

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW**  
**MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES**

**[ISSN 2581-5369]**

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**Volume 4 | Issue 4**

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**2021**

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# Uniform Civil Code or Secularism

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## ABSTRACT

*In the recent developments related to the need of reforms in the personal laws and the directive of constitution to secure its through Uniform Civil Code (UCC). Abolishment of Triple Talaq have given Muslim Women a sense of security in the marriage which they never had before. UCC is basically an attempt to cut away any prejudices and discrimination against vulnerable groups in the society. In the recent times we have also seen the role played by the judiciary in abolishing law that are discriminative in nature and provides ground for injustice. Although there has been no solid step taken in this regard as of now. There have been unresolved debates related to freedom of religion and how with the UCC the freedom of religion is threatened. However Supreme Court in its recent observations have made it pretty clear that Uniform Civil do not violate 'Right to Religion'*

**Keywords:** Uniform Civil Code, Secularism, Personal laws.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since India is a country with diverse cultures, traditions, and religions and due to which there are different personal laws for different religions. Though the Constitution of the country guarantees gender equality but there are certain aspects which creates issues due to the difference in religion. These differences in personal laws create a major problem for equality, secularism and justice. In view of these obstacles, the need and importance of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) has been understood. There are several matters that are governed by the Uniform Civil Code, such as marriage, adoption, divorce, maintenance etc. However, as per the Constitution of India, there is no particular religion that the State has to follow. The Preamble of our Constitution states that India is a *Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic Country*. The word "Sovereign" was added in the Constitution of India in 1976 which denotes that no religion in the country will receive any kind of supremacy or special favours by the State. Even it ensures that there will be no discrimination against any person of this Country on the basis that he or she professes a particular form of religion. India is a Country

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which does not has any State religion, it is a Secular State.

Uniform Civil Code is an attempt to resolve the issue of contradicting personal laws. This can be done just to strengthen the unity and national integration in the Country and to ensure that these personal laws are replaced by a common law. The Uniform Civil Code in India can be considered as a call to eliminate the discrimination against different vulnerable groups who have to follow hostilities on the basis of gender & caste.

#### **(A) Research Question**

- Why do we need UCC?
- What are the different aspects of UCC?
- How can UCC help in protecting women's rights?

#### **(B) Research Objective**

This research paper is aimed to make the reader aware of the current status and position of the Uniform civil code and the amalgamation of Personal Laws into Uniform Civil Code. Implication and adoption of the code is on the basis of the following factors:

1. Existence of Personal in interpreting the Uniform Civil Code and the efforts applied by the ways of case laws.
2. To comprehend the relations between constitution & uniform civil code and how it is summarised in the constitution.
3. To understand the relation of personal laws and the impact of such law in the form of religious values.

#### **(C) Hypothesis**

Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is basically a common law that is applicable throughout the country and on each and every person of the country in the case of Civil matters.

Due to the presence of different beliefs in our country, there has always been a conflict between the practices of different personal laws. UCC can help in solving this.

#### **(D) Scope of Study**

The scope of this research is the amalgamation of Personal Laws into Uniform Civil Code.  
**Uniform civil code (UCC)**

It is provided underneath article 44 of the constitution which implies under directive principles of state policy. It states that it's the duty of the state to secure the citizens a consistent civil code throughout the territory of India.

Uniform civil code places an assortment of laws to control issues of all residents paying little mind to religion and is likely the necessity of great importance and guaranteeing that their principal and constitutional rights are protected, in other terms it means one country one rule.

A real issue in India is that Positive Secularism divides the individual faith of people as seen in western countries as well as in America. Both of these countries have gone through developmental phase and renaissance.

The Major issues of Personal Laws.

1. A Muslim man can keep more than one wife but not a Hindu or Christian. But of course, no woman from Muslim, Hindu or Christian can have more than one husband in our patriarchal society.
2. Hindus can form an undivided family (HUF) in order to manage their assets better & in the process they tend to reduce their tax liability but not a Muslim or Christian
3. A Muslim marriage can be dissolved merely on the pronouncement of Triple Talaq but not a Hindu or Christian marriage
4. A Christian woman cannot get a share in her deceased child's property while other communities have their own set of bylaws with respect to it.

## II. HIGHLIGHTS ON PERSONAL LAWS

### (A) Divorce

***Divorce under Hindu Marriage Act:*** The thorough law material to every one of the Hindus in the nation giving separation was passed in 1955. After the correction of the segment in 1976, every one of the grounds referenced in section 13(1)<sup>3</sup> are likewise grounds on which the cure of legal partition under section 10 of the Act can be looked for. Section 13(1) of the Act gave the grounds of separation to both companion if living in infidelity, pitilessness, departure, transformation to another religions, serious of shakiness of brain. Sub-section (2) of section 13 gives exceptional grounds to spouse on the grounds (i) Pre-marriage polygamous relationships; (ii) Guilty of unnatural offenses; (iii) Non-resumption of dwelling together after a request for support and (iv) alternative of adolescence. The Act likewise gave separate by Mutual Consent under section 13-B, where both the parties if commonly concurred can introduce the request to the District Court, given the marriage was solemnized between the gatherings and have been living separate throughout the previous one year. They have not been able to live together and

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<sup>3</sup> Hindu Marriage Act 1955

they have mutually agreed that their marriage should be dissolved<sup>4</sup>.

**Divorce under Muslim Law:** Under Muslim personal law husband is vested with the more power of Talaq (divorce) ‘can be pronounced by the husband even in the absence of his wife.’<sup>5</sup> The Talaq should be articulated when the spouse was conscious. A Talaq articulated when he was sleeping, oblivious or lost will be invalid. The formula applied by the husband in dissolving his marriage must be understood by the wife.<sup>6</sup> Talaq-ul-biddat (triple talaq without noticing the Iddat time frame by wife) is generally difficult and irreversible sort of talaq. The gathering can't re-wed except if spouse wedding and separating to the third individual. Khula sort of talaq is just kind of talaq where the spouse is given the freedom to quit from the marriage holding gave the extent of dower is repaid. Interestingly, if parties are hitched during youth, both the mate have option to look for talaq under the ground for example 'Choice of Puberty' which isn't material under Hindu Marriage Act however simply accessible to the Hindu spouse under Hindu Marriage Act 1955.

## **(B) Succession**

**Under Muslim Law:** In Muslim law, complete consideration has been paid to the necessities of wards and family members. Blood connections are qualified for the succession. The lawful heirs are the fundamental heirs in the property of the expired Muslim. Although, a deceased Muslim is having the power to dispose of his property but it has been restricted to 1/3<sup>rd</sup> only<sup>7</sup>. Muslim law of succession doesn't make any differentiation among male and females. With the end goal of succession, both are equivalent. No lady will be denied of her privilege of legacy only on the ground of sex. The property inherited by a Muslim lady is her absolute property. She is free to dispose of her property according to her sweet-will<sup>8</sup>. Muslim law doesn't perceive “stridhan” or a lady's restricted domain returning to others upon her demise. Muslim law of progression depends on Quran and, along these lines it is a heavenly law. This law is, consequently, totally not quite the same as Hindu law. Hindu law recognizes the right of inheritance by birth. Muslim law does not recognize the right of birth of a child<sup>9</sup>.

**Under Hindu Succession Act:** Section 6 of the Act<sup>10</sup> has replaced the traditional Hindu Law of inheritance. Significant change acquainted by this Act is to make mother, widow and girl as equivalent beneficiaries with the children in the property of a Hindu or other individual to

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<sup>4</sup>. *Id.* at 82.

<sup>5</sup> Qureshi MA: Muslim Law (3<sup>rd</sup> Edn. 2007) p. 81; *F.C.Bibi v. N.A. Choudhary*, (1909) 36 Cal.185:13CWN 134.

<sup>6</sup> Ameer Ali: Mohammadan Law, p.479.

<sup>7</sup>. Qureshi MA: Muslim Law (3<sup>rd</sup> Edn. 2007) p. 368.

<sup>8</sup>. *Id.* at 372.

<sup>9</sup>. *Id.* at 371.

<sup>10</sup>. Hindu Succession (amendment) Act 2005.

whom this Act applies, on the off chance that he/she passes on intestate.

Equivalent offer to siblings and sisters in the dad's property as given by the Act has caused some functional troubles for the cultivating local area. It has prompted fracture of landholdings. The issue with this Act is again equivalent to with the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, i.e., of title of the Act. There isn't anything in the Act which is unconventionally Hindu, the substance of the Act being mainstream in nature. The title should also give a secular look<sup>11</sup>.

### **(C) Adoption**

***Under Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act:*** Section 7 and 8<sup>12</sup> made the secular provisions for adoption of any child by both male and female. There ought to be the gap of 21 years old between the opposite gender and who needs to embrace the kid and he/she ought not have child/girl's, child/child's little girl regular conceived or supportive. Under section 7 of the Act any male Hindu who is of sound brain and isn't minor has the ability to take a child or a girl in selection with the assent of his significant other aside from where the spouse has changed over to another religion. Also, section 8 of the Act gives that a Hindu female whether wedded or unmarried, widow or separated and who is of sound brain and isn't minor has the ability to take a child or a girl in selection by her own doing. Where the female is raise she can embrace the youngster without the assent of her significant other where spouse is dead or stopped to be a Hindu, or has been announced by a Court of equipped Jurisdiction to be of weak brain. Section 12 of the Act makes a lawful fiction and gives that an embraced youngster turns into the offspring of their assenting father or mother '*for all reasons*' with impact from their selection and from such date all ties of the kid in the group of birth will be cut off. The adopted son/daughter also becomes a coparcener in the adoptive family as if he/she was natural born son/daughter<sup>13</sup>.

***Adoption under other personal laws:*** If there should be an occurrence of the Adoption of Children Bill 1972, the Muslim people group went against a uniform law with respect to appropriation relevant to all networks since Islam doesn't perceive reception. Because of this resistance, the bill was thusly dropped and once again introduced in 1980 with an express proviso of non-pertinence to Muslims. This was again against, this time by the Bombay Zoroastrian Jashan Committee, which framed an extraordinary council to absolve Parsis from the bill. The adopted son/daughter also becomes a coparcener in the adoptive family as if he/she

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<sup>11</sup>. Kashmir Singh, '*Sikhs and Personal Law*' at [http://sikhinstitute.org/sikh\\_p\\_1/ch\\_10.htm](http://sikhinstitute.org/sikh_p_1/ch_10.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956

<sup>13</sup>. Basant K. Sharma: Hindu Law (1st. Edn. 2007) p.154.

was natural born son/daughter<sup>14</sup>.

#### **(D) Marriage**

**Under Hindu Marriage Act:** The Institution of Marriage is the establishment of harmony and request of society. Under Hindu law Marriage is considered as hallowed bunch by the individuals who see it as a common agreement while under Muslim law marriage is a common agreement to legitimize the sex. Under conventional Hindu law, the marriage is stricter than a common foundation. Section 5<sup>15</sup> sets out the states of a legitimate Hindu Marriage and segment opens with the words, "A marriage might be solemnized between any two Hindus", which implies that gatherings to the marriage should be Hindus. Provision (I) of section 5 presents severe guideline of monogamy among Hindus. It gives that at the hour of marriage, neither one of the parties has a mate living. Assuming the principal marriage is void, second marriage would be substantial and not bigamous. Yet, on the off chance that the primary marriage is voidable as the parties are living separate after a pronouncement of legal detachment, the subsequent marriage would be bigamous. Two that subsequent marriage should be solemnized by the exhibition of substantial functions. If a Hindu male having a Hindu wife converts to Islam and marriages again according to Muslim law, as the Hindu marriage is subsisting, the second will be bigamous.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, Clause (iii) of Section 5 of Hindu Marriage Act 1955 sets out the age of the bridegroom and bride for the marriage. The age set up for the bridegroom is 21 years and for the bride it is 18 years. Marriage in contradiction of this condition is neither void nor voidable. Thus, marriage would remain valid in law and enforceable and recognizable in the court of law.<sup>17</sup> The results, assuming any, which stream from that contradiction are given in section 18 of the Act which gives that whoever gets a marriage for oneself in such negation will be culpable with basic detainment which may reach out to 15 days or with fine which may stretch out to 1,000 rupees or both. Under traditional Hindu law, the marriage is more religious than a secular institution.<sup>18</sup>

**Under Muslim Law:** Muslim personal law expresses that "both the parties i.e., the bridegroom and bride should give their consent for marriage and there should be at least two witnesses who would personally enquire from the bride as to whether she is willing to marry or not Dower

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<sup>14</sup> Basant K. Sharma: Hindu Law (1st. Edn. 2007) p.154.

<sup>15</sup> Hindu Marriage Act 1955

<sup>16</sup> *Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India*, AIR 1995 SC 1531; *Lily Thomas v. Union of India*, AIR 2000 SC 1650.

<sup>17</sup> Basant K. Sharma: Hindu Law (1st. Edn. 2007) p.38.

<sup>18</sup> Basant K. Sharma: Hindu Law (1st. Edn. 2007) p.34.

money should also be explained to her by them. The consent of boy is also necessary".<sup>19</sup> Then again "Under Muslim law, a male is permitted to have four spouses all at once. Then again the spouse can have just each husband in turn. On the off chance that a Muslim spouse weds a fifth wife such a marriage isn't void yet just unpredictable and child of such marriage is illegitimate".<sup>20</sup> The marriage under Muslim law is terrible (batil) whenever wedded with connection, partiality and fosterage. The marriage will be substantial just when the individuals agree to wed at the hour of Nikha.

**Under Christian Law:** The states of the catholic marriage are the accompanying ones:

- a) At least one of the two mates should be catholic (absolved);
- b) None of the companions should be associated by a past legitimate strict marriage;
- c) They should be truly free in their consent (opportunity);
- d) The man and the lady make a responsibility conclusively the one to the next (constancy);
- e) They need to drive forward in the devotion of their adoration for all the life (loyalty);
- f) They acknowledge the duty regarding having kids (ripeness) and the Papers of the birth endorsement, the baptismal declaration, and the authentication of common marriage (in country where it exists) is to be provided.

### III. SECULARISM V/S UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

When there's division of working of State with every one of the parts of confidence, at that point the motivation of regulation happens. In elective words, regulation implies that generous autonomy from the State inside the issues of the confidence and the reverse way around. tenet looks to ensure and protect opportunity of non-common conviction and practices for all electors. Since State doesn't advance or notice a particular confidence, in an extremely lay majority rules system all electors are equivalent under the steady gaze of the law.

The Uniform Civil Code should be mandatory in Asian country all together that a climate is shaped among that all areas of society have a sense of safety and congruity exists among them which would more be able to ensure that there are no mobs inside the local area.

Uniform common code isn't against doctrine and Articles 25-26<sup>21</sup>.

Article 44<sup>22</sup> essentially expresses that the confidence, their traditions their own laws is won. It

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<sup>19</sup> Qureshi MA: Muslim Law (3<sup>rd</sup> Edn. 2007) p. 32.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at p.35.

<sup>21</sup> Constitution of India

<sup>22</sup> Constitution of India



ought to be valued that the point of uniform common code isn't to meddle with the traditions and their custom rather its fundamental target is balance that out be introduced upon each and every public of Asian countries.

#### IV. RELEVANT LEGAL PROVISIONS

- **Article 25-** Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.<sup>23</sup>
- **Article 26-** Freedom to manage religious affairs Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right.<sup>24</sup>
- **Article 44-** Uniform civil code for the citizens The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.<sup>25</sup>
- **Section 13(1)**<sup>26</sup>- Provides the grounds on which the Petitioner can claim to dissolve the marriage by a decree of divorce.
- **Section 6**<sup>27</sup>- Devolution of interest in coparcenary property.
- **Section 7**<sup>28</sup>- Capacity of a male Hindu to take in adoption
- **Section 8**<sup>29</sup>- Capacity of a female Hindu to take in adoption
- **Section 12**<sup>30</sup>- Effects of adoption
- **Section 5**<sup>31</sup>- Conditions for a Hindu marriage
- **Section 18**<sup>32</sup>- Punishment for contravention of certain other conditions for Hindu marriage

#### V. CASE LAWS AND JUDICIAL DECISIONS

1. **A Srinivasa Aiyar v. Saraswati Ammal**<sup>33</sup>, in this case the High Court of Madras upheld the validity of Madras Prohibition of Bigamy Act on similar grounds.

2. **A State of Bombay v. Narasu Appa Mali**<sup>34</sup>, in this case the constitutional validity of the Bombay (Prevention of Hindu Bigamous Marriages) Act, 1946 was to be determined by the High Court of Bombay. One of the two major contentions was that it was violative of

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<sup>23</sup> Constitution of India

<sup>24</sup> Constitution of India

<sup>25</sup> Constitution of India

<sup>26</sup> Hindu Marriage Act 1955

<sup>27</sup> Hindu Succession Act 1956

<sup>28</sup> The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956

<sup>29</sup> The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956

<sup>30</sup> The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956

<sup>31</sup> The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955

<sup>32</sup> The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955

<sup>33</sup> 1954 AIR 561

<sup>34</sup> AIR (1952) Bom 84

articles 14 and 15<sup>35</sup> since the Hindus were singled out to abolish bigamy while the Muslim counterparts remained at full liberty to contract more than one marriage and this was discrimination on the grounds of religion. Questions such as these were raised due to an absence of a common civil code and clash of different principles in different personal laws.

**3. Bai Tahira v. Ali Hussain Fisaalli<sup>36</sup>, according to the Ambedkarian point of view,** he states that:

*“Speaking for myself, there are several excellent provisions of the Muslim law understood in its pristine and progressive intendment which may adorn India’s common civil code. There is more in Mohammed than in Manu, if interpreted in its humanist liberalism and away from the desert context, which helps women and orphans, modernises marriage and morals, widens divorce and inheritance.”*

**4. Mary Roy v. State of Kerala<sup>37</sup>,** where it was argued before the Supreme Court was that certain provisions of Travancore Christian Succession Act, 1916, were unconstitutional under Art. 14. Under these provisions, on the death of an intestate, his widow was entitled to have only a life interest terminable at her death or remarriage and his daughter. It was also argued that the Travancore Act had been superseded by the Indian Succession Act, 1925. The Supreme Court avoided examining the question whether gender inequality in matters of succession and inheritance violated Art.14, but, nevertheless, ruled that the Travancore Act had been superseded by the Indian Succession Act. Mary Roy has been characterized as a decision in the direction of ensuring gender equality in the matter of succession.

**5. Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano (referred to as Shah Bano case)<sup>38</sup>** in which a divorced Muslim woman was brought within the ambit of Section 125<sup>39</sup> by the Supreme Court in which it was declared by the Apex court that she was entitled for maintenance even after the completion of iddat period.

**6. S.R. Bommai v. Union of India<sup>40</sup>,** it was held by the court that religion is the matter of individual faith and cannot be mixed with the secular activities. Secular activities can be regulated by the State by enacting a law.

**7. Sarla Mudgal v Union of India,1995<sup>41</sup>,** in which Justice Kuldeep Singh reiterated the need for the Parliament to frame a Uniform Civil Code, which would help the cause of national

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<sup>35</sup> Constitution of India

<sup>36</sup> 1979 AIR 362

<sup>37</sup> 1986 AIR 1011

<sup>38</sup> 1985 AIR 945

<sup>39</sup> Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973

<sup>40</sup>1994 AIR 1918

<sup>41</sup>AIR 1995 SC 1531

integration by removing contradictions based on ideologies. Therefore, the responsibility entrusted on the State under Article 44 of the Constitution whereby a Uniform Civil Code must be secured has been urged by the Supreme Court repeatedly as a matter of urgency.

## **VI. ANALYSIS**

With the help of this paper, it can be analysed that the personal laws in our country are very contradictory in nature and also some of the laws are violative of Fundamental Rights. It can be noticed that in some of the cases the personal laws are discriminatory against women so if these personal laws from all the religions will be included in the Uniform Civil Code then it will not protect the main aim of the UCC and India is a country where the laws are made to protect the rights of the citizens but the inclusion of these laws will in no way fulfil the core idea behind the formation of UCC.

Uniform Civil Code is about social justice, gender justice unity and fraternity of the country<sup>42</sup>, and to fulfill the idea unity in diversity.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Uniform common code for the entire India is viewed as famously reassuring as it will give the possibility of public solidarity and uprightness and will likewise contend the maxim of "one resident one law". Yet, this stayed an issue in light of the fact that as we live in a democratic country where individuals from various station dwell and they have their own law.

The basic guideline ought to be that established law should abrogate strict law in light of a legitimate concern for the mainstream republic. Hence, for protecting the interests of the relative multitude of residents of our country, the State may present a Uniform Civil Code. It is improper to consider that Right to Religion and Right to Worship presented by the Constitution and individual laws corresponding to progression, legacy, marriage, separate, reception and so forth are comparative in light of the fact that the individual laws are inferred. Upholding a Uniform Civil Code for these assorted individual laws won't encroach one's Right to Religion, however it will just look to disperse such practices that are being completed for the sake of religion. Its primary target is to convey equity among all residents by administrating them through Common individual laws.

With multiple belief systems, come multiple ideological conflicts. To live together in concurrence with such diversity, we need to have uniformity at some level so as to avoid such conflicts. What we need is a Uniform Civil Code in the form of a sophisticated, harmonized

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/>

system of legal regulation that maintains and skilfully uses the input of personal laws and yet achieves a measure of legal uniformity. As long as the code does not go against the essence i.e., the core or fundamental belief of any particular religion, it will not go against the religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution<sup>43</sup>.

## VIII. SUGGESTION

1. As we know that India is a country with different religions and traditions and it is really difficult to keep all the people from different walks of life and religion and for this it is really important to have good governing body with the effective implementation of laws.
2. It is important to have a proper law which creates a sense of unity and uniformity among the people of this country.
3. Uniform Civil Code basically means that there will be one law or one civil code which will be applicable to every religion and is to be followed throughout the country.
4. Uniform Civil Code aims to fulfil the principle of “*One nation, One law*”. And if different personal laws will be included in the Uniform Civil Code then that code will not be uniform anymore and different practices from different personal laws will contradict each other.
5. Even there are several benefits that a Uniform civil code provides, some of them are:
  - a) To provide equal status to all citizens
  - b) To promote gender parity
  - c) To accommodate the aspirations of the young population
  - d) To support the national integration
  - e) To bypass the contentious issue of reform of existing personal laws
6. By viewing all the listed benefits it can be seen that Uniform Civil Code is the need of the hour and its effective implementation is very necessary.
7. Also, existing personal laws are mainly based on the upper-class patriarchal notions of the society in all religions. The demand of UCC is normally made by aggrieved women as a substitute for existing personal laws as patriarchal orthodox people still deem the reforms in personal laws will destroy their sanctity and oppose it profusely.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> <http://jurisonline.in/2010/03/uniform-civil-code-an-unfulfilled-vision/>

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<sup>45</sup> 1986 AIR 1011

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<sup>48</sup> 1954 AIR 561

<sup>49</sup> 1985 AIR 945

<sup>50</sup>1994 AIR 1918

<sup>51</sup>AIR 1995 SC 1531