

Bill No. LXXIII of 2025

**THE PROTECTION OF ALL RELIGIONS AND PROMOTION
OF MUTUAL RESPECT FOR FAITHS BILL, 2025**

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BILL

to promote inter-faith harmony, ensure protection of all religions and sacred beliefs, and prevent acts intended to insult or malign any religion or religious community in the country in accordance with the secular and pluralistic spirit of the Constitution of India, and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

WHEREAS, the Constitution of India guarantees to all citizens the freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion;

AND WHEREAS, it is expedient to safeguard the dignity of every faith, promote mutual respect among followers of different religions, and prevent deliberate acts that incite hatred or disturb communal harmony.

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

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

- 5 **1.** (1) This Act may be called the Protection of All Religions and Promotion of Mutual Respect for Faiths Act, 2025.
- (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Short title and
commencement.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) “Commission” means the National Commission for Inter-Faith Harmony established under section 3 of this Act;

(b) “deliberate insult” means any public act, publication, communication, or display intentionally meant to outrage religious feelings or show contempt towards any religion; 5

(c) “faith” means a system of beliefs, rituals, practices and sacred texts adhered to by a community or class of persons professing or practising a religion;

(d) “faith-based offence” means any act or omission committed under this Act which violates the rights of persons practising a religion or faith, or which insults, vilifies, demeans a religion or sacred object or incites hatred between communities or classes of persons; 10

(e) “Fund” means the National Inter-Faith Harmony Fund established under section 6 of this Act; 15

(f) “inter-faith harmony” means peaceful coexistence, dialogue, and respect amongst persons of diverse faiths or religions;

(g) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(h) “religion” includes all faiths, spiritual paths, and systems of belief practised in India; and 20

(i) “sacred object” means any text, symbol, structure, place or item held in reverence by the followers of a religion or faith.

CHAPTER II

PROMOTION OF INTER-FAITH HARMONY

3. **(1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the official Gazette, establish a body to be known as the National Commission for Inter-Faith Harmony to carry out the purposes of this Act.** 25

(2) The Commission shall be a body corporate by the name aforesaid having perpetual succession and a common seal, with power, subject to the provisions of this Act, to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and to contract, and shall, by the said name, sue or be sued. 30

(3) **The head office of the Commission shall be at New Delhi and it may, with the prior approval of Central Government, establish office(s) at any other place in the country, as it may deem fit, for carrying out the purposes of this Act.** 35

(4) **The Commission shall consist of the following, namely –**

(i) a Chairperson with substantial knowledge of various religious traditions and high level of commitment to the promotion, protection and preservation of inter-faith harmony; and

(ii) ten members, who shall be persons of eminence from different religions and faiths in the country, in such proportion as may be prescribed; 40

to be appointed by the Central Government in such manner as may be prescribed.

(5) **The term of office of, the salary and allowances payable to, and other terms and conditions of service of the Chairperson and Members of the Commission shall be such as may be prescribed by the Central Government.** 45

	(6) The Commission shall meet as and when necessary and at such times and places as the Chairperson may deem fit for the efficient discharge of the functions assigned to it under this Act.	
5	(7) The Commission shall have the power to regulate its own procedure with regard to transaction of its business.	
	4. (1) The Commission shall appoint such number of officers and staff with the prior approval of the Central Government, as may be required, for its efficient functioning.	Officers and staff of the Commission.
10	(2) The method of recruitment, qualifications and experience, salaries and allowances payable to and other terms and conditions of service of the officers and staff of the Commission shall be such as may be prescribed.	
	5. The Commission shall perform all or any of the following functions, namely:—	Functions of the Commission.
15	(a) advise the appropriate Government on policies for promoting inter-faith harmony, respect amongst religions and prevention of faith-based offences;	
	(b) recommend measures to prevent communal conflicts;	
	(c) organise awareness and educational programmes in schools, Universities, and through media for promoting mutual respect amongst different religions and faiths and peaceful co-existence;	
20	(d) coordinate with the Central and State Governments, religious institutions, non-governmental organisations etc. for inter-faith dialogues;	
25	(e) prepare reports, annually and also at such other times as the Commission may deem fit on any matter relating to promotion or preservation of inter-faith harmony and in particular in relation to its functions assigned under this Act, in such form and manner, as may be prescribed, containing therein its recommendations to the Centre and the States, as the case may be, for the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act; and	
30	(f) perform such other functions as may be assigned to it by the Central Government under this Act.	
	6. (1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, establish a fund to be called the National Inter-Faith Harmony Fund for financing programmes promoting religious tolerance, peace and inter-faith cooperation and for other purposes as may be prescribed.	National Inter-Faith Harmony Fund.
35	(2) The Fund shall be administered by the Commission under the supervision and control of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.	
	(3) There shall be credited to the Fund:—	
40	(i) any sums provided by the Central Government to carry out the purposes of this Act;	
	(ii) grants, CSR contributions or donations from institutions or persons, approved by the Central Government;	
	(iii) amount accrued on account of monetary penalties imposed; and	
	(iv) such other sums as may be specified from time to time.	
45	(4) The Fund shall be subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India and the Central Government shall cause such audit report to be laid, as soon as may be after it is received, before each House of Parliament.	
50	7. The Central Government shall after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, provide adequate funds to the Commission, as it may deem fit, for carrying out the purposes of this Act.	Central Government to provide funds.

CHAPTER III

OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

Offence of insulting religion or religious beliefs.	8.	Whoever, with deliberate intent to insult or demean the religious beliefs or practices of any class of citizens of India, commits any act, publication, or representation that insults or attempts to insult the religion or religious beliefs or feelings of that class of persons, shall be guilty of an offence and shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years and with fine which may extend to two lakh rupees.	5	
		Provided that the penal provision shall be read in addition to the punishment, if any, prescribed in the relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and not in derogation of it.		45 of 2023.
Protection of sacred places and symbols.	9.	Whoever defiles, damages or desecrates any place of worship or sacred object of any religion with the deliberate or malicious intent to insult that religion or any class of persons of that religion shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years and with fine which may extend to two lakh rupees.	10	
		Provided that the penal provision shall be read in addition to the punishment, if any, prescribed in the relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and not in derogation of it.	15	45 of 2023.
Dissemination of hatred on grounds of religion.	10.	Whoever promotes enmity or hatred between persons on the ground of religion, or by speech, writing, image, or electronic communication intends to do so deliberately, shall be guilty of an offence and shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to two lakh rupees.	20	
		Provided that the penal provision shall be read in addition to the punishment, if any, prescribed in the relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and not in derogation of it.	25	45 of 2023.
Protection of artistic and academic expression.	11.	(1) Nothing contained in this Act shall apply to — (a) any fair and <i>bona fide</i> expression made in good faith in art, literature, research or academic discourse; and (b) any constructive criticism, discussion or commentary made without malicious intent.	30	
		(2) The Commission established under this Act shall frame guidelines for the purposes of this section, within such period as may be prescribed.		

CHAPTER IV

MISCELLANEOUS

Accounts and audit.	12.	(1) The Commission shall, in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts in such form and manner and at such time of each financial year, as may be prescribed.	35	
		(2) The accounts of the Commission shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General at such intervals as may be specified by him and any expenditure incurred in connection with such audit shall be payable by the Commission to the Comptroller and Auditor-General.	40	
		(3) The accounts of the Commission, as certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General or any other person appointed by him in this behalf, together with the audit report thereon shall be forwarded annually by the Commission to the Central Government, which shall cause the same to be laid, as soon as may be after it is received, before each House of Parliament.	45	
Annual report.	13.	(1) The Commission shall prepare every year, in such form and within such time, as may be prescribed, an annual report, giving a true and full account of		

	its activities during the previous year and forward a copy thereof to the Central Government.	
5	(2) The Central Government shall, as soon as may be after its receipt, cause to be laid before each House of Parliament, the annual report under sub-section (1) as well as any report under clause (e) of section 5 along with a memorandum of action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendation(s) of the Commission and the reasons, if any, for non-acceptance of any of the recommendation(s) contained therein.	
10	(3) Where the report or any of its part thereof is relates to any matter with the which any State Government is concerned, the Commission shall forward a copy of such report or part thereof to the concerned State Government, who shall in turn, as soon as may be after its receipt, cause it to be laid before the each House of State Legislature concerned, where it consists of two Houses, or where such Legislature consists of one House, before that House, along with a	
15	such report along with an explanatory memorandum on the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendation(s) related to the State, if any, and reasons, if any, for not accepting any of the recommendation(s) made therein.	
20	14. (1) No court shall take cognizance of any offence under this Act except on a complaint made by a public authority or with prior sanction of the District Magistrate.	Cognizance and investigation.
	(2) All offences under this Act shall be cognizable and non-bailable.	
	15. No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Commission or any of its members or any other person for any action taken in good faith under this Act or any rule made thereunder.	Protection of action taken in good faith.
25	16. The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of the provisions of any other law for the time being in force and, in case of any inconsistency, the provisions of this Act shall have over riding effect on the provisions of any such law to the extent of the inconsistency.	Act not in derogation of any other law.
30	17. (1) The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act.	Power to make rules.
35	(2) The Commission may, with the approval of the Central Government, by notification in the Official Gazette, make regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder, to provide for all matters for which provisions is necessary or expedient for the purposes of implementing the provisions of this Act.	
40	(3) Every rule or regulation made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or regulation or both Houses agree that the rule or regulation should not be made, the rule or regulation shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule or regulation.	
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50	18. (1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may make such order or give such direction, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as may appear to be necessary or expedient for removing such difficulty.	Power to remove difficulties.
	(2) Every order made under this section shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament.	

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The purpose of this Bill is to strengthen India's secular and plural ethos by ensuring that every religion receives equal protection from deliberate insult or desecration, while upholding freedom of expression and to provide for a legal framework that safeguards the dignity of every faith, promotes mutual respect, and prevents acts which incite communal hatred or disturbance of communal harmony. It seeks to create an institutional framework for inter-faith dialogue, education, and prevention of communal hatred.

Hence, this Bill.

MEDHA VISHRAM KULKARNI.

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for the establishment of the National Commission for Inter-Faith Harmony consisting of a Chairperson and ten Members and their salaries, allowances and other terms and conditions of their service. Clause 4 of the Bill provides for the appointment of officers and staff of the Commission, their salaries and allowances and other terms and conditions of their service. Clause 5 of the Bill provides for the functions of the Commission *inter-alia* including the organization of awareness and educational programmes in schools, Universities, and through media for promoting mutual respect for different religions and peaceful co-existence. Clause 6 of the Bill provides for establishment of the National Inter-faith Harmony Fund for financing programmes promoting religious tolerance and peace. Clause 7 of the Bill provides for the Central Government to provide adequate funds to the Commission for carrying out the purposes of this Bill.

The Bill, therefore, if enacted, would involve expenditure, both of recurring and non-recurring nature, from the Consolidated Fund of India. However, it is difficult, at this juncture, to estimate the exact expenditure likely to be involved.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 17 of the Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules and the Commission with the approval of the Central Government to make regulations for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. Clause 18 of the Bill provides that the Central Government may make such order or give such direction, as may be necessary, for removing any difficulty to give effect to the provisions of this Bill.

As the rules or regulations or orders or directions will relate to matters of detail only, the delegation of legislative power is, therefore, of a normal character.

RAJYA SABHA

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to promote inter-faith harmony, ensure protection of all religions and sacred beliefs, and prevent acts intended to insult or malign any religion or religious community in the country in accordance with the secular and pluralistic spirit of the Constitution of India, and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

(Dr. Medha Vishram Kulkarni, M.P.)