

LAW COMMISSION
GOVERNMENT OF GOA
MAQUINEZ PALACE ANNEXE, GROUND FLOOR,
OLD G.M.C COMPLEX, PANAJI-GOA 403001

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PRESS NOTE

Places of worship, shrines etc in public places

Numerous small and big shrines exist along National Highways and other roads as well as in public places like bus stands, municipal markets, etc. Devotee's throng these places resulting in traffic jam and inconvenience to the public in general. Some shrines crop up overnight and are built without any licence or approval from the authorities. It is feared that over a period of time these shrines may be used by vested interests for fomenting disharmony among people of different faiths.

It is suggested that a legal framework be devised to effectively curb sprouting of unauthorised Places of worship or shrines in public places. The Supreme Court of India has also in a recent judgement given directions to the government to take steps to remove unauthorised shrines from public places.

The Law Commission proposes to create a framework:

1. To provide for constitution of a registered Managing Committee for every religious place of worship or shrine so that persons responsible for upkeep, maintenance and protection of such shrines are known and are held accountable.
2. To provide for registration of existing religious places of worship and shrines in public and private places with full details of their extent, nature, area occupied, survey numbers, lists of devotees, managing committees, major religious activities performed in or at such place every year etc.

3. To make it compulsory to obtain licences and approvals for new religious places of worship or shrines with full details as to area occupied, buildings erected and the festivities to be performed.
4. To create a controlling authority empowered to take action against illegal religious places of worship and shrines which may come up after the appointed date and to decide requests for their removal and relocation, payment of compensation, etc if such places are or likely to be a hindrance to infrastructural projects

Individuals, NGOs, religious bodies and others are invited to send their specific views in this regard within the next two weeks.

All communications may be addressed to the Chairman / Secretary, Law Commission, Goa, c/o R. D. Khalap, 188, Altinho, Mapusa, Goa. Or e-mailed to rdkhalap@rediffmail.com or chairman-glc.goa@nic.in