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Q8(b)

Delineate the constitutional safeguard for religious minorities in India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Anthropology GS 2 · 15 marks · Linguistic and religious minorities and their social, political and economic status.

5.2 Linguistic and religious minorities and their social, political and economic status.

Core demand of the question

- Outline the constitutional safeguards for religious minorities in India
- Keep the answer to a 15-mark length of about 200 words

Revision summary

Equality articles bar religious discrimination in civic life and jobs.

Articles 25 to 28 protect conscience and denomination, with public-order limits.

Article 29 conserves culture and language.

Article 30 is the minority school right.

Commissions help oversee; they do not replace the constitutional text.

Introduction

Religious minorities in India are communities that are not the numerical majority in the relevant unit. The Constitution safeguards them as equal citizens with extra cultural and educational shields.

Body

Equality and non-discrimination

- **Article 14** promises equality before law. **Article 15** bars discrimination on religion, among other grounds, and allows special provision.
- **Article 16** extends that equality to public employment.

Freedom of religion

- **Articles 25 to 28** cover conscience, profession, practice, and propagation, subject to public order, morality, and health.
- They also cover religious denominations' affairs, limits on tax for a particular religion, and freedom in educational institutions about religious instruction.

Culture and schools

- **Article 29** protects the right to conserve a distinct language, script, and culture, used by religious as well as linguistic minorities.
- **Article 30** is the operational school right: minorities may establish and administer educational institutions.

- These clauses are the multicultural core, distinct from ST land law.

Institutional and political frame

- A statutory **National Commission** for Minorities and related bodies add oversight. They are not a substitute for the articles.
- Personal law and conversion politics test **Article 25** in court. Anthropology notes the gap between text and riot-year practice.

Limit

- Safeguards are rights against the state and a school power. They do not by themselves equalise property or stop majoritarian street power.

Flow diagram

Articles 14 15 16 -> Equality

Articles 25 to 28 -> Faith practice

Articles 29 30 -> Culture schools

Conclusion

Religious minorities are guarded by equality articles, **Articles 25** to 28 on faith, and **Articles 29** to 30 on culture and schools. The text is strong. Delivery depends on courts, police, and politics.

Facts & figures

Article 25

Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice, and propagation of religion.

Article 26

Right of religious denominations to manage their own affairs in matters of religion.

Article 29

Right of sections of citizens to conserve distinct language, script, or culture.

Article 30

Right of religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.