

THE UNIFORM CIVIL CODE: STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN SECULARISM, RELIGIOUS AUTONOMY, AND GENDER JUSTICE IN INDIA

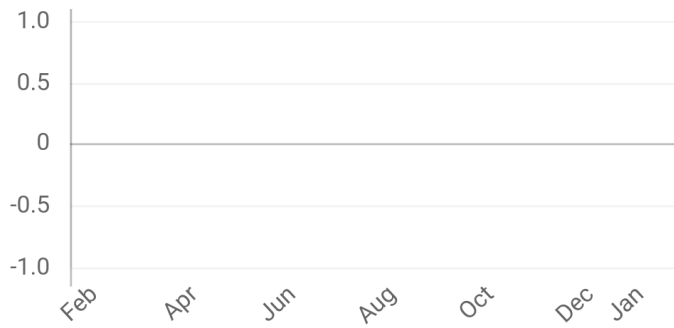
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ABSTRACT

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) represents an on-going effort to harmonize personal laws across religious and cultural lines in India, aiming to promote equality, gender justice, and national unity. Rooted in Article 44 of the Constitution, the UCC has been widely debated, with the judiciary often emphasizing its desirability while acknowledging the complexities of its implementation. This paper explores the historical, legal, and social dimensions of the UCC, including key cases like *Narasu Appa Mali*, *Shah Bano*, and *Sarla Mudgil*, as well as regional applications like the Goa Civil Code and recent developments in Uttarakhand. The study also examines challenges in addressing marriage, divorce, inheritance, and live-in relationships within a diverse society, particularly focusing on concerns of tribal and minority communities. By analyzing the interplay between constitutional principles, political discourse, and societal needs, this paper evaluates the feasibility of a UCC that respects India's cultural diversity while advancing justice and equality.

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