



Uniform Civil Code in India: Constitutional Framework Judicial Approach and Special Reference to Assam

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Abstract

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is an important constitutional objective under Article 44 of the Constitution of India. It seeks to establish common civil rules governing matters such as marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption and succession, irrespective of religion. The subject involves a delicate balance between equality, gender justice, individual liberty and freedom of religion. The Supreme Court has examined these issues in several landmark decisions, including Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum, Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India, Shayara Bano v. Union of India and Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira. Recent legislative developments in Assam have further strengthened the contemporary relevance of the UCC debate. This article examines the constitutional framework, judicial approach, advantages and challenges of the UCC, with particular reference to Assam.

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1. INTRODUCTION

India is a pluralistic constitutional democracy characterised by considerable religious, cultural, linguistic and customary diversity. The Constitution guarantees equality before law while simultaneously protecting freedom of conscience and religion. This constitutional arrangement has historically permitted different communities to be governed by different personal laws in matters relating to marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption, guardianship and succession.

The expression Uniform Civil Code refers to a common body of civil law governing specified personal and family matters irrespective of the religion of the parties. It is important to clarify that a UCC does not necessarily mean uniformity in religious beliefs, worship, ceremonies or rituals. Its principal purpose is to create common civil rights and obligations.

Article 44 of the Constitution provides:

“The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.”¹

Article 44 is contained in Part IV of the Constitution, dealing with the Directive Principles of State Policy. It is therefore not directly enforceable by a court. Nevertheless, Article 37 declares that the Directive Principles are fundamental in the governance of the country and that it is the duty of the State to apply them in making laws.²

The UCC debate has therefore always involved a balance between two constitutional objectives: uniformity in civil rights and protection of religious and cultural diversity.

The contemporary importance of the subject has increased substantially because States have begun considering legislative models of a UCC. Assam is particularly significant because the Assam Legislative Assembly has published The Uniform Civil Code, Assam, 2026.³

2. Historical Background of the Uniform Civil Code

The roots of the UCC debate can be traced to the colonial period. During British rule, several areas of Indian law were progressively codified. Criminal law, evidence, contracts and other areas received substantially uniform statutory treatment. However, family matters were generally treated differently. Personal matters involving marriage, divorce, inheritance and succession were frequently regulated according to religious personal laws and customary practices.

The constitutional framers were conscious of this legal diversity. During the Constituent Assembly debates, the question arose whether personal laws should continue to operate separately or whether the State should endeavour to introduce a common civil code.

The final constitutional compromise was the inclusion of Article 44 among the Directive Principles rather than among the Fundamental Rights.

The framers therefore did not make the UCC an immediately enforceable constitutional right. Instead, they imposed a constitutional responsibility upon the State to work towards its eventual establishment.

After independence, Parliament enacted important legislation codifying and reforming Hindu personal law, including:

- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955;
 - The Hindu Succession Act, 1956;
 - The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956; and
 - The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956.
- These enactments demonstrated that personal law could be reformed through legislation while maintaining religious freedom.

However, India did not enact one comprehensive civil code applicable to all religious communities.

3. Meaning and Scope of Uniform Civil Code

There is no single statutory definition of the expression “Uniform Civil Code” in the Constitution.

Generally, the expression refers to a common legal framework dealing with civil consequences arising from family and personal relationships.

The principal subjects ordinarily associated with a UCC are: marriage; divorce; maintenance; adoption, guardianship; succession; inheritance; registration of marriage and divorce; and certain aspects of family relationships.

The UCC should therefore be distinguished from criminal law. India already has substantially common criminal legislation applicable irrespective of religion.

The principal issue in the UCC debate is whether citizens belonging to different religious communities should continue to have different legal rules governing their civil and family relationships.

4. Constitutional Framework of the Uniform Civil Code

4.1 Article 14: Equality Before Law

Article 14 provides:

“The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.”⁴

Article 14 is one of the principal constitutional provisions relevant to the UCC.

Different personal laws may create different legal consequences for similarly situated individuals. The question therefore arises whether such differences are compatible with the constitutional guarantee of equality.

However, the mere existence of different personal laws does not automatically establish an Article 14 violation. The constitutional validity of particular provisions must be examined according to their nature, object, classification and effect.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasised that arbitrary State action is incompatible with Article 14.

4.2 Article 15: Prohibition of Discrimination

Article 15(1) provides:

“The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.”⁵

¹ Constitution of India, art. 44.

² Constitution of India, arts. 37 and 44.

³ Assam Legislative Assembly, The Uniform Civil Code, Assam, 2026, Assam Legislative Assembly, Dispur, Guwahati

⁴ Constitution of India, art. 14.

⁵ Constitution of India, art. 15(1).

Article 15 is especially relevant to gender justice in family law. A UCC may potentially provide common rules that prevent discrimination based upon religion or sex.

4.3 Article 21: Life and Personal Liberty

Article 21 provides:

“No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.”⁶

The Supreme Court has interpreted Article 21 broadly to include dignity, privacy and decisional autonomy.

The landmark decision in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India recognised privacy as a constitutionally protected right.⁷

Therefore, any UCC must carefully balance regulation of family relations with the individual's right to privacy and personal autonomy.

4.4 Article 25: Freedom of Conscience and Religion

Article 25(1) provides:

“Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion.”⁸

Article 25(2)(a) permits the State to regulate:

“Any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice.”⁹

Article 25(2)(b) further permits laws providing for social welfare and reform.

This distinction between religious practice and secular civil consequences is fundamental to the UCC debate.

4.5 Article 26: Freedom to Manage Religious Affairs

Article 26 protects the rights of religious denominations to manage their religious affairs, subject to constitutional limitations.¹⁰

The UCC debate therefore requires an examination of whether the subject matter being regulated is genuinely religious or whether it primarily concerns secular civil consequences.

4.6 Article 37: Directive Principles

Article 37 provides that the provisions contained in Part IV shall not be enforceable by any court but nevertheless declares them fundamental in the governance of the country.¹¹

Therefore, Article 44 cannot ordinarily be enforced through a writ compelling Parliament or a State Legislature to enact a UCC.

However, Article 44 remains an important constitutional objective.

4.7 Article 44: Uniform Civil Code

Article 44 is the direct constitutional foundation of the UCC. It provides:

“The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.”¹²

The wording “shall endeavour” indicates a constitutional obligation to work towards the objective rather than an immediate command requiring a particular legislative form.

4.8 Article 51A(e): Fundamental Duty

Article 51A(e) requires every citizen to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.¹³

Although Article 51A does not specifically mention the UCC, the constitutional values of fraternity and dignity of women are relevant to discussions concerning family-law reform.

4.9 Article 246 and Legislative Competence

Article 246 distributes legislative power between Parliament and State Legislatures.

The UCC involves several subjects appearing in the Concurrent List. Therefore, both Parliament and State Legislatures may legislate in relevant areas, subject to constitutional limitations.¹⁴

4.10 Article 254: Repugnancy

Article 254 becomes important where both Parliament and State Legislatures legislate on subjects in the Concurrent List.

Article 254(1) provides generally that where a State law is repugnant to a Parliamentary law on a matter in the Concurrent List, the Parliamentary law prevails, subject to the constitutional exception contained in Article 254(2).¹⁵

Consequently, any State-level UCC must be examined in light of existing Central legislation dealing with marriage, divorce, succession and related subjects.

5. Seventh Schedule and Legislative Competence

The Constitution distributes legislative powers between Parliament and State Legislatures through Article 246 and the Seventh Schedule.

Several subjects relevant to the UCC fall within the Concurrent List, including:

marriage and divorce; infants and minors; adoption; wills; intestacy; and succession.¹⁶

This legislative arrangement permits both Parliament and State Legislatures to legislate in relevant areas, subject to constitutional limitations.

Accordingly, the enactment of a State-level UCC is not constitutionally impossible merely because Article 44 refers to a UCC “throughout the territory of India.”

⁶ Constitution of India, art. 21.

⁷ Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India, (2017) 10 SCC 1.

⁸ Constitution of India, art. 25(1).

⁹ Constitution of India, art. 25(1).

¹⁰ Constitution of India, art. 25(2)(a).

¹¹ Constitution of India, art. 26.

¹² Constitution of India, art. 37.

¹³ Constitution of India, art. 44.

¹⁴ Constitution of India, art. 51A(e).

¹⁵ Constitution of India, art. 246 read with the Seventh Schedule.

¹⁶ Constitution of India, art. 254(1)– (2).

6. Personal Laws and Secular Civil Matters

Personal laws historically developed from religious and customary traditions. However, not every rule found within personal law is necessarily religious in the constitutional sense. Marriage, divorce, inheritance and succession have both social and legal consequences.

The Supreme Court has specifically addressed this distinction. In *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*, Justice Kurian Joseph discussed the relationship between Article 25 and Article 44 and referred to matters such as marriage and succession as having a secular dimension.¹⁷

The distinction is therefore important:

Religious belief and worship receive constitutional protection, whereas secular civil consequences associated with personal relationships may be subject to legislative regulation.

7. Judicial Approach Towards Uniform Civil Code

7.1 Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum

The Supreme Court's decision in *Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum*, (1985) 2 SCC 556, is one of the earliest major cases associated with the modern UCC debate.¹⁸

The case concerned the right of a divorced Muslim woman to claim maintenance under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

The Court held that the secular maintenance provision applied to a divorced Muslim woman who satisfied its statutory requirements.

The judgment also referred to Article 44 and expressed concern regarding the absence of a common civil code.

The case remains significant because it linked maintenance, gender justice and the constitutional aspiration of a UCC.

7.2 Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India

In *Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India*, (1995) 3 SCC 635, the Supreme Court considered whether a Hindu husband could convert to Islam and marry again without dissolving his existing Hindu marriage.¹⁹

The Court held that conversion to Islam did not automatically dissolve the existing Hindu marriage and that the second marriage during the subsistence of the first marriage could attract the law relating to bigamy.

The Court also referred extensively to Article 44.

The judgment is important because it demonstrated the potential conflict that may arise when individuals attempt to use conversion to move from one personal-law regime to another.

7.3 Lily Thomas v. Union of India

In *Lily Thomas v. Union of India*, (2000) 6 SCC 224, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the principle that conversion cannot

be used as a device to circumvent the law relating to monogamy applicable to an existing marriage.²⁰

The Court also reiterated that the enactment of a UCC is fundamentally a legislative matter.

7.4 John Vallamattom v. Union of India

In *John Vallamattom v. Union of India*, (2003) 6 SCC 611, the Supreme Court considered the constitutional validity of Section 118 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925.²¹

The Court struck down the discriminatory restriction affecting Christian testamentary dispositions.

The judgment also referred to Article 44 and the desirability of progressive legal reform.

7.5 Shayara Bano v. Union of India

In *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*, (2017) 9 SCC 1, a Constitution Bench considered the practice of *talaq-e-biddat*, commonly referred to as instant triple *talaq*.²²

By a 3:2 majority, the Court set aside the practice.

The case is important to the UCC debate because it illustrates the constitutional scrutiny of personal-law practices affecting individual rights and gender justice.

It is important, however, not to interpret *Shayara Bano* as a judgment creating a UCC. The Court invalidated a particular practice; it did not enact a comprehensive common civil code.

7.6 Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India

In *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 1, a nine-Judge Bench recognised privacy as a fundamental right protected by the Constitution.²³

The decision is relevant to UCC legislation because family relationships and intimate decisions fall within the broader sphere of personal autonomy.

Any legislation regulating marriage, divorce or live-in relationships should therefore satisfy constitutional requirements of legality, legitimate purpose and proportionality.

7.7 Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala

In *Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala*, (2019) 11 SCC 1, the Supreme Court considered the constitutional dimensions of religious practice, equality and access to a religious institution.²⁴

Although the case was not directly concerned with the UCC, it is relevant to the broader constitutional relationship between religious freedom and equality.

7.8 Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira

In *Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira*, (2019) 20 SCC 85, the Supreme Court discussed Goa's civil-law system.²⁵

¹⁷ *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*, (2017) 9 SCC 1.

¹⁸ *Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum*, (1985) 2 SCC 556.

¹⁹ *Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India*, (1995) 3 SCC 635.

²⁰ *Lily Thomas v. Union of India*, (2000) 6 SCC 224.

²¹ *John Vallamattom v. Union of India*, (2003) 6 SCC 611.

²² *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*, (2017) 9 SCC 1.

²³ *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 1.

²⁴ *Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala*, (2019) 11 SCC 1.

²⁵ *Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira*, (2019) 20 SCC 85.

The Court noted that Goa provides an important example of a common civil-law framework applicable to persons irrespective of religion, subject to limited exceptions.

The Supreme Court expressly referred to Article 44 and observed that the Constitution-makers had hoped that the State would endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code.

The Goa example is therefore frequently cited in discussions concerning the feasibility of a common civil-law framework in India.

8. UCC and Gender Justice

Gender justice is one of the strongest constitutional arguments advanced in support of reform of personal laws.

Family-law rules can directly affect women's:

- (i) right to maintenance;
- (ii) right to property;
- (iii) right to inheritance;
- (iv) marital status;
- (v) right to divorce;
- (vi) guardianship rights; and
- (vii) personal dignity.

Articles 14 and 15, together with Article 21, provide a constitutional foundation for protecting women against discriminatory legal practices.

However, uniformity alone does not automatically guarantee equality. A UCC must therefore be substantively gender-just.

9. Advantages of Uniform Civil Code

9.1 Equality Before Law

A common civil framework can reduce differences in civil rights based solely on religious identity.

9.2 Gender Justice

Uniform provisions concerning marriage, divorce, maintenance and inheritance can strengthen women's legal rights.

9.3 Legal Certainty

Common rules can reduce uncertainty arising from the simultaneous operation of multiple personal-law systems.

9.4 Simplification of Family Law

Courts and citizens may benefit from a clearer and more uniform statutory framework.

9.5 National Integration

Supporters of the UCC argue that common civil rights may strengthen the constitutional idea of equal citizenship.

9.6 Protection of Vulnerable Persons

A well-designed code can provide stronger protection for women, children and persons who are economically or socially vulnerable.

9.7 Reduction of Conflict Between Personal Laws

A common legal framework may reduce situations where individuals attempt to change legal regimes through conversion or other means.

10. Disadvantages and Challenges of Uniform Civil Code

10.1 India's Cultural Diversity

India contains numerous religious, cultural and customary communities. A single framework may not easily accommodate every legitimate difference.

10.2 Possibility of Majoritarian Influence

A UCC must not become a mechanism through which the practices of one community are imposed upon others.

10.3 Religious Freedom

Poorly drafted legislation may create unnecessary conflict with Articles 25 and 26.

10.4 Privacy and Autonomy

Excessive regulation of intimate relationships may raise concerns under Article 21.

10.5 Tribal Customs

Customary laws of Scheduled Tribes and other indigenous communities require special constitutional consideration.

10.6 Legislative Complexity

A comprehensive UCC would interact with numerous existing Central and State laws.

10.7 Implementation

Enactment alone would not guarantee success. Effective registration, administrative infrastructure, judicial training and public awareness would be necessary.

11. Uniform Civil Code and Assam

Assam provides an important contemporary example of State-level legislative engagement with the UCC.

The Assam Legislative Assembly's official legislative database lists "The Uniform Civil Code, Assam, 2026" among the Bills introduced before the Assembly.²⁶

The Assam initiative is particularly significant because Assam has a complex combination of religious communities, tribal communities and customary practices.

A State-level UCC must therefore be assessed in light of:

- (i) Article 14;
- (ii) Article 15;
- (iii) Article 21;
- (iv) Articles 25 and 26;
- (v) Article 44;
- (vi) Article 246;
- (vii) Article 254; and
- (viii) relevant entries in the Seventh Schedule.

²⁶ Assam Legislative Assembly, The Uniform Civil Code, Assam, 2026, official legislative record.

12. Major Areas Covered by the Assam UCC Framework

The Assam legislative initiative concerns important family-law matters, including marriage, divorce and succession. The official Assam Legislative Assembly records identify the measure as The Uniform Civil Code, Assam, 2026.²⁷

The proposed framework is therefore important from the perspective of creating common civil standards within the State.

12.1 Marriage

Marriage is one of the principal subjects addressed by a UCC.

A common statutory framework can establish uniform legal requirements concerning:

age; consent; prohibited degrees; monogamy; registration; and legal consequences of marriage.

Religious ceremonies may continue to have social and spiritual importance even where the civil consequences of marriage are governed by common legislation.

12.2 Divorce

A UCC can establish common legal grounds and procedures for dissolution of marriage.

This may simplify the legal position and ensure that the rights of spouses are not determined solely by their religious identity.

12.3 Succession and Inheritance

Succession is one of the most complex areas of personal law.

A common succession framework can promote equality between male and female heirs and provide greater certainty concerning property rights.

However, the drafting of succession provisions must be undertaken carefully because property and inheritance are closely connected with family structures and customary practices.

12.4 Registration

Mandatory registration of marriage can provide documentary evidence of marital status.

It can help prevent:

denial of marriage;

fraudulent claims;

child-marriage-related disputes;

disputes concerning marital status; and

difficulties in claiming maintenance or inheritance.

12.5 Monogamy

A common law requiring monogamy would establish the same civil rule concerning the number of simultaneous marriages irrespective of religious identity.

This would also address situations in which individuals attempt to use religious conversion to avoid the consequences of existing matrimonial obligations.

The principles developed in *Sarla Mudgal* and *Lily Thomas* are particularly relevant here.

13. Scheduled Tribes and the Assam Context

One of the important issues in the Assam UCC debate concerns tribal communities and customary law.

The Assam UCC framework provides for exclusion of Scheduled Tribes from its application. This aspect is constitutionally significant because India's constitutional structure contains special protections relating to tribal communities and Scheduled Areas.

The approach demonstrates that uniformity need not necessarily mean the immediate abolition of every customary practice.

Instead, constitutional uniformity may operate alongside constitutionally protected cultural and customary autonomy.

This is particularly important for Assam because of its substantial tribal population and diverse customary traditions.

14. UCC and Muslim Personal Law

The expression Muslim Personal Law should be used accurately and respectfully in legal scholarship.

The UCC debate has often focused disproportionately on Muslim Personal Law. However, the constitutional question is broader.

Personal laws of different communities contain different rules concerning:

marriage; divorce; maintenance; inheritance; adoption or guardianship; and succession.

The purpose of constitutional reform should therefore be equality of civil rights rather than targeting a particular religious community.

The Supreme Court's jurisprudence demonstrates that individual practices may be subjected to constitutional scrutiny where they conflict with applicable constitutional guarantees.

The decision in *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*, for example, concerned *talaq-e-biddat* and not Muslim Personal Law as a whole.²⁸

Therefore, it would be legally inaccurate to equate the UCC with abolition of Muslim identity or religious practice.

15. UCC and Religious Freedom

The constitutional challenge to a UCC must be assessed through Articles 25 and 26.

Article 25 protects freedom of conscience and the profession, practice and propagation of religion. However, Article 25(2) permits State regulation of secular activities associated with religious practice and permits legislation for social welfare and reform.

Consequently, the constitutional issue is not whether a practice is historically associated with religion, but whether the particular subject being regulated falls within constitutionally protected religious freedom or within the sphere of secular civil regulation. The Supreme Court's discussion in *Shayara Bano* is particularly relevant. The judgment distinguishes religious freedom under Article 25 from secular matters such as marriage and succession.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*, (2017) 9 SCC 1.

²⁹ Ibid.

16. UCC and Secularism

Indian secularism requires the State to maintain constitutional neutrality among religions while also permitting social reform. A UCC can therefore be consistent with secularism if it: applies equally to citizens; does not favour one religion; protects legitimate religious freedom; regulates only appropriate civil matters; and advances constitutional equality. The objective should not be religious uniformity but civil-law equality.

17. Role of the Judiciary

The judiciary has an important role in determining the constitutional validity of UCC legislation. Courts may examine legislation under Article 14 examine discrimination under Article 15; protect privacy and autonomy under Article 21; determine the scope of Articles 25 and 26; examine legislative competence; resolve questions of repugnancy under Article 254; and interpret the legislation consistently with constitutional values. However, the judiciary cannot itself enact a comprehensive UCC.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly referred to Article 44 but has recognised that the actual formulation of a UCC is primarily a legislative function.

18. Need for Public Consultation

A UCC directly affects family life and civil status. Its drafting should therefore be based upon extensive consultation. Consultation should include: constitutional experts; family-law scholars; women's organisations; religious communities; tribal representatives; civil-society organisations; lawyers; judicial officers; academics; and members of the general public. Public consultation is particularly important in Assam because of its religious, tribal and customary diversity.

19. Constitutional Balance

The central constitutional challenge can be represented as follows:

Equality requires common protection of civil rights.
Religious freedom requires protection of conscience and legitimate religious practice.
Personal liberty requires respect for individual autonomy.
Cultural diversity requires sensitivity towards legitimate customs.
Article 44 encourages the State to work towards a common civil code.
A constitutionally sound UCC must therefore balance all these principles.

20. Suggestions for a Constitutionally Sustainable UCC

A future UCC should ideally be based upon the following principles:

20.1 Equality

Civil rights should not depend upon religious identity.

20.2 Gender Justice

Men and women should receive equal legal rights in marriage, divorce, maintenance and succession.

20.3 Religious Freedom

Legitimate religious ceremonies and beliefs should not be unnecessarily interfered with.

20.4 Individual Autonomy

The law should respect privacy and personal choices.

20.5 Tribal Protection

Constitutionally protected tribal customs and rights should receive appropriate protection.

20.6 Simplicity

The law should be understandable to ordinary citizens.

20.7 Consultation

The drafting process should involve all relevant communities.

20.8 Judicial Review

The legislation must remain subject to constitutional review.

20.9 Effective Implementation

Registration, administrative procedures and legal awareness should accompany the legislation.

21. CONCLUSION

The Uniform Civil Code is not merely a question of replacing one set of personal laws with another. It represents a constitutional challenge involving equality, liberty, dignity, religious freedom, cultural diversity and social reform.

Article 44 establishes the constitutional aspiration that the State should endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code. Although the provision is not directly enforceable, Article 37 gives the Directive Principles an important constitutional position.

The Supreme Court's decisions in *Shah Bano*, *Sarla Mudgal*, *Lily Thomas*, *John Vallamattom*, *Shayara Bano* and *Jose Paulo Coutinho* demonstrate the continuing judicial engagement with personal law, gender justice, secular civil regulation and Article 44. The Supreme Court's decision in *Jose Paulo Coutinho* specifically records that Article 44 has remained an important constitutional aspiration and refers to Goa as an example of a common civil-law system.

The Assam legislative development adds a new dimension to the debate. The Assam Legislative Assembly has officially published *The Uniform Civil Code, Assam, 2026*, making the State an important contemporary example of legislative engagement with Article 44.³⁰

The ultimate success of a UCC will depend upon its substance rather than its name. A genuinely constitutional UCC should provide equal civil rights, strengthen gender justice, protect individual dignity, respect legitimate religious freedom and accommodate constitutionally protected customary practices.

³⁰ Assam Legislative Assembly, *The Uniform Civil Code, Assam, 2026*, official legislative record.

Thus, the appropriate objective should not be uniformity for its own sake, but equality, justice and constitutional citizenship through a fair and inclusive civil-law framework.

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