

To,

Hon'ble Education Minister  
Government of India, New Delhi

**Subject :** Regarding compulsion on non-Christian students, including Hindus, to read the Bible, conduct various activities aligned to the Christian faith, etc. in Convent schools, across the country..

Sir,

Recently it came to light that 'Clarence High School', a convent school in Karnataka, had made it mandatory for all children to carry a copy of the Bible with them to school. This has restarted speculations as to what goes on in convent schools across the country. Convent schools have been around in India from the East India Company era, and till date the main aim of these missionary run schools seems to have been (covertly or overtly) 'religious conversion' of the students. It is a pity that, across the nation, 10 lakh Hindus convert every year. Convent schools try to imbue the seeds of conversion in the minds of students from an early age. This mental and intellectual conversion which begins in school ends with the whole family converting to a different religion. Due to this, some towns, talukas, districts and states are becoming Christian majority. For example, when India became independent, out of the seven Hindu-majority states in Northeast India, today Nagaland has 88 per cent Christians, Mizoram 87 per cent Christians, Meghalaya 75 per cent Christians, Manipur 42 per cent Christians and Arunachal Pradesh also has a sizeable Christian population. So out of these 7 states and in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, the Nicobar Island (70% Christians) have a Christian majority. These statistics are for the year 2011. In the last 11 years, another state or two may have been added to these stats. Convent schools are an important part of this serious issue. This can not go unnoticed. We wish to present certain points for your consideration...

1. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution bestows the freedom of religion to every citizen. According to this, Hindu students cannot be forced to learn the Bible in any school in India, even if it is a 'convent school'. To do so would be unconstitutional.
2. Article 29 and Article 30 of the Indian Constitution have provisions for imparting religious education in minority educational institutions. So it is understandable if Christian students are taught the Bible. But it would be religious compulsion if the institute insists that the Hindu students, who may be in majority in the school, also should mandatorily study the Bible. This is gross misuse of the Constitutional provisions.
3. If the majority of the students in these 'convent schools', which have been accorded status of a minority institution, are Hindus, it continues to enjoy the status of a minority institute due to the provisions in the Constitution. There is a need to de-recognise the minority status of such 'convent schools' where majority of the students do not belong to that particular minority.
4. It is hypocrisy and injustice to deprive Hindus of their religious rights on the one hand and to make Bible compulsory for Hindu children in Convent educational institutions on the other.
5. Forcing students who do not want to learn the Bible or students who do not profess any religious affiliations to learn a certain scripture, the Bible, violates individual freedom under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.
6. Globally, 21st June is celebrated as 'Yoga Day'; however, it is opposed by convent schools as well as madarasas. 'Yoga Day 'is celebrated enthusiastically in various countries which have different state religions. However, in India, certain schools refuse to participate on the grounds that Yoga is a part of Hindu culture and the school is secular. If so, how can students of all religions be forced to only study the Bible in a school in a secular country?
7. Although various states have only announced that the teachings from 'Bhagavad Gita' will be incorporated in school curricula, there is widespread opposition to this

alleged 'saffronisation of education'. However, there is no opposition to the mandatory inclusion of Bible studies. This is religious persecution against Hindus.

8. Forcing children and adolescents to learn the Bible and to practice Christianity is a form of religious persecution and is an offence under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005.

Based on the above observations, we table the following demands to expose and curb the malpractices that are underway in Convent schools...

- A. The central government should enquire into what exactly is being taught in convent schools as well as the financial resources of convent schools.
- B. In convent schools, Hindu children are forced to learn the Bible while restrictions are imposed on Hindu practices. E.g. Not allowing boys to wear tilak, not allowing girls to wear kumkum-tikli, not allowing mehendi on hands/feet, restrictions on wearing lockets of Deities, restrictions on wearing traditional dress, forcing children to pray to Jesus. Also there is anecdotal evidence that such schools set their examination timetables around prominent Hindu festivals. The government should appoint an enquiry committee into the malpractices taking place in convent schools and revoke the minority institution status of those found guilty.
- C. There have been numerous incidents of physical abuse of children in the church and associated institutions. In this context, it should be investigated whether the students in the convent schools were sexually abused by the clergy and strict action should be taken against the culprits.
- D. To this end, the Central Government should bring in appropriate amendments in Articles 29 & 30 of the Constitution to ensure that no minority institute can misuse the laws. This being a Hindu majority nation, the said amendments to these Articles must provide for Hindu religious institutes to flourish with adequate government aid.

E. To break the monopoly of 'Convent Schools', government schools with good facilities should be set up by the Central and State Governments, so that Hindu majority students can study there.

Awaiting your response,

Yours sincerely,

Copy to

1. Hon'ble Home Minister, Government of India, New Delhi.
2. Hon'ble Union Minister of Women and Child Development, New Delhi.
3. Hon'ble Secretary of Education, Government of India, New Delhi.