

Orissa Freedom of Religion Act, 1967

Act 2 of 1968

An Act to provide for prohibition of conversion from one religion to another by the use of force or inducement or by fraudulent means and for matters incidental thereto.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Orissa in the Eighteenth Year of the Republic of India as follows:

1. Short title, extent and commencement

- (1) This Act may be called the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act, 1967.
- (2) It shall extend to the whole of the State of Orissa.
- (3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions

In this Act unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) "conversion" means renouncing one religion and adopting another;
- (b) "force" shall include a show of force or a threat for injury of any kind including threat of divine displeasure or social excommunication;
- (c) "fraud" shall include misrepresentation or any other fraudulent contrivance;
- (d) "inducement" shall include the offer of any gift or gratification, either in cash or in kind and shall also include the grant of any benefit, either pecuniary or otherwise;
- (e) "minor" means a person under eighteen years of age.

3. Prohibition of forcible conversion

No person shall convert or attempt to convert, either directly or otherwise, any person from one religious faith to another by the use of force or by inducement or by any fraudulent means nor shall any person abet any such conversion.

4. Punishment for contravention of the provisions of Section 3

Any person contravening the provisions contained in Section 3 shall, without prejudice to any civil liability, be punishable with imprisonment of either description which may extend to one year or with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees or with both;

Provided that in case the offence is committed in respect of a minor, a woman or a person belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes the punishment shall be imprisonment to the extent of two years and fine up to ten thousand rupees.

5. Offence to be cognizable

An offence under this Act shall be cognizable and shall not be investigated by an officer below the rank of an Inspector of Police.

6. Prosecution to be made with the sanction of District Magistrate

No prosecution for an offence under this Act shall be made without the sanction of the Magistrate of the District or such other authority, not below the rank of a Sub-divisional Officer, as may be authorised by him in that behalf.

7. Power to make rules

The State Government may make rules for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act.