

**BOMBAY HINDU PLACES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP (ENTRY
AUTHORIZATION) ACT, 1956**

31 of 1956

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An Act to make better provision for the throwing open of places of public worship to all classes and sections of Hindus. WHEREAS it is expedient to make better provision for the throwing open of places of public worship to all classes and sections of Hindus; It is hereby enacted in the Seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:-

1. Short title, extent and commencement :-

(1) This Act may be called the Bombay Hindu Places of Public Worship (Entry Authorization) Act, 1956.

¹[(2) It extends to the whole of the ²[State of Gujarat].

(3) It shall come into force ³[in the pre-Reorganisation State of Bombay] on such date as the State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, ⁴ [appoint: and in that part of State of Bombay to which it is extended by the Bombay Hindu Places of Public Worship (Entry Authorisation)(Extension) Act,

1957. (Bom XXXVI of 1958), it shall come into force on such other date as the State Government may, by notification published in the like manner, appoint).

1. Substituted by Bom 36 of 1958.
2. Substituted by Gujarat A.O. 1960.
3. Inserted by Bom 36 of 1958.
4. Substituted by Bom 36 of 1958.

2. Definitions :-

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,-

(a) "place of public worship" means a place, whether a temple or by any other name called, to whomsoever belonging which is dedicated to, or for the benefit of, or is used generally by, Hindus, Jains, Sikhs or Buddhists or any section or class thereof, for the performance of any religious service for offering prayers therein: and includes all land subsidiary shrines appurtenant or attached to any such place, and also any sacred, tanks, wells, springs and water courses the waters of which are worshipped, or are used for bathing or for worship:

(b) "section" or "class" of Hindus includes any division, subdivision, cast, sub-caste, or denomination whatsoever of Hindus.

3. Throwing open of Hindu temples to all classes and sections of Hindus :-

Notwithstanding any custom, usage or law for the time being in force, or the decree or order of a court, or anything contained in any instrument, to the contrary, every place of public worship which is open to Hindus generally, or to any section or class thereof, shall be open to all sections and classes of Hindus; and no Hindu of whatsoever section or class, shall in any manner be prevented, obstructed or discouraged from entering such place of public worship, or from worshipping or offering prayers thereat, or performing any religious service therein, in the like manner and to like extent as any other Hindu of whatsoever section or class may so enter, worship, pray or perform.

4. Penalty :-

(1) Whoever in contravention of section 3-

(a) prevents any person belonging to any class or section of Hindus from entering, worshipping or offering prayers, or performing any religious service in any Hindu temple which is used as a place of

public worship, or

(b) molests injures, annoys, obstructs, or causes or attempts to cause obstruction to or by the threat of molestation. injury, annoyance or obstruction, overawes or discourages any such person doing or performing any of the acts aforesaid, shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees or with both.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be taken to relate to offences relating to the practice of "untouchably."

5. Abatement of offences :-

Whoever abets any offence under this Act, shall be punished with the punishment provided for the offence.

6. Limitation of Jurisdiction of civil courts :-

No civil court shall entertain or continue any suit of proceeding, or shall pass any decree or order, or execute wholly or partially any decree or order, if the claim involved in any such suit or proceeding, or if the passing of the such decree or order or if such execution would in any way be contrary to the provisions of this Act.

7. Offences to be cognizable and compoundable :-

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, (V of 1898), every offence under this Act shall be cognizable, and every such offence may, with the permission of the court, be compounded.

8. Saving of Act XXII of 1955 and other laws :-

The provisions of this Act shall not be taken to be in derogation of any of the provisions of the Unsociability (Offences) Act, 1955 (XXII of 1955), or of any other law for the time being in force relating to any of the matters dealt with in this Act.