

Uniform Civil Code *vis a vis* Gender Justice in India

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Abstract: *In India there had never been an Indian personal Law. Instead there are several personal laws, applicable to various religious communities i.e the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews and Parsees. Each of this is known as the personal law of the particular community and covers matters of personal relationship like marriage, adoption, inheritance and succession, maintenance and guardianship. Two major personal laws in India are the Hindu and the Muslim. Like most personal laws they are linked with religion and customary practices. The Constitution enjoins upon the state to 'secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India'. When the constitution was made many members were obsessed with the idea of national integration, therefore the debate on Uniform Civil Code has ever since not stopped.*

Key Words: *Uniform Civil Code, Personal Law, Constitution, Religion, Marriage, Divorce (talaq)*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Personal law in India are really personal. They are subject to interpretation and application in their own unique way to suit personal conditions. In several cases the Honourable Supreme Court has tried to intervene and give more liberal approach to the text of the law but they have not been very successful. India unlike other popular legal systems does not have a uniform personal law. People belonging to different religious groups follow different religion. The legal system principally provides for four religious laws viz: Hindu Muslim, Christian and Parsis. India has a long standing history of contraventions in different parts of the personal law amongst the subjects belonging to different religious groups. There is contravention among the people who choose to follow different religious groups. Uniform Civil Code remains an elusive Constitutional goal that the Courts have fairly refrained from enforcing through directions and the Legislature has dispassionately ignored except by way of paying some lip service. However, it is submitted that laws dealing with marriage and succession are part of religion in India and the law has to change with time.

2. MATERIALS: Secondary Sources including Books, Reports, Case Law Judgements of Supreme Court.

3. UNIFORM CIVIL CODE - NOMENCLATURE IS IN DISPUTES:

In the phrase Uniform Civil Code, the term civil code is used to cover the entire body of laws governing rights relating to property and otherwise in personal matters like marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption and inheritance. The demand for a uniform civil code essentially means unifying all these personal laws to have one set of secular laws dealing with these aspects that will apply to all citizens of India irrespective of the community they belong to. The bone of contention revolving around Uniform Civil Code has been secularism and the freedom of religion enumerated in the Constitution of India. The preamble of the Constitution states that India is a "Secular Democratic Republic" This means that there is no State religion. A secular State shall not discriminate against anyone on the ground of religion. A State is only concerned with the relation between man and man. It is not concerned with the relation of man with God. It does not mean allowing all religions to be practiced. It means that religion should not interfere with the mundane life of an individual. The Indian Constitution, in its part IV, Article 44 directs the State to provide a Uniform Civil Code throughout the territory of India. However, it is only a directive principle of state policy; therefore it cannot be enforced in a court of law. It is the prerogative of the state to introduce Uniform Civil Code.

4. INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND THE UNIFORM CIVIL CODE:

The Uniform Civil Code is, by and large, a child of independent India. [i] Article 15 of the constitution of India lays down a guarantee to every citizen that consists of 'No discrimination on any ground only of religion race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of these. Article 15 (3) provides that special provision can be made by the state for women and children Women empowerment enjoys constitutional protection of this Article 15 (3). Article 39 (a) (d) and (e) lay down certain principles of directive policy that are to be followed by State. Men and Women citizens shall enjoy equal right to an adequate means of livelihood. There shall be equal pay for equal work for both men and women and that the health and strength of worker's men and women shall not be abused. Article 42 provides for just and humane condition of work and maternity relief. Article 44 also provides that, 'the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India'. [ii]

The Constituent Assembly Debates clearly shows that there was a wide spread opposition to the incorporation of Article 44, particularly from the Muslim members. The Uniform Civil Code is required not only to ensure (a) uniformity of laws between communities, but also (b) uniformity of laws within communities ensuring equalities between the rights of men and women. One of the major problems that has provoked exciting polemics and aggravated majority pressures is the enactment of a uniform civil code for the citizens throughout the territory of India, as desiderated in Article 44. The provision is cautiously worded and calls upon the State to 'endeavour' to secure such a code. It is neither time-bound nor carries a compulsive urgency. [ⁱⁱⁱ]

5. INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE:

Under International law, a state that ratifies an international instrument becomes legally bound to implement its provisions. Accordingly India having ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, and International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979, is bound to enforce the relevant provisions and ensure gender equality under its national laws. However, women in India under Hindu, Muslim and Christian laws continue to suffer discrimination and inequalities in the matter of marriage, succession, divorce and inheritance.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a unique international convention in that it was based on the need for special formulation that would assert, protect and promote women's human rights. The Convention expressly states that discrimination against women is socially and culturally constructed and encompasses public and private spheres, thereby bringing within its fold the domain of the family. India too has ratified the CEDAW with a declaration to limit its obligations relating to changing the discriminatory cultural practices within the community and the family. Hence, with regard to Articles 5 (a) and 16 (1) of the Convention, India declares that "it shall abide by and ensure that these provisions are in conformity with its policy of non-interference in the personal affairs of any community without its initiative and consent". India's reservation is an *unqualified* exemption from state interference into customary practices and it also fails to specify a time frame. This reservation can only be construed as being inconsistent with the objectives and purpose of the Convention and an indication of the utter lack of political will on part of the Indian state, even in face of international duties and obligations, to bring about an egalitarian, uniform civil law in the country. [^{iv}]

6. STRUCTURE OF THE PERSONAL LAW IN INDIA:

To name a few laws:

- The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993
- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (28 of 1955)
- The Guardians and Wards Act, 1869
- The Guardians and Wards Act, 1860 (8 of 1860)
- The Hindu Adoptions & Maintenance Act, 1956
- The Hindu Minority & Guardianship Act, 1956
- The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937
- The Muslim Woman Protection of (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986.
- The Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939
- The (Indian) Christian Marriage Act, 1872
- The Divorce Act, 1869
- The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936
- The Family Courts Act, 1984
- Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973
- Indian Penal Code, 1860

6.1 How is the personal law discriminatory in the favour of women?

The personal law is not in the favour of any one community per se but it is in for the greater benefit of the community and the common good. However some sections of the society conveniently ignored it. To name a few, the minorities are not fully represented in the code of the uniform civil code. The women folk to a large extent are discriminated not just on the basis of religion but on the basis of gender as well. The women constitute the largest lot of minority in India who are very poorly represented. The uniform civil code ignores the people belonging to minority groups in the form of schedule cast and schedule tribes.

6.2 Hindu Law

Till the codification of Hindu Law in 1955 and 1956 the Hindu Women did not enjoy equal rights along with the Hindu men. Before 1955 polygamy was prevalent among the Hindus. The Hindu women could not hold any

property, as its absolute owner except in the case of *Stridhana*. She had only limited estate which was passed on to the heirs of the last full male owner called reversionary on her death. In the matter of adoption a Hindu woman had no right to adopt a child on her own. She could not be the natural guardian of her children during the life her husband. These examples are only illustrative in nature and not exhaustive. Even though the Hindu law has been codified, certain discriminatory provisions still exist even today. For example a Hindu woman is not a coparcener in Hindu coparceners except in a few states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Consequently, she is not entitled to claim a share in the coparcenary. Similarly she has no right to partition of a dwelling house even though she is a legal heir. Thus it is obvious that the codification of personal law of Hindus has not succeeded completely in eradicating the gender inequality.

6.3 Muslim Women

In the Pre-Islamic Arabia, the women enjoyed a secondary status in all respects when compared to men. The advent of Islam has contributed much for the amelioration of Muslim women and alleviation of their problems. The Holy Quran gives equal rights to men and women and places women in a respectable position. However there are certain aspects in Islam that render the position of Muslim women especially the wives insecure and inferior.^v

7. GENDER DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMAN IN PERSONAL LAWS:

Gender discrimination, is a concept as summarised but Rosemary Tong in her book *'Feminist Thought- A comprehensive introduction'* as 'Gender Justice insists liberal, requires us, first to make the rule of the game fair and second to make certain that none of the runners in the race for society's goods and services is systematically disadvantaged.'^[vi]

The importance of the institution of marriage in India is undeniable as society views marriage as according to woman respectability, personal and financial security, social acceptance and legality of union.^[vii] However the multiplicity of personal laws according to religion is only the beginning of the problem. The personal laws too are gender biased against woman and many of the courts are less than favourable in interpreting the law otherwise. The Judiciary is not to be blamed fully, since they are merely interpreting the text of the law. Some of the areas, which the researcher would like to point out, which brings out the glaring irregularities in the personal law in India.

7.1 Bigamous Marriage

Bigamy is a ground of divorce under the Hindu Marriage Act and is punishable under S. 494 IPC. The section focuses on the 'Solemnization of the second marriage' for the offence to be cognizable. Solemnised include performed according to customary rites and essential ceremonies. This casts a heavy burden on the prosecution as the second marriages are not performed with much publicity^[viii]. It is worthy to mention that according to Article 16 of CEDAW, both men and women enter into marriage, with free and full consent, one marriage at a time. Thus it neither allows a man nor a woman to contract more than one marriage at a time.^[ix] In 1975, the Committee on the Status of Women reported that more Hindus than Muslims were in bigamous marriages in India.^[x]

7.2 Adultery

S.497 makes it an offence for the husband to have sexual intercourse with a married woman. This section allows the husband to sue the adulterer but not the wife to sue the other woman. Also the section treats the wife as the property of the husband, against which some wrong had been done. Also polygamy under Muslims Personal law is legal, where the man is allowed to have four wives.^[xi]

7.3 Restitution of Conjugal rights

S. 9 of Hindu Marriage Act, gives the right of restitution of conjugal rights. Much has been debated about the right to privacy and the right to personal life and liberty under Article. 21 which is violated by S. 9 of the HM Act.

7.4 Divorce Laws

Divorce laws are gender biased and add even more to the woe than a troubled marriage. It is equally painful for a Hindu as well as a Muslim woman to get divorce from a marriage gone wrong. Even after the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 was passed, Muslim women continued to approach the courts for maintenance and for a ban on the unilateral form of divorce. Women criticized the practice of triple *talaq* and its acceptance by religious leaders. It is also reported that *talaq* was sent by post, on telephone and even advertised in the newspapers. Even though the couple wanted to live together again, the wife had to go through a form of *Halala*.^[xii]

7.5 Maintenance Laws

The maintenance laws too are irregular and suffer shortcomings as the estranged wife has to go to a lot of trouble to secure maintenance from her husband, since most of the time she is economically dependent on her husband.

7.6 Guardianship Laws

The guardianship laws also in most of the cases treat the father to be a better guarding of the child in the light of his economic position and treats the mother less favourable as she is herself dependent on the maintenance given by her estranged husband. However there is some relief due to the judgement delivered by the Supreme Court in *Gita Haraiharan v Reserve Bank of India*. [xiii]

7.7 Uniform Civil Code

The political and legal goals of the Uniform Civil Code are not co terminates. The legal goal focuses on the hardship suffered by woman in the legal order. The discrimination against them and the achievement of common standard of gender justice. The only means of imparting true gender equality will be through a uniform civil code. Some initiative is taken however by the Domestic Violence Act 2005. [xiv]

Case Study of Sahyra Bano v Union of India (Civil original jurisdiction (order xxxviii, S.C.R, 2013) under article 32 of the Constitution of India writ petition (civil) no. of 2016)

Writ petition under Article 32 of the Constitution of India seeking a writ or order or direction in the nature of mandamus declaring the practices of *talaq-e-bidat*, *nikah-halala* and polygamy under Muslim personal laws as illegal, unconstitutional for being violative of articles 14, 15, 21 and 25 of the constitution, and to pass such further orders as this Hon'ble Supreme court may deem appropriate to provide a life of dignity unmarred by any discrimination to Muslim women to, the Hon'ble chief justice of India and his companion judges of the supreme court of India the humble petition of the petitioner above named most respectfully showed: This is a Writ Petition under Article 32 of the Constitution of India praying for a direction against the Union of India and others seeking a writ or order or direction in the nature of mandamus declaring the practices of *talaq-e-bidat*, *nikah halala* and polygamy under Muslim personal laws as illegal, unconstitutional for being violative of Articles 14, 15, 21 and 25 of the Constitution,

The Petitioner is a female citizen of India, a Muslim by religion, and hails from *Kashipur (Uttarkhand)*. She is sick, unemployed, and the daughter of a government employee who has meagre income. The Petitioner was married to Respondent on 11.04.2002 at Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh) as per Muslim *Shariyat* law rites and customs and has two children from the wedlock. Her parents had been compelled to give dowry before the marriage. Her husband and his family not only subjected her to cruelty after the marriage (including physical abuse and administration of drugs that caused her memory to fade, kept her unconscious, and eventually made her critically ill), but also demanded additional dowry in the form of a car and cash which her family was unable to provide. Due to the unreasonable demands, the torturous behaviour of her husband and his eventual decision to abandon her, the Petitioner has been forced to stay with her parents since April 2015. As a consequence of the drugs administered to the Petitioner-wife by her husband, she is ill, requires the constant care and support of doctors and medicines, and requires financial supported by her father. The Petitioner-wife was divorced by *triple-talaq*, which was confirmed by a divorce deed dated 10.10.2015 issued by Respondent.

This Hon'ble Court has not only observed that gender discrimination against Muslim women needs to be examined, but has also been pleased to direct that a public interest litigation be separately registered for which notices were directed to be issued to the Ld. Attorney General and the National Legal Services Authority, New Delhi. Referring to *John Vallamattom v. Union of India, (2003) 6 SCC 611*, it was observed in *Prakash and Others v. Phulavati and Others, Civil Appeal No. 7217 of 2013* decided on 16.10.2015, that laws dealing with marriage and succession are not a part of religion, the law has to change with time, and international covenants and treaties could be referred to examine validity and reasonableness of a provision. Accordingly, the Hon'ble Court directed that the issue of gender discrimination against Muslim women under Muslim personal laws, specifically the lack of safeguards against arbitrary divorce and second marriage by a Muslim husband during the currency of first marriage notwithstanding the guarantees of the Constitution, may be registered as a public interest litigation and heard separately. A perusal of the decisions of this Hon'ble Court in *Prakash v. Phulavati (supra)*, *Javed and Others v. State of Haryana and Others, (2003) 8 SCC 369*, and *Smt. Sarla Mudgal, President, Kalyani and Others v. Union of India and Others, (1995) 3 SCC 635* illustrates that the practice of polygamy has been recognised as injurious to public morals and it can be superseded by the State just as it can prohibit human sacrifice or the practice of sati.

The Muslim personal laws of India permit the practice of *talaq-e-bidat* or *talaq-i-badai*, which includes a Muslim man divorcing his wife by pronouncing more than one *talaq* in a single *tuhr* (the period between two menstruations), or in a *tuhr* after coitus, or pronouncing an irrevocable instantaneous divorce at one go. This practice of *talaq-e-bidat* (unilateral triple-talaq) which practically treats women like chattel is neither harmonious with the modern principles of human rights and gender equality, nor an integral part of Islamic faith, according to various noted scholars. Many Islamic nations, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iraq, have banned or restricted such practice, while it continues to vex the Indian society in general and Indian Muslim women like the Petitioner in particular. It is submitted that the

practice also wreaks havoc to the lives of many divorced women and their children, especially those belonging to the weaker economic sections of the society.

The practice of *talaq-e-bidat* and divorce of a woman without proper attempt at reconciliation violates the basic right to live with dignity of every Muslim woman. Muslim women have been given *talaq* over Skype, Facebook and even text messages. There is no Protection against such arbitrary divorce. Muslim women have their hands tied while the guillotine of divorce dangles, perpetually ready to drop at the whims of their husbands who enjoy undisputed power. Such discrimination and inequality hoarsely expressed in the form of unilateral *triple-talaq* is abominable when seen in light of the progressive times of the 21st century. Further, once a woman has been divorced, her husband is not permitted take her back as his wife even if he had pronounced *talaq* under influence of any intoxicant, unless the woman undergoes *nikah halala* which involves her marriage with another man who subsequently divorces her so that her previous husband can re-marry her.

A life of dignity and equality is undisputedly the most sacrosanct fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution and it prevails above all other rights available under the laws of India. It is therefore submitted that the solutions to societal problems of universal magnitude pertaining to horizons of basic human rights, culture, dignity, decency of life, and dictates of necessity in the pursuit of social justice should be decided on considerations other than religion or religious faith or beliefs, or sectarian, racial or communal constraints. The Muslim Personal Law (*Shariat*) Application Act, 1937, by providing for the application of Muslim personal law in matters relating to marriage where the parties are Muslims, conveys a wrong impression that the law sanctions the sinful form of *talaq*, *nikah halala*, and polygamy which is grossly injurious to the fundamental rights of married Muslim women and offends Articles 14, 15, 21 and 25 of the Constitution.

The Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939 fails to secure for Indian Muslim women the protection from bigamy, which protection has been statutorily secured for Indian women belonging to all other religions, and is to that extent violative of Articles 14, 15, 21 and 25 of the Constitution. The assumptions and beliefs upon which *talaq-e-bidat* is recognised are factually false, scientifically untenable and contrary to the spirit and provisions of the Constitution and, in any event, this form of divorce has been declared to be a spiritual offence in the Holy Quran itself. Giving recognition to *nikah halala* and to *talaq-e-bidat* as a valid form of divorce interferes with the Muslim women's right to profess and practice her religion, inasmuch as it unleashes a spiritual offence on her to say the least and is, thus, violative of Articles 14, 15, 21 and 25 of the Constitution. The Constitution neither grants any absolute protection to the personal law of any community that is unjust, nor exempts personal laws from the jurisdiction of the Legislature or the Judiciary. Entry 5 of List III in the Seventh Schedule confers power on the Legislature to amend and repeal existing laws or pass Bar & Bench 28 new laws in all such matters (including marriage and divorce) which were on August 15, 1947, governed by personal laws, and the Legislature has practically abdicated its duties and permitted the basic fundamental rights of Muslim women to be widely violated which also affects the entire country as a matter of public order, morality and health.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights explained in its General Comment No. 16 of 2005 that the parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are obliged to eliminate not only direct discrimination, but also indirect discrimination, by refraining from engaging in discriminatory practices, ensuring that third parties do not discriminate in a forbidden manner directly or indirectly, and taking positive action to guarantee women's equality. It is submitted that failure to eliminate de jure (formal) and de facto (substantive) discrimination constitutes a violation of the rights of women envisaged in such international treaties and covenants. It is further submitted that not only must the practices of polygamy, *talaq-e-bidat* and *nikah halala* be declared illegal and unconstitutional, but the actions of religious groups, bodies and leaders that permit and propagate such practices must also be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

8. MERITS OF UNIFORM CIVIL CODE:

The Uniform Civil Code has been put on the back burner by the government. What could be taken up is the reform of the personal law with a view to make them fair for everyone. Uniformity of law is not a condition precedent for national Integration. Differential laws may be applied for deferral communities as each community wants to retain its identity. The aim should be to gradually reform these personal laws.^{xv}

Some advantages if a Common Civil Code is enacted and enforced:

- It would help and accelerate national integration.
- Overlapping provisions of law could be avoided.
- Litigation due to personal law would decrease.
- Sense of oneness and the national spirit would be roused, and

Vish Lochan Madan v. Union of India^{xvi} cases new approach to the Uniform Civil Code

All India Muslim Personal Law Board comprises of *Ulemas*. *Ulema* is a body of Muslim scholars recognised as expert in Islamic sacred law and theology. It is the assertion of the petitioner that All India Muslim Personal Law Board (hereinafter referred to as 'the Board') strives for the establishment of parallel judicial system in India as in its opinion it is extremely difficult for Muslim women to get justice in the prevalent judicial system. Further, under the pressure of expensive and protracted litigation it has become very difficult for the downtrodden and weaker section of the society to get justice.

Imrana, a 28 years old Muslim woman, mother of five children was allegedly raped by her father-in-law. The question arose about her marital status and those of her children born in the wedlock with rapist's son. The *Fatwa* of *Dar-ul-Uloom* in this connection reads as follows: "If one raped his son's wife and it is proved through witnesses, or the rapist himself confesses it, *haram musaharat* will be proved. It means that the wife of the son will become unlawful forever to him i.e. the son. The woman with whom father has copulated legally or had sexual intercourse illegally in both ways, the son can't keep physical relationship with her. *The Holy Quran* says: "Marry not the woman whom your father copulated". The Fatwa has dissolved the marriage and passed a decree for perpetual injunction restraining the husband and wife living together, though none of them ever approached the *Dar-ul-Uloom*. Another Fatwa of which our attention is drawn rules that no police report can be filed against the father-in-law of Asoobi, who had allegedly raped her. According to the Fatwa, father-in-law could have been blamed only if there had either been a witness to the case or the victim's husband had endorsed Asoobi's allegation. Petitioner alleges that all these Fatwas have the support of All India Muslim Personal Law Board and it is striving for the establishment of parallel Muslim judicial system in India. According to the petitioner, adjudication of disputes is essentially the function of sovereign State, which can never be abdicated or parted with. In the aforesaid background, the petitioner has sought a declaration that the movement/ activities being pursued by All India Muslim Personal Law Board and other similar organizations for establishment of Muslim Judicial System and setting up of *Dar-ul-Qazas* (Muslim Courts) and Shariat Court in India are absolutely illegal, illegitimate and unconstitutional. Further declaration sought for is that the judgments and fatwas pronounced by authorities have no place in the Indian Constitutional system, and the same are unenforceable being wholly non-est and void *abinitio*. Petitioner further seeks direction to the Union of India and the States concerned to forthwith take effective steps to disband and diffuse all *Dar-ul-Qazas* and the Shariat Courts and to ensure that the same do not function to adjudicate any matrimonial-disputes under the Muslim Personal Law. Petitioner's prayer further is to restrain the respondents from establishing a parallel Muslim Judicial System, inter-meddling with the marital status of Indian Muslims and to pass any judgments, remarks or fatwas and from deciding the matrimonial dispute amongst Muslims. *Qaza* is a parallel court and 'Fatwa' has any legal status. As it is well settled, the adjudication by legal authority sanctioned by law is enforceable and binding and meant to be obeyed unless upset by an authority provided by law itself. The power to adjudicate must flow from a validly made law. Therefore, the opinion or the Fatwa issued by *Dar-ul-Qaza* or for that matter anybody is not adjudication of dispute by an authority under a judicial system sanctioned by law. The person or the body concerned may ignore it and it will not be necessary for anybody to challenge it before any court of law. It can simply be ignored. In case any person or body tries to impose it, their act would be illegal. Therefore, the grievance of the petitioner that *Dar-ul-Qazas* and *Nizam-e-Qaza* are running a parallel judicial system is misconceived. As observed earlier, the Fatwa.

9. CONCLUSION:

Secularism, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity are all inseparable from one another. So are clarity and security. No one of them can stand without the others. Justice without equality or fraternity is meaningless. The personal laws of this country did try to separate the two by creating distinct systems of justice for separate groups on the basis of their race, religion, caste, creed and sex. Over the decades, at least amongst the educated classes, so many of the evils contested by the reformers of last century have become less commonly practiced, though some others, notably dowry murders, have sprung up. Justice without equality was not palatable to the framers of the Constitution. Secularism, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity are all inseparable from one another. So are clarity and security. No one of them can stand without the others. For the purposes of the Uniform Civil Code, there are some inherent limitations faced, if they were to be realised truly. Firstly the Scheduled Tribes have not been taken into account they form the second largest minority of India. Secondly children are also ignored in these policies. They are the weakest and the most vulnerable group. The children also do not have enough voice or adequate representation. What adds importance to the situation is the fact that the future of this country lies with them. Thirdly uniform civil code is not gender centric, focusing only on women, yet the policy framers continue to ignore the status of women. The notion that all secularism consists of equal status to all religions which can continue to include all aspects of life finds an echo in the reassurances sought or given that a Uniform Civil Code will embody what is best in all personal laws, rather than demanding that the Uniform Civil Code should confer the best possible rights on all citizens.

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