

Bill No. LIX of 2024

THE CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

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BILL

further to amend the Constitution of India

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-fifth Year of the Republic of India as follows: —

1. (1) This Act may be called the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2024.
(2) It shall come into force at once.

- 5 2. In Part IV of the Constitution, after article 48-A, the following new article shall be inserted, namely: —

"48-B. The State shall endeavour to develop, promote and regulate the

Short title and commencement.

Insertion of new article 48-B.

Promotion and regulation of the traditional domestic fisheries sector.

traditional domestic fisheries sector to improve its marketing network, quality of seafood produced, maintain hygiene standards and take all necessary steps for economic stability and upliftment of the small-time marginal fishermen engaged in this traditional sector."

Insertion of
new article
51-B.

Compulsory
voting.

3. In Part IV-A of the Constitution, after article 51-A, the following new article shall be inserted, namely: — 5

"51-B. It shall be compulsory for every citizen of India, who is eligible to vote and has been registered as a voter, to exercise his right to vote in the general elections to the State Legislative Assemblies and the House of the People. 10

Provided that in case of a genuine emergency, a voter may be exempted from exercising his right to vote, if the district election officer or such other officer, to whom such authority may be delegated by the district election officer, on receipt of a written request from the voter before the date of polling, is satisfied that there are genuine and bona fide grounds for such exemption." 15

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The absence of effective monitoring and oversight has resulted in issues such as overfishing, illegal fishing practices, and unfair pricing for the fishermen. In the absence of proper regulations and support, traditional domestic fishermen are at risk of losing their livelihoods, while the nation's seafood industry is at risk of collapse. It is imperative for the Government to intervene and establish a robust framework and system that ensures the sustainability of the seafood industry, protects the livelihoods of the fishermen, and promotes fair trade practices. This may involve implementing quotas to prevent overfishing, enforcing regulations to prevent illegal fishing practices, and setting up quality control measures to ensure that only the highest quality seafood reaches the market. Additionally, the Government should extend support to small-scale fishermen by offering training programs, access to technology and equipment, and financial assistance. By investing in the seafood industry and supporting the fishermen who depend on it, the nation can ensure the long-term viability of this vital sector and preserve its rich maritime heritage. It is therefore, proposed to make the promotion and regulation of the traditional domestic fisheries sector, a Directive Principle of State Policy by inserting a new article 48-B in Part-IV of the Constitution.

One potential solution to address the issue of decreasing voter participation is to implement mandatory voting for citizens. By making it mandatory under the Constitution for all eligible voters to cast their ballots in general elections, we can help raise awareness about the importance of exercising this fundamental right in a democratic society. Mandatory voting could also lead to the election of more competent and representative public officials, as it would ensure that a broader and more diverse range of voices are heard in the electoral process. This could help to combat issues such as voter apathy and disengagement, which can have negative consequences for the functioning of our democratic system. However, it is important to recognize that there may be certain circumstances in which individuals are unable to vote, such as illness, disability, or other extenuating circumstances. In these cases, the District Election Officer should be empowered to provide exemptions to ensure that no one is unfairly penalized for their inability to participate in the electoral process. Overall, implementing mandatory voting could be a valuable tool in addressing the worrisome trend of decreasing voter participation in general elections and strengthening our democratic system. By encouraging more citizens to take part in the electoral process, we can help to ensure that the Government truly represents the will of the people. It is therefore, proposed to insert a new article 51-B in Part-IV of the Constitution to provide for compulsory voting.

The Bill seeks to achieve the above objectives.

AJEET MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE

RAJYA SABHA

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(Dr. Ajeet Madhavrao Gopchade, M.P.)