2011 census, 4.5 million, or 45 lakh, identified as

¹⁶ Id.

Jain adherents. In 2011, Jains made up 0.37% of India's total population. There have been reports of sizable Jain populations in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujrat. In India, 52 lakh people practice Jainism as of 2024.¹⁷

VII. RELIGION: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Religion has united humanity over the ages, but it has also caused division. In Western nations, religious belief is generally declining, but it is rising in other regions of the world. The benefits and drawbacks of religion are a matter of opinion.

- Proponents of religion frequently present it as a source of meaning and purpose for humanity, along with a moral compass for people to follow.
- Opponents of religion describe it as an unreasonable and constrictive force that has caused oppression, prejudice, and war in the past.

(A) Advantages of Religion

1. People's lives are given meaning by religion. Life can seem meaningless without a purpose, which can lead to anxiety, angst, or depression. Humans require a driving force of some kind.
2. People who might otherwise feel hopeless or desperate can find inspiration and hope in religion.
3. Religious organizations oversee a large number of charities that aid the world's poorest citizens.
4. People who share similar goals, moral systems, and values can be brought together by religion, creating social coherence.
5. Sacred texts and teachings, like the Quran, the Bible, or the Hindu Vedas, are filled with profound wisdom that is helpful to all people and offers helpful points of reference.
6. Some of the best works of literature, sculpture, architecture, music, and art in the world have been influenced by religion.
7. Religion offers a solid foundation and a sense of continuity in a world that is changing. Rituals and rites give people comfort and structure while they navigate the ups and downs of life.
8. The worst excesses of man's innate, animal nature can be restrained by religion.¹⁸

¹⁷ Id.

¹⁸ PAUL GOODMAN, Pros and Cons of Religion, <https://soapboxie.com/social-issues/The-Pros-And-Cons-Of->

9. Places of worship such as churches, temples, synagogues, and others offer a gathering, socializing, and organizing space for the community.

(B) Disadvantages of Religion

1. Since humans created and began to believe in religion, it has been a source of war and conflict. Religious people have historically held the view that their own religion is the only true one and that all other religions are false.
2. The foundation of religion is the misconception that the universe functions on the basis of "supernatural" forces and laws as opposed to those derived from science. Unproven claims about magic powers, people rising from the dead, miracles, and other unbelievable happenings continue to be made.
3. Bigotry against minority communities, including women, racial groups, and gay people, can be fostered or caused by religions.
4. Religion promotes the notion that fundamental answers can only be found in a fixed and particular book or belief system, which inhibits freedom of thought and discourages independent inquiry. Religious leaders and preachers can also foster a culture of unwavering allegiance among their flock.
5. Religion prevents humanity from advancing. Scientific advancements and discoveries came to a near complete halt during the Christian Church's dominance of Western Europe in the Middle Ages. Only with the rise of secularism did things start to pick up steam again.
6. Religion frequently threatens people with Hell in order to instill fear and maintain control over them.
7. Some religions discourage followers from making the most of their time here on Earth because they assure them that they will have a better life after they pass away.
8. Religion fosters an unrealistic idealism that leads to hypocrisy, annoyance, and disappointment.
9. Unethical politicians exploit religion as a means of personal gain.
10. People who practice religion are free from personal accountability because they can claim that God commanded them to do something.
11. Essentially, religions are not inspired by gods, but rather by humans. It's encouraged for

people to lead false lives, which is basically a kind of escape.¹⁹

VIII. CONCLUSION

Religion plays a crucial role in people's lives. Giving people the freedom to practice their religion allows their unique beliefs, emotions, and conclusions to grow and develop within the community. It has a profound effect on how people's brains function generally. It also plays a fundamental role in illustrating the general public's behavior and direction, especially in Indian culture. Indians are extremely protective of their religion, and they become enraged when someone tries to disturb it or interfere with their journey of religious love. However, in the interim, as we exercise this fundamental right granted to us, it is crucial to remember that it should not impede the tranquility and harmony of the public at large. Consideration should be given to the consequences of undervaluing this privilege. It is crucial to maintain some dignity while exercising this right, to understand its hidden meaning and the rationale behind its distribution which is primarily to maintain national unity and harmony and prevent any kind of religious conflict between our own brothers and sisters in order to prevent any danger or suspicion among our fellow citizens in the future. Sometimes people who display a great deal of concern for their religion in the appropriate manner of expressing it end up upsetting the surrounding populace. This can aggravate or inspire them to take actions that can also disrupt the open peace and cause results that incite hatred among the general public. It's a fundamental right guaranteed by the constitution for the smooth operation and advancement of the country, allowing every National to practice the theories and principles in which they believe. It's also a right that they cannot be denied at any cost, but in the interim, it's critical to make sure that we demonstrate in a way that is both realistic and mindful of others. Law grants all Indian subjects the right to exercise this privilege in order to strengthen national unity and agreement; however, in the interim, the State retains the right to intervene when misuse or improper application of this right occurs among the general public.

¹⁹ Id.