

Madras High Court Ruling on Reservation Benefits Post Religious Conversion

A Madras High Court judgment on reservation benefits following religious conversion brought constitutional secularism and state neutrality into focus.

It is a legal principle examining whether welfare and reservation benefits should remain neutral to personal religious choices under Articles 15, 16, and 25.

KEY EXAM POINTS

- The **Madras High Court** issued a key ruling on eligibility for **reservation benefits** after an individual undergoes religious conversion.
- The judgment examined **freedom of conscience** guaranteed under **Article 25** of the Indian Constitution.
- **State neutrality** mandates that **fundamental rights** and affirmative action are not compromised by personal religious choices.
- The case highlighted the principle of **principled distance** where the State treats all religions equally without favoring any.
- The legal debate intersects caste identity, social backwardness, and individual rights under **Articles 15 and 16**.

STATICS & SYLLABUS FOCUS

Article 25 guarantees **freedom of conscience** and free profession, practice, and propagation of religion.

The landmark **S.R. Bommai v. Union of India** case (**1994**) declared secularism as a **Basic Structure** of the Constitution.

Article 15(1) prohibits state discrimination against citizens on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.

Article 16(2) bars discrimination in public employment based on religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, or residence.

The **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976** added the word 'Secular' to the Preamble of the Constitution.

The **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950** restricts Scheduled Caste status to individuals professing Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism.

Article 26 grants religious denominations the right to manage their own affairs in matters of religion.

REVISION FLASHCARD

Article 25 protects freedom of conscience, while S.R. Bommai case (1994) established secularism as part of the Basic Structure.

Syllabus Relevance: High relevance for Group 1 & Group 2 mains and prelims questions on Article 25, Secularism, and Reservation Policy.

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