

THE FREEDOM OF MARRIAGE AND ASSOCIATION AND PROHIBITION OF CRIMES IN THE NAME OF HONOUR BILL, 2023

A Bill, to provide for, in the interests of protecting individual liberty and preventing victimization, prohibition of crimes in the name of honour, unlawful assemblies and other conduct interfering with the freedom of marriage and association.

To provide justice, compensation and rehabilitation in in crimes committed in the name of honour with regard to caste, faith, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, class, race, Tribe, indigeneity status and tradition and for the matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Chapter I

1. Short title, extent and commencement.

1. This Act may be called The Freedom of Marriage and Association and Prohibition of Crimes in the Name of Honour Act 2022.
2. It extends to the whole of India.
3. It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Definitions.- In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,-

- a) "Person" means any person who has completed 18 years of age.
- b) "Child" means any person below the age of eighteen years.
- c) 'Accused is any person or persons, whether they are members of the victim's family, member of the victims' community, caste, clan, race, Tribe or indigenous community, member of any religious council, or caste panchayat (by whatever name called) or katta panchayat, or participates, abets, finances or incites or is hired to commit such an act as is prohibited under this Act;
- d) "social and economic boycott" includes all such acts as are calculated to lead to the boycott or enforcement of social or economic sanctions and includes the following acts, namely: -
 - a) Bringing pressure, coercion, threats on the couple, married or associated persons, dependents, relatives, families or their communities to leave the settlement, household, village or area of residence concerned;

- b) A refusal to permit a person to render to other person or receive from them any customary service or to abstain from social relations that one would maintain with other person or to isolate them from others;²¹
 - c) Indulging in any conduct which will impede or is likely to impede, access to markets, community facilities, places of worship or any other necessities of life;
 - d) attempting/threatening to divest or dispossess the couple or their families of any rights to any land or property and / or imposition of fine or penalty of any kind;
 - e) a refusal to deal with, work for hire or do business;³
 - f) to deny opportunities including access to services or contractual opportunities for rendering service for consideration; or to refuse to do anything on the terms on which things would be commonly done in the ordinary course of business; or
 - g) to abstain from any professional or business relations;
 - h) Preventing or obstructing the victim from observing any social or religious custom or usage or ceremony or from taking a part in a social, religious or community functions, congregation, assembly, meeting or procession;
 - i) Refusal of the right to perform marriage, funeral or other religious ceremonies and rites which the members of the victim's own community usually and ordinarily perform;
 - j) Shunning or refusal to engage in the society or cut social or commercial ties off with the victim or the victim's family;
 - k) Preventing or obstructing access to or usage of any place used or intended to be used for a charitable, religious or public purpose;
 - l) Preventing or obstructing from having access to or using the facilities of any school, educational institution, medical institution, community hall, club hall, cemetery, burial ground or any other place used by, or intended to be used by, or for the benefit of, victim's community; or any other public place;
 - m) Inciting or provocation or encouragement to any member of the community, directly or indirectly, to sever social, religious, professional or business relations with the victim or their family or members of their community;
 - n) Preventing or obstructing from entering, lodging in or otherwise using any place of worship or pilgrimage, which is ordinarily open to the members of victim's community;
 - o) Creating or causing to create cultural obstacle or compel the victim to wear any particular type of clothes or use any specific language;
 - p) Expulsion or causing to expel the victim from their community;
 - q) Committing any other similar acts which amount to social boycott
- e) "marriage" includes a marriage that has been solemnized under any law and a marriage that is proposed or intended;

- f) Association: means any intimate association of a person with another person of any sex or gender, including as a partner, friend, companion, or having a relationship with another person, and includes any interactions or meetings with another person and includes relationships within traditional *hijra* gharanas
- g) Caste / Community panchayats: means any caste or religious community groups of persons of the same lineage, religion or caste, registered or not, which may be called by another name or description including Khap panchayats or a ‘gavki’, which control personal and social behavior of any member and collectively pass orders without any legal authority against persons for acts of marriage and association with a person based on caste, religion, gotra, or against the wishes of the community members, by issuing oral or written dictums.
- h) *Katta panchayats*: means local groups that are not necessarily based on caste hierarchies, which assemble and issue unlawful punishments against persons;
- i) “practices In the name of ‘Honour’”: a collection of practices used predominantly to control the behaviour of victims, especially but not limited to women and girls within families or castes, in order to protect supposed cultural, religious and traditional beliefs, values and social norms in the name of ‘honour’.
- j) “Victim”: means any person, including a minor, who has suffered any physical, mental, psychological, emotional, or monetary harm in relation to marriage or association under this Act and includes the victim’s family members, guardians, or any one supporting or sympathizing with the victim.
- k) “Gender identity” means each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body which may involve a freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or functions by medical, surgical or other means and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms. Gender identity, therefore, refers to an individual’s self-identification as a man, woman, transgender or other identified category.¹
- l) “Sexual orientation” means a person’s capacity for sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender and includes homosexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality or any other sexual orientation;
- m) The words and expressions used but not defined in this Act and defined in the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), as the case may be, shall be deemed to have the meanings respectively assigned to them in that enactment.

¹ Definition taken from the *NALSA v. Union of India* judgement of the Supreme Court

Chapter II

Freedom to Marry and of Association

3. Freedom to Marry and of Association

- a) All persons have the right to life, the right to liberty and freedom of expression, and a right of association, movement and bodily autonomy. They have a right to choose their own partners, the right to marry or to associate with any person of their choice.
- b) The consent of a person's family, religious community, caste or clan is not a condition precedent for any adult person to enter into a marriage or a relationship.
- c) Any person shall have the right to marry any another person, irrespective of caste, religion, tribe, indigenous status, community or gender identity and there shall be no interference in a person's right to marry by anyone.
- d) Any action to prevent or interference with the exercise of the rights referred to in subsection (1) by any person or a group of persons shall be an offence under the provisions of this Act.
- e) **Declaration by a Couple of intention to be together:** Any two persons desirous of marrying each other or being in a relationship with each other or associating with each other shall be entitled to declare their age and willingness to be together, in oral or in writing to any District Magistrate or any Nodal officer as designated for this purpose by the District Magistrate, who shall send the said information to the nearest police station who will maintain strict confidentiality and no punitive action shall be taken by the Police and / or any other authority or at the instance of any party, including the family members or relatives or community members of either party or any third party, against the said couple. Furthermore, the District Magistrate must be obligated by law to ensure police protection in jurisdiction to the couple or either of them.

Chapter III

Prohibition of Crimes in the Name of 'Honour'

4. Prohibition of Crimes in the name of Honour:

No person or persons shall commit any acts or practices in the name of caste, culture, custom, religion, tradition or so-called "honour" against any person or persons on the ground that the person has transgressed cultural, religious, social or traditional norms or customs. Such acts which would amount to crimes in the name of honour and would include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Forcibly declaring the couple who have got married as a brother and sister
- (2) Excommunicating, ostracization or forcible removal or displacement / eviction of the couple or their family or relatives from the village, town or area they live in

- (3) Harassing the couple or either of them not to meet or associate with or live with each other, either physically or through any means of communication
- (4) Forcibly making them drink urine and feces
- (5) Publicly humiliating and degrading the couple or persons associated with them
- (6) Preventing the exercise of the right to marry as provided in sub-section (1) of section 3 under this Act
- (7) Committing any atrocity as defined under the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 as amended in 2015
- (8) Committing any other act or acts of harassment or intimidation, whether physical or mental or psychological against any victim, the couple, or persons supporting them.
- (9) Raising funds for promoting/attempting to/committing crimes under this Act
- (10) Asking the couple or anyone associated with them or harbouring them to pay a fine
- (11) Imposing social and economic boycott on the couple or their family or anyone associated with them
- (12) Confiscation of a person's phone, laptop and any means of communication, certificates, documents, IDs, other important personal effects
- (13) Freezing the bank accounts of the couple or either of them
- (14) Causing the termination of the job of the couple or either of them by their employer
- (15) Causing disturbance or disruption in places of employment and education of the victim
- (16) Burning the house/crops/properties of the victim(s), breaking or damaging properties belonging to them, and encroaching or forceful occupation of their properties
- (17) Seizing properties of the victim(s) after the victim(s) has left or forced to leave the village, town or area they live in.
- (18) Abducting/kidnapping the victim and / or anyone associated with them^[9]
- (19) Causing physical harm or injury to the couple or either of them or anyone connected/related with them
- (20) Threatening the couple or either of them or their family or anyone associated with them of retributive action of any kind whatsoever
- (21) Individually or collectively exhorting or bringing pressure or psychological trauma directly or indirectly upon any person or persons to prevent or disapprove of the marriage or association which is objected to, or to generate an environment of hostility towards such couple or either of them or their supporters,^[10]
- (22) Confining any person illegally, or placing them under house arrest
- (23) Publication of any defamatory and false material or information about the couple in print or online media including social media and Whatsapp
- (24) Committing act of sexual violence or sexual harassment against any person
- (25) Forcing or causing an abortion or miscarriage on any person
- (26) Forced marriage of either or both persons against their consent
- (27) Abuse, with an intent to humiliate, using caste names in public
- (28) Spreading or inciting hate through oral/technological/written speech

- (29) Parading the victim naked or semi-naked or making them wear a garland with slippers/sandals through the village, or disrobing them, shaving their head, tying up and hitting them, including their family members or anyone supporting them or connected to them
- (30) Causing hurt to the couple or either of them or a member of their family by acid attack
- (31) Accusations of witchcraft and violence meted in the name of witchcraft

5. Prohibition of Unlawful Assembly:-

No group of five or more persons shall gather, assemble or congregate at any time with the view or intention to deliberate on, or condemn or prevent or punish any marriage or association of any person or persons on the ground that such marriage or association has dishonoured the caste, tribe, indigenous status, community, religion, tradition or is against the wishes of the family or community and this would also include marriage or association of persons when either of the person's family or community is not accepting of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

6. Power of court to issue injunctions

1. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Act, if, on an application or complaint from any person or persons, a Judicial Magistrate of the first class or a Metropolitan Magistrate/Special Fast Track Court is satisfied that a crime in the name of honour has been committed or is about to be committed, the Magistrate shall issue an injunction against any person or persons including a Caste Panchayat to restrain them from committing such act and providing protection to the persons against whom such acts were or are intended to be committed.
2. A complaint under sub-section (1) may be made by any person or organization having knowledge or information or reason to believe relating to the likelihood of a crime in the name of honour taking place.
3. The Court of the Judicial Magistrate of the first class or the Metropolitan Magistrate or the Special Fast Track Court may also take suo motu cognizance on the basis of any reliable report or information received.
4. Provided that in the case of any urgency, the Court shall have the power to issue an ad-interim and ex-parte injunction or order or direction, without giving any notice under this section.
5. An injunction, order or direction issued under sub-section (1) may be confirmed or vacated after giving notice and hearing the party against whom the injunction was issued.
6. Whoever knowing that an injunction has been issued under sub-section (1) against them disobeys such injunction shall be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or with fine which may extend to one lakh rupees or with both.
7. The state government may confer such powers and impose such duties on the District Magistrate or any other authorities, as may be necessary to ensure that the provisions of the Act are properly carried out.

Chapter IV

Offences and Penalties

7. Crimes in the name of Honour

Whoever causes any crimes in the name of honour as defined in Section 4, not amounting to honour killing or grievous hurt and injury as provided in sections 8 and 9 below, shall be punishable with imprisonment of a term not less than three years and shall also be liable to fine, which may extend to three lakh rupees.

8. **Killing in the name of 'Honour'**: Whoever causes death through any means or commits any such act that results in death of a couple or either of them or any person in the name of 'honour', including assisting or abetting any person to commit suicide, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for life and with fine of a minimum of Rs. 10 Lakhs or confiscation of property of similar value.

9. Grievous Hurt and Injury:

1. Whoever causes grievous hurt, including loss of limb and causing disability, to a couple or either of them in the name of honour shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than ten years, but which may extend to imprisonment for life and with fine which may extend to five lakh rupees.
2. Whoever causes simple hurt to a couple or either of them in the name of 'honour' shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three years, but which may extend to five years and with fine which may extend to three lakh rupees.

Explanation.- The expressions 'grievous hurt' and 'simple hurt' shall have the same meaning as is given to it in sections 319 and 320 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Central Act No. 45 of 1860).

10. Unlawful assembly:

Any person or persons participating in any unlawful assembly as described in Section 5 including every member participating therein directly or indirectly, such an act of participation shall be punishable shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not less than six months but which may extend to five years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to one lakh rupees.

11. **Criminal Intimidation.**- Whoever including any member of an unlawful assembly indulges in criminal intimidation of any person or persons or their family members or supporters, for their marriage or association or for separation, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not less than three years but which may extend to five years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to five lakh rupees:

Provided that if the threat be to cause harm or injury of the description referred to in second part of section 506 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Central Act No. 45 of 1860), the maximum imprisonment shall extend to seven years.

Explanation: The expression 'criminal intimidation' shall have the same meaning as given to it in Section 503 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

12. **Offence under the Indian Penal Code:** Whoever commits any offence under this Act being a crime in the name of honour, which is an offence under the Indian Penal Code 1860 (Central Act 45 of 1860) and is punishable with imprisonment of ten years or more, shall be punishable with imprisonment for life.
13. **Application of certain provisions of the Indian Penal Code:** Subject to the other provisions of this Act, the provisions of Section 340, Section 351, Section 354, Section 355, Section 357, Section 359, Section 326A, and Section 312 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), shall, so far as may be, applicable for the purposes of this Act as they apply for the purposes of the Indian Penal Code^[11].
14. When the Court imposes a sentence of fine or a sentence of which fine forms a part, the Court shall when passing judgment, order the whole or any part of the fine recovered to be paid in the payment to any person of compensation for any loss or injury caused by the offence. The Court may also order financial compensation equaling value of property of the victim(s) if property of the victim is in an area where the victims might be attacked or is not allowed to return to.
15. **Monetary Relief:**
 - (1) In addition to punishment and fine, the Court may direct the accused to pay monetary relief to meet the expenses incurred and losses suffered by the victim and any child of the victim as a result of the crime committed in the name of honour and such relief may include but is not limited to—
 - a. the loss of earnings;
 - b. the medical expenses;
 - c. the loss caused due to the destruction, damage or removal of any property from the control of the victim; and
 - d. the maintenance for the victim as well as any children
 - (2) The monetary relief granted under this section shall be adequate, fair and reasonable.
 - (3) The Magistrate shall send a copy of the order for monetary relief made under sub-section (1) to the parties to the application and to the in charge of the police station within the local limits of whose jurisdiction the respondent resides.
 - (4) The respondent shall pay the monetary relief granted to the aggrieved person within the period specified in the order under sub-section (1).
 - (5) Upon the failure on the part of the Accused to make payment in terms of the order under sub-section (1), the Court may direct the employer or a debtor of the accused, to directly pay to the victim or to deposit with the court a portion of the wages or salaries or debt due to or accrued to the credit of the accused, which amount may be adjusted towards the monetary relief payable by the accused.

16. Whoever knowingly or having reason to believe that an offence has been committed under this Chapter, causes any evidence of the commission of that offence to disappear with the intention of screening the offender from legal punishment, or with that intention gives any information respecting the offence which they know or believe to be false, shall be punishable with the punishment provided for that offence;

17. **Abetment of an offence:** A person abets an offence, who--

First.-- Instigates any person to do that offence; or

Secondly.-- Engages with one or more other person or persons in any conspiracy for the doing of that offence, if an act or illegal omission takes place in pursuance of that conspiracy, and in order to the doing of that offence; or

Thirdly.-- Intentionally aids, by any act or illegal omission, the doing of that offence.

Explanation I.--A person who, by willful misrepresentation, or by willful concealment of a material fact, which bound to disclose, voluntarily causes or procures, or attempts to cause or procure a thing to be done, is said to instigate the doing of that offence.

Explanation II.--Whoever, either prior to or at the time of commission of an act, does anything in order to facilitate the commission of that act, and thereby facilitates the commission thereof, is said to aid the doing of that act.

Explanation III.--Whoever employ, harbours, receives or transports a victim, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of a position, vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of any offence under this Act, is said to aid the doing of that act.

Explanation IV.- The expressions 'abetment' and conspiracy' shall have the same meaning as is given to it in sections 107 and 120A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Central Act No. 45 of 1860).

18. **Punishment for Abetment:** Whoever abets any offence under this Act, if the act abetted is committed in consequence of the abetment, shall be punished with punishment provided for that offence.

Explanation.-- An act or offence is said to be committed in consequence of abetment, when it is committed in consequence of the instigation, or in pursuance of the conspiracy or with the aid, which constitutes the abetment.

19. **Punishment for Attempt to commit offence**

Whoever attempts to commit any offence punishable under this Act or to cause such an offence to be committed, and in such attempt, does any act towards the commission of the offence, shall be punished with imprisonment of any description provided for the offence, for a term which may extend to one half of the imprisonment for life or, as the case may be, one-half of the longest term of imprisonment provided for that offence or with fine or with both.

20. **Presumption as to offences:**

- (1) Where a person is prosecuted for committing or abetting or attempting to commit any offence under this Act, the Court shall presume, that such person has committed or abetted or attempted to commit the offence, as the case may be unless the contrary is proved.
- (2) In a prosecution for an offence under this Act, if it is proved that the accused rendered [any financial assistance in relation to the offences committed by a person accused of], or reasonably suspected of, committing, an offence under this Chapter, the Court shall presume, unless the contrary is proved, that such person had abetted the offence;
- (3) If group of persons are accused of committing an offence under this Act and if it is proved that the offence committed was a sequel to any existing dispute regarding marriage or association of any person, it shall be presumed that the offence was committed in furtherance of the common intention or in prosecution of the common object.

21. Burden of Proof:

Where any person(s) is prosecuted for offences under this Act, the burden of proving that he or they have not committed the offence or offences under the said sections shall be on him or them.

22. Offences to be cognizable, non-bailable and non- compoundable.-

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Central Act No. 2 of 1974), all offences under this Act shall be cognizable, non- bailable and non- compoundable.

23. Confidentiality of the Victims / Complainants

The identity and addresses of the complainants and victims shall not be published, communicated or made known to the public, press and media in any manner including social media platforms: Provided that information may be disseminated regarding the justice secured to any victim under this Act without disclosing the name, address, identity or any other particulars calculated to lead to the identification of the victim(s) and witnesses.

Chapter V

Rights of Victims and Witnesses

23. Rights of Victims and Witnesses and their Protection

- (1) It shall be the duty and responsibility of the State to make arrangements for the protection of victims, their dependents, and witnesses against any kind of intimidation or coercion or inducement or violence or threats of violence.
- (2) A victim or their dependent shall have the right to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any Court proceeding including any bail proceeding and the Public Prosecutor or the State Government shall inform the victim about any proceedings under this Act.

- (3) A victim or her dependent shall be entitled to be heard at any proceeding under this Act in respect of bail, discharge, release, parole, conviction or sentence of an accused or any connected proceedings or arguments and file written submission on conviction, acquittal or sentencing.
- (4) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974), the Court trying a case under this Act shall provide to a victim, her dependent, informant or witnesses--
 - a) Complete protection to secure the ends of justice;
 - b) Travelling and maintenance expenses during investigation, inquiry and trial;
 - c) Social-economic rehabilitation during investigation, inquiry and trial including relocation where necessary.
- (5) The Court shall periodically review the protection being offered to victims and witnesses and pass appropriate orders to modify any protection measures if necessary.
- (6) The Court may, on an application made by a victim, informant or witness in any proceedings before it or by the Public Prosecutor in relation to such victim, informant or witness or on its own motion, take such measures including but not limited to:
 - a) concealing the names and addresses of the witnesses in its orders or judgments or in any records of the case accessible to the public,
 - b) issuing directions for non-disclosure of the identity and addresses of the witnesses or
 - c) providing relocation to the victim and / or witnesses;
 - d) take immediate action in respect of any complaint relating to harassment of a victim, informant or witness and on the same day, if necessary, pass appropriate orders for protection and
 - e) any other measures it deems appropriate
- (7) It shall be the duty of the Investigating Officer and the Station House Officer to record the complaint of victim, informant or witnesses against any kind of intimidation, coercion or inducement or violence or threats of violence, whether given orally or in writing, and a photocopy of the First Information Report shall be immediately given to them free of cost.
- (8) The Police shall ensure that there shall be no destruction of evidence in any manner in all crimes and FIRs registered under this Act.
- (9) It shall be the duty of the State Government to frame a scheme for protection and rehabilitation of victims and witnesses under this Act. Such scheme may include provision of immediate relief in cash or kind to victims, to provide relief in respect of death or injury or damage to property; to arrange food or water or clothing or shelter or medical aid or transport facilities or daily allowances to victims; to ensure that these shelters and transport facilities are accessible to persons with disability; to ensure that these resources are provided to the victims and witnesses without discrimination on the basis of caste, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or age; to provide the maintenance expenses to victims; to provide protection to victims or their dependents and witnesses from intimidation and harassment and any other measures. Such a scheme will also ensure that the child of a couple that has been killed in the name of honour is fairly compensated and rehabilitated as determined by the Court.
- (10) It shall be the right of the victims or their dependents, to take assistance from the Non-Government Organizations, social workers or advocates.

- (11) **Victim Compensation Fund:** Every State Government in co-ordination with the Central Government shall include in its existing Victim Compensation Scheme, the funds for the purpose of compensation to the victim or their dependents who have suffered loss or injury as a result of crimes committed in the name of honour under this Act and all provisions of Section 357A of the Cr.P.C. would be applicable in this regard.

Chapter VI

Positive Obligations and Duties

24. Power to prohibit certain acts and taking preventive measures.-

- (1) Any person(s) can make complaints, file representations or letters to the Sub Divisional Magistrate or the jurisdictional police seeking protection against any unlawful assembly or against any other person who have been or are likely to object to any marriage or association or commit crimes in the name of honour as referred to in this Act.
- (2) Upon receiving such complaint or representation, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate or District Magistrate shall immediately and not later than 6 hours take appropriate steps to provide protection to the said person(s), and shall give appropriate directions for the same to the police. The police, on receiving such a complaint, or request for protection, shall immediately and not later than 6 hours, provide protection and safety measures to the said persons, in such manner as they deem fit, but not limited to providing a shelter home or by any other means.
- (3) The Sub-Divisional Magistrate or the District Magistrate shall be in direct supervision of the protection and safety of the persons concerned and shall supervise the same.
- (4) If information about any proposed unlawful assembly or gathering of a Caste/Community Panchayat or a Katta Panchayat in respect of crimes to be committed against any victim/s in the name of honour, is received by any police officer or any officer of the District Administration, they shall forthwith intimate the jurisdictional Deputy Superintendent of Police and Superintendent of Police.
 - a) On receiving such information, the Deputy Superintendent of Police (or such senior police officer as identified by the State Governments with respect to the area/district) shall immediately communicate to the members of the Caste Panchayat that convening of such meeting/gathering is not permissible and prohibit from going ahead with such a meeting. Additionally, the said officer shall issue appropriate directions to the Officer In-charge of the jurisdictional Police Station to be vigilant and, if necessary, to deploy adequate police force for prevention of assembly of the proposed gathering.
 - b) In addition to the steps under Section 6 of this Act, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate or District Magistrate shall immediately issue an order prohibit the convening of such unlawful assembly and the doing of any act towards the commission of an offence under this Act by any person in any area specified thereunder and such order shall be immediately published in a local newspaper and delivered to such persons of the said unlawful assembly;

- c) The Sub-Divisional Magistrate or District Magistrate may take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to such order(s) including directions to the police authorities concerned.
- d) The District Magistrate shall also take such steps as may be necessary to ensure the safety of the victims as to the illegal decisions taken by the unlawful assembly.
- e) Whoever contravenes any order made under sub-section (4) shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but may extend to two years and with fine.
- f) If the Deputy Superintendent of Police has reason to believe that the assembly/gathering cannot be prevented and/or is likely to cause harm to the potential victims, he or she shall forthwith submit a proposal to the District Magistrate/Sub-Divisional Magistrate of the District/ Competent Authority of the concerned area for issuing orders to take preventive steps under the provisions of Cr.P.C. including by invoking prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC and causing arrest of the participants in the assembly under Section 151 CrPC.
- g) Despite the preventive measures taken by the police, if any unlawful assembly takes place and any such assembly or Caste Panchayat/Khap Panchayat passes any diktat to take action against the victims and/or their family members, the Officer In-Charge of the police station having jurisdiction shall cause to lodge an F.I.R. immediately under the provisions of this Act and the appropriate provisions of the Indian Penal Code including Sections 141, 143, 503 and 506 of the IPC.
- h) Upon registration of F.I.R., intimation shall be simultaneously given to the Superintendent of Police/ Deputy Superintendent of Police who, in turn, shall ensure that effective investigation of the crime is taken to its logical end with promptitude.
- i) The District Magistrate/Superintendent of Police must deal with the complaint regarding threat administered to such couple/family with utmost sensitivity. If necessary, they may be provided with logistical support for solemnizing their marriage and/or for being duly registered under police protection, if they so desire. After the marriage, if the couple so desire, in addition to adequate protection, they can be provided accommodation on payment of nominal charges in a safe house initially for a period of one month to be extended on monthly basis but not exceeding one year in aggregate, depending on their threat assessment on a case-to-case basis.
- j) The initial inquiry regarding the complaint received from the couple or upon receiving information from any other source that the relationship/marriage of such couple is opposed by their family members/local community/Caste Panchayat shall be entrusted by the District Magistrate/ Superintendent of Police to an officer not below the rank of Additional Superintendent of Police. Such an officer shall conduct a preliminary inquiry in order to ascertain the authenticity, nature and gravity of threat and shall immediately submit a report to the Superintendent of Police not later than 7 days,
- k) The Superintendent of Police, upon receipt of such report, shall direct the Deputy Superintendent of Police in-charge of the concerned sub-division to cause to register an F.I.R. against the persons threatening the couple(s)/victims and, if necessary, may also invoke Section 151 of the CrPC. Additionally, the Deputy

Superintendent of Police shall personally supervise the progress of investigation and ensure that the same is completed and charge sheet is filed within 30 days.

- (5) In a case where the victim(s) has/have been killed in the name of honour, as defined under Section 8 of this Act, the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police shall ensure the following:
 - a) An intimation must be given to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) within 24 hours,
 - b) That a post-mortem shall be conducted of the body by a panel of at least two doctors and the post-mortem report along with videography and Magisterial Inquest Report, shall be submitted to Special fast Track Court within 30 days of incident;
 - c) The police and District Magistrate shall ensure that the body of the deceased is not disposed nor are the last rites for the victim(s) performed without the written consent of the victim's family and acknowledgment of the said letter by the service provider as mentioned in Section 34 of this Act.
- (6) In a case where the victim(s) is a woman or a transgender person, the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police shall give an intimation to the National Commission for Women and the State Commission for Women within 24 hours.
- (7) In a case where the victim(s) is a person from the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police shall give an intimation to the National Commission for Scheduled Caste or National Commission for Scheduled Caste respectively and the State Commission for Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe within 24 hours.
- (8) The state government will be responsible for creating and maintaining the post of mental health counsellor at the Special Cell under Section 31(5) of this Act and in the safe houses under Section 25 of this Act. The counsellor, who may be a mental health professional, mental health nurse or a psychiatric social worker, will provide counselling to victim(s) who may have been threatened or harmed in a way defined under this Act.
- (9) The State governments shall introduce monetary and other schemes to incentivise inter-caste and inter-faith marriages between persons.
- (10) Every official called upon to act in terms of the above provisions shall be accountable for their lapses, omissions or failures and the concerned State Governments shall provide for and take such action against them as may be deemed fit for their lapses, omissions or failure to act.

25. Protection Measures and Safe Houses:

1. The State Government shall establish a safe house at each District Headquarter for persons seeking protection against crimes in the name of honour. Such safe houses will act as shelter homes with facilities of lodging and boarding, medical and counselling for couple and their families who have faced violence in their place of residence.
2. Immediate steps shall be taken by the police to provide security to the couple/family and, if necessary, to remove them to a safe house within the same district or elsewhere keeping in mind their safety.
3. The safe houses may be placed under the supervision of the jurisdictional District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police. Additionally, the safe houses will also be

monitored by a CCTV camera at the entrance and the common rooms to ensure the safety and security of the couples.

4. In the safe houses, the couple shall be able to stay together, and shall have access and the facilities to meet with their lawyers or members from any non-governmental organisations providing them support and assistance.
5. Such safe houses will ensure that in cases requiring immediate medical attention, any women or transgender persons needing special assistance are provided the same, including from the One Stop Centres established by Ministry of Women and Child Development.

26. Service Providers

(1) Subject to such rules as may be made in this behalf, any voluntary association registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (21 of 1860) or a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 (1 of 1956) or any other law for the time being in force with the objective providing of legal aid, medical, financial or other assistance shall register itself with the State Government as a service provider for the purposes of this Act

(2) A service provider registered under sub-section (1) shall have the power to—

- a) record the incident report in the prescribed form if the victim so desires and forward a copy thereof to the Court and the state Nodal Officer having jurisdiction in the area where the crime took place;
 - b) ensure that the victim is provided shelter in a safe house, if so required and forward a report of the lodging of the victim in the safe house to the police station within the local limits of which the crime took place.
- (3) No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against any service provider or any member of the service provider who is, or who is deemed to be, acting or purporting to act under this Act, for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done in the exercise of powers or discharge of functions under this Act towards the prevention of the commission of crime committed in the name of honour.

27. Accountability measures:

- (1) Any failure by either the police or district officer/officials, including Marriage Officers^{[17](#)}, to comply with the aforesaid directions, shall be considered as an act of deliberate negligence and/or misconduct for which an enquiry will be conducted by the department and which will be completed within 6 months.
- (2) In addition to imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but which may extend to one year, disciplinary action shall be taken against the concerned officials if it is found that (i) such official(s) did not prevent the incident, despite having prior knowledge of it, or (ii) where the incident had already occurred, such official(s) did not promptly apprehend and institute criminal proceedings against the culprits.

28. Mandatory Reporting: Obligation of persons to report about commission of offences under this Bill –

1. All State and central government officers are required and empowered to assist the police in the execution of the provisions of this Bill or any rule or order made hereunder.
2. All village officers and such other officers as may be specified by the District Magistrate in relation to any area and the inhabitants of such area shall, if they have reason to believe

or have the knowledge that any of the offences mentioned under this Act are about to be, or have been committed in the area shall mandatorily report such fact to the nearest police station forthwith.

3. Whoever contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) shall be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years and shall also be liable to fine.

29. Appointment of State Nodal Officer

The State Government shall nominate a nodal officer of the level of a Secretary to the State Government for coordinating the functioning of the District Magistrates and Superintendent of Police or the officers authorized by them responsible for implementing the provisions of the Act. By the end of the every quarter, the nodal officer shall review the position of cases registered under the Act, various kinds of measures adopted for providing immediate relief in cash or kind or both to the victims or their dependent; adequacy of immediate facilities like rationing, clothing, shelter, legal aid, travelling allowance, daily allowance, and transport facilities provided to the victims or his/her dependents; performance of non-Governmental organizations, the Special Cell, various committees and the public servants responsible for implementing the provisions of the Act.

30. Duties of the State and Central Government to ensure effective Implementation of the Act²².-

- (1) The State Governments should forthwith identify Districts, Sub-Divisions and/or villages where instances of crimes in the name of honour or assembly of Caste Panchayats have been reported in the last five years.
- (2) The Secretary, Home Department of the concerned States shall issue directives/advisories to the Superintendent of Police of the concerned Districts for ensuring that the Officers In charge of the Police Stations of the identified areas are extra cautious if any instance of inter-caste or inter-religious marriage within their jurisdiction comes to their notice.
- (3) The Superintendent of Police of the concerned Districts shall issue directives to the Officers in charge of the Police Stations to investigate any case of suicides that take place in the districts in the event such an incident may be a case of a crime committed in the name of honour.
- (4) For the effective implementation of the Act, the central government shall designate Ministry of Social Justice to oversee, supervise and monitor the effective implementation of the Act.
- (5) The Home Department of the central government shall work in coordination with the State Governments and take measures to create awareness and sensitize law enforcement agencies, government departments, the police, Judges and Special Public Prosecutors for the implementation of this Act and also for the prevention of crimes in the name of honour.

- (6) The Home Department of the central government shall work in co-ordination with the State government to include awareness and prevention of crimes in the name of honour, in the school curriculum and textbooks in the public education system, media, and other forms for spreading awareness.
- (7) The State Governments shall create a Special Cell for prevention of crimes in the name of 'honour' in every District comprising of the Superintendent of Police, the District Social Welfare Officer and District Adi-Dravidar Welfare Officer to receive petitions/complaints of harassment of and threat to couples of inter-caste marriages.
- (8) These Special Cells shall establish a dedicated 24-hour telephone and email helpline to receive and register such complaints and to provide necessary assistance/advice and protection to the couple.
- (9) Constitution of State Committees: -
 - a) In each State, the Chief Minister shall set up a monitoring committee to review the implementation of the provisions of the Act, relief and rehabilitation facilities provided to the victims and other matters connected therewith, prosecution of cases under the Act, role of different officers/agencies responsible for implementing the provisions of the Act and various reports received by the State government.
 - b) The State-Level Monitoring Committee shall consist of:
 - a. The Chief Minister/Administrator - Chairman in case of a State under President's Rule, Governor - Chairman),
 - b. The Home Minister, and Women and Child Department Minister,
 - c. 5 elected Members of Parliament from the State and Members of the State Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council;
 - d. The Commissioner of Police;
 - e. Chief Secretary, Department of Women and Child Department
 - f. 3 members of non-governmental organisations working on crimes in the name of honour;
 - c) The State-level committee shall meet at least once in six months.
- (10) Constitution of District Vigilance and Monitoring Committees: -
 - a) In each district within the State, the District Magistrate Revenue Division Officer shall set up a monitoring committee p, relief and rehabilitation facilities provided to the victims and other matters connected therewith, prosecution of cases under the Act, role of different officers/agencies responsible for implementing the provisions of the Act and various reports received by the regional administration.
 - b) The local-level monitoring committee shall consist of the District Magistrate, Deputy Superintendent of Police, the Director of the District Legal services Authority and 3 members having association with nongovernment organizations.
 - c) The District Level committee shall meet at least once every 3 months.
- (11) Annual Report: The State Government shall every, before 1st of July, forward a report to the Central Government about the measures taken for implementing provisions of the Act and various schemes and plans framed by it during the previous calendar year.

- (12) Subject to such rules as the Central Government may make in this behalf, the State Government shall take such measures as may be necessary for the effective implementation of this Act. Such measures may include--
 - a) The provision for adequate facilities, including legal aid, to the persons subjected to honour crimes to enable them to avail themselves of justice;
 - b) The provision for travelling and maintenance expenses to victims and witnesses in honour crimes during investigation and trial of offences under this Act;
 - c) provision for a periodic survey of the working of the provisions of this Act with a view to suggesting measures for the better implementation of the provision of this Act;
- (13) The Central Government shall, every year, place on the table of each House of Parliament a report on the measures taken by itself and by the State Governments in pursuance of the provisions of this section.
- (14) The Central and State Governments shall make budgetary provisions for the effective implementation of this Act.
- (15) The Central Government shall direct the National Crime Records Bureau to collect data on the crimes committed in the name of 'honour' in its annual reports;

Chapter VII

Special Fast Track Courts

30. Establishment of Special Fast Track Courts. –

1. The State Government, may after consultation with the concerned High Court, by notification, designate a District Courts as Special Fast Track Court for the purpose of trying the cases pertaining to crimes in the name of honour and offences under this Act.
2. Such Special Fast Track Court shall exercise all jurisdiction exercisable by the District Court under any law for the time being in force in respect of any proceedings under this Act.
3. The State Government shall, after consultation with the High Court, by notification, extend, reduce or alter the local limits of the area to which the jurisdiction of the Fast Track Court extends.
4. The concerned District judge presiding over a designated Special Fast Track Court shall receive prior training on this Act, in the manner as may be prescribed under the Rules.
5. For every Special Fast Track Court, the State Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify a Public Prosecutor or appoint an advocate who has been in practice as an advocate for not less than seven years, as a Special Public Prosecutor for the purpose of conducting cases in that court.
6. Where an application is made by a victim seeking the appointment of a particular Special Public Prosecutor, the same can be considered and allowed by the Special Fast Track Court.

31. Procedure

- a) The Special Fast Track Court may take cognizance of any offence without the accused being committed to it for trial upon receiving a complaint of facts which constitutes such offence, or upon a police report of such facts.
- b) While framing charges under this Act, the Court may also frame charges under The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, as amended in 2015, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, any provision of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) as the case may be, and under any other special legislations, if the facts disclose the commission of an offence under those provisions.
- c) The Special Fast Track Court shall try cases in-camera and the trial must proceed on a day-to-day basis and shall be concluded without fail within 12 months from the date of filing of charge sheet/final investigation report.
- d) If, in the course of any trial of any offence under this Act, it is found that the accused person has committed any other offence under this Act or any other law, the notified Court may convict such person also of such other offence and pass appropriate sentence authorized by that law.
- e) A victim or their dependent shall have the right to apply to the Special Fast Track Court to summon parties for production of any documents or material, witnesses or examine the persons present.
- f) A victim or their dependent shall be entitled to be heard at any proceeding under this Act in respect of bail, discharge, release, parole, conviction or sentence of an accused or any connected proceedings or arguments and file written submission on conviction, acquittal or sentencing.

32. Appeals

- a) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, or in any other law an appeal shall lie from every judgment or order under this Act to the High Court.
- b) Every appeal under this Section shall be preferred within a period of thirty from the date of the judgment or order under this Act.
- c) Except as aforesaid, no appeal or revision shall lie to any Court from any judgment, order or decree under this Act.
- d) An appeal preferred under sub-section (1) shall be heard by a Bench consisting of two or more judges.

Chapter VIII Miscellaneous

33. Guidelines for persons to take assistance of experts, etc.—Subject to such rules as may be made in this behalf, the State Government shall prepare guidelines for non-governmental organisations, professionals and experts or persons having knowledge of psychology, social work, physical health, and mental health to be associated with the pre-trial and trial stage to assist the victims and witnesses.

34. **Application of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.**- Save as otherwise provided in this Act, the provisions of the Code of Criminal procedure, 1973 (Central Act No. 2 of 1974) shall apply to the proceedings under this Act.
35. Any reference in this Act to any enactment or any provision thereof shall, in relation to an area in which such enactment or such provision is not in force, be construed as a reference to the corresponding law, if any, in force in that area.
36. Act to override other laws.—
Save as otherwise provided in this Act, the provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law for the time being in force or any custom or usage or any instrument having effect by virtue of any such law.
37. Power to make rules –
- a) The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act.
 - b) Every rule 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 both Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule 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.