



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalsivam Kamarajar"

MINORITY RIGHTS

Published On: 18-08-2025

Introduction

In a pluralistic and diverse country like India, minority rights refer to the constitutional and legal safeguards extended to communities that are numerically smaller in population or distinct in language, religion, or culture, so as to protect their identity and ensure equality of opportunity. They are an essential component of India's secular and democratic fabric, aimed at balancing the principle of equality with the need to preserve diversity.

At a broader level, minority rights uphold social justice, cultural pluralism, and inclusive growth, resonating with India's motto of "Unity in Diversity" and global commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and UN Minority Rights Declaration (1992).

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS FOR MINORITIES:

Cultural and Educational Rights

Article 29(1) – Protection of the interests of minorities to conserve their language, script, and culture.

Article 29(2) – No discrimination in admission into educational institutions maintained by the State or receiving State aid.

Article 30(1) – Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

Article 30(2) – State shall not discriminate in granting aid to minority institutions.

Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)

Article 38 – Promotes welfare of all people, securing justice and equality.

Article 46 – Promotes educational and economic interests of weaker sections, including minorities.

Article 51A(e) (Fundamental Duty) – Promotes harmony and spirit of common brotherhood among all communities.

Special Provisions

Article 350A – Instruction in mother tongue at primary stage for children of linguistic minorities.

Article 350B – Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities appointed by the President.

Article 347 – Provision for recognition of language spoken by a section of the population as official language in a state.

Issues Faced by Minorities in India

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: 044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833

1. Educational Backwardness: Minority communities, especially Muslims, lag behind in literacy and higher education enrolment.

Example: NSO 2021–22 report shows Muslim literacy at 77.7% vs national average of 84.1%; enrolment in higher education remains lowest among all communities (AISHE 2023).

2. Economic Marginalisation: Minorities face poverty, low workforce participation, and poor access to credit/markets.

Example: Sachar Committee & NITI Aayog reports highlighted Muslims' high share in informal, low-paying jobs; recent Periodic Labour Force Survey (2022–23) shows Muslims' unemployment rate higher than national average.

3. Underrepresentation in Politics & Bureaucracy: Despite being ~20% of the population (religious + linguistic minorities), representation in legislatures and higher bureaucracy is low.

Example: In the 17th Lok Sabha (2019), only 27 Muslim MPs (5%) were elected vs ~14% population share. Similarly, their presence in IAS/IPS remains disproportionately low (UPSC 2023 data).

4. Communal Violence & Discrimination: Minorities are disproportionately affected by communal riots, mob lynching, and hate crimes.

Example: NCRB 2022 Report shows rising cases of communal incidents. The Manipur ethnic violence (2023) highlighted vulnerability of minority Kukis.

5. Identity and Cultural Erosion: Linguistic and cultural minorities face challenges in preserving language, heritage, and institutions.

Example: UNESCO's Atlas of World Languages in Danger (2022) lists 197 Indian languages as endangered, many belonging to tribal and linguistic minorities.

6. Legal & Social Injustice: Issues related to personal laws (e.g., gender rights, triple talaq), biased policing, and lack of access to speedy justice.

Example: Shah Bano case (1985) and Triple Talaq judgment (2017, Shayara Bano vs Union of India) highlight tension between minority rights and gender justice.

7. Stereotyping & Social Exclusion: Minorities face prejudice in housing, jobs, and everyday interactions, deepening alienation.

MEASURES TAKEN TO PROTECT THE MINORITIES IN INDIA:

1. Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS)

A consolidated scheme combining five earlier programs—Seekho Aur Kamao, USTTAD, Nai Manzil, Nai Roshni, and Hamari Dharohar—to holistically boost education, skills, and heritage preservation among minorities.

2. Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025: Modernizes Waqf governance with increased inclusivity:

Introduces Muslim women's representation and participation from diverse sects.

Allows eligible Waqf assets to be used for affordable housing, education, healthcare.

Empowers Waqf tribunals with civil court jurisdiction for faster justice.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

3.Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK)

Previously MsDP, this centrally-sponsored scheme continues to improve socio-economic infrastructure in minority-dense regions. Lays Emphasis on education, healthcare, sanitation, and allocating 33–40% of funds to women-centric initiatives.

4.Padho Pardesh (Interest Subsidy for Overseas Education)

Provides full interest subsidies on educational loans for minority students pursuing higher education abroad.

5.Cyber Gram & Minority Cyber Gram

Bridge the digital divide: Provides computer literacy training in madrasas/minority clusters.

Includes free internet access and digital skills to enhance participation in government and social services.

Conclusion

Minority rights in India are not about special treatment, but about ensuring equality, dignity, and justice in a diverse democracy. The Constitution provides a robust framework, and successive governments have introduced welfare schemes to promote education, employment, and cultural preservation of minorities. Yet, challenges of underrepresentation, socio-economic backwardness, and discrimination remain. The way forward lies in strengthening institutional mechanisms, fostering interfaith harmony, ensuring gender-just reforms, and focusing on inclusive growth. By upholding the ethos of “Unity in Diversity” and the vision of “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas”, India can transform its diversity into a source of strength rather than division.