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**Anti-conversion bill passed in fifth state assembly**

**Received from the Church of North India:**

**Anti-Conversion Bill Passed in Rajasthan Assembly**

It is again disheartening news for the Church to know that an Anti-Conversion Bill has been passed recently in the Legislative Assembly of Rajasthan. India is a federal country and each state has the right to pass its own bills and laws as envisaged in the Constitution. Now the present BJP Government, apparently anti-Christian, in Rajasthan, having a two-thirds majority, found it easy to pass the bill. Rajasthan is the fifth state in India to pass this bill. The bill has the following effects:

1. The government can put any Christian leader in jail if someone complains that s/he is engaged in conversions. (Needless to mention that this will be seriously misused in the coming days to put anyone behind bars.)
2. The punishment is between two to five years of rigorous imprisonment.
3. It is also a non-bailable offense. One cannot expect to get bail under any condition.
4. The government has sealed many Christian orphanages, leprosy homes, hospitals, colleges and schools and has put them under their direct supervision.

Bishop M. A. Thomas is still hiding and his son Bishop Samuel Thomas is in prison. We do not see his early release as the entire state government machinery is inhumanly against Christians.

The truth of the matter is that this bill has been introduced to especially target Christians and Muslims who are doing a lot of work for the upliftment of Dalits, the so-called "untouchables" in the Indian society, and many of them are embracing other faiths. However, it must be said that there are a large number of Hindus who have goodwill towards Christians and it is only a minority of anti-social elements who are patronized by political powers to spread the poison of religious fundamentalism.