

Karnataka Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2025

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Why in news?

The Karnataka Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill was unanimously passed with support from lawmakers across parties.

- **Aim** - To punish caste & community-based social exclusion & discrimination carried out by informal bodies like caste or community panchayats.
- **Objective** - To uphold equality and protect backward and marginalised groups from further exclusion caused by unconstitutional practices.
- **2nd State** - With this law, ***Karnataka has become the second state***, after Maharashtra, to enact a law criminalising social boycotts.

Key Provisions

- **Definition** - It defines a ***social boycott*** as any act or gesture, oral or written, that results in social discrimination among members of a community.
- **List of forms of exclusion** - It lists ***20 forms of exclusion***, including
 - Denial of the right to work, hire services, conduct business, or participate in social and religious life on equal terms.
 - Also, interference in marriages or funeral rites, blocking access to essential services, and acts of social ostracism on any grounds, etc.
- **Scope of Criminal Liability** - It extends criminal liability beyond those who directly impose a boycott to include individuals who encourage, enforce, or use their influence to sustain it.
- Members of any-body who votes in favour of a social boycott will also be deemed to have committed the offence.
- **Prohibition on assembling** - Assemblies convened to deliberate or plan the imposition of a boycott are declared unlawful.
- **Victim to be heard** - If the accused is found guilty, the Court must first hear the victim on the sentence before deciding it.
- **Offences to be cognizable & bailable** - Offences under this Act are cognizable & bailable, and will be tried by a Judicial Magistrate of the First Class.
- **Compounding of Offence** - An offence under this Act may be settled if the victim consents and the court grants permission.
- **Receiving Complaints** - The ***victim or a family member*** can file a complaint with the police or directly before a Judicial Magistrate of the First Class.

- **Police Powers** - The police are empowered to file complaints on their own initiative (*suo motu*).
- **Social Boycott Prohibition Officer** - The State Government may appoint, through an official notification, a Group 'A' officer as the Social Boycott Prohibition Officer.
- **Punishment** - It prescribes imprisonment of ***up to 3 years***, a fine that ***may extend to Rs 1 lakh, or both***, for any person who imposes, causes, or practises a social boycott.

Reference

[The News Minute | Karnataka's Social Boycott Bill](#)

