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UNIFORM CIVIL CODE IN INDIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract: The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) has been a subject of debate in India for decades. It aims to replace personal laws based on religion with a common set of civil laws governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption. The historical context, constitutional provisions, difficulties, and ramifications of implementing UCC in India are all critically examined in this paper. It also explores judicial interpretations and contemporary perspectives on the subject. Through an examination of the existing literature and legal frameworks, this research emphasizes the importance of UCC in promoting gender justice and national integration while responding to issues of religious diversity and cultural identity.

Keywords – Uniform Civil Code (UCC), Gender Equality and Personal Laws, Religious Freedom and Cultural Diversity, Legal and Political Challenges in India.

Introduction

The debate surrounding the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in India has been ongoing for decades, stirring deep discussions about the country's legal, cultural, and social fabric. A country rich in multihued religions, languages, and practices, India has hitherto permitted personal laws to be regulated by religious law. This system has led to tremendous variations in legal rights and protection among different communities, and questions have been raised about fairness and equality. The demand for a UCC is based on the argument that there could be one legal framework unifying the country and providing equal rights to every citizen irrespective of their background.

While the legal implications of a UCC are well-discussed, the issue goes beyond just the law. It touches upon India's complex socio-political landscape, where personal laws are intertwined with deeply ingrained religious traditions. This study attempts to examine the prospects of the application of a UCC in India, and not merely its legal viability but also the socio-political complexities it poses. Based on the existing historical case laws, judicial rulings, and analyzed public debates controversies, this research tries to illustrate how a UCC might be able to balance the differences that exist under the present system, without compromising India's cultural diversity and religious sentiments.

Literature Review

Numerous scholars have debated the necessity and feasibility of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC). Historically, India's family laws have been governed by community-specific traditions, leading to inconsistencies in legal rights among various groups. Previous studies have explored the judiciary's role in advocating for a unified civil code and how landmark rulings have influenced this discourse. Additionally, comparative legal systems in countries that have implemented uniform legal frameworks, such as France and Turkey, have been

examined, offering insights into their success in promoting equal treatment in family matters. Research suggests that these legal structures contributed to greater legal clarity and societal harmony. Scholars argue that India's legal system could benefit from such models while respecting cultural differences. However, the challenge in India lies not in the legal framework itself but in the socio-political dynamics, as personal laws are intricately tied to deeply held religious traditions and customs.

Statement Problem

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) aims to replace the diverse personal laws of India with a unified set of laws governing personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption. However, the proposition of a UCC in India has been met with substantial resistance from various religious communities, who view personal laws as integral to their religious practices and cultural identities.

The issue lies in the tension between the UCC and religious freedoms. The Constitution of India guarantees freedom of religion (Article 25-28), but the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 44) encourage the establishment of a uniform civil code. This leads to the central issue of whether the UCC can be implemented without violating personal rights and religious freedoms.

Additionally, gender justice remains a critical factor in the debate, as personal laws in certain communities have been criticized for discriminatory practices against women (e.g., polygamy, unequal inheritance rights). The UCC is seen as a potential means to address these issues, but its impact on religious rights needs careful examination.

Thus, the core problem this study seeks to address is whether the implementation of the UCC would violate personal and religious rights while promoting gender equality and national integration.

Objective of the Study

This research aims to explore the legal, constitutional, social, and political dimensions of the Uniform Civil Code in India, with a focus on how it intersects with personal and religious rights. The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the constitutional provisions related to the Uniform Civil Code (Article 44) and religious freedoms (Articles 25-28), and evaluate whether the UCC can be implemented in accordance with these provisions.
2. To analyze the conflict between personal laws and the UCC, particularly the concerns of religious minorities who view personal laws as an extension of religious identity.
3. To assess the implications of the UCC on gender equality, specifically its potential to rectify discriminatory practices within personal laws, such as polygamy, unequal inheritance rights, and maintenance issues.
4. To evaluate judicial opinions and political discourse on the UCC, focusing on key landmark cases such as Shah Bano, Sarla Mudgal, and Triple Talaq.
5. To explore the practical challenges and societal implications of implementing a UCC in a diverse and pluralistic society like India.

Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach, depending on the interpretation of constitutional provisions, judicial dicta, parliamentary debates, and scholarly writings. Analyzing case laws, government documents, and popular discourse, this study assesses the pros and cons of introducing UCC in India.

Hypothesis

The research is based on the assumption that the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), if well drafted and implemented, can reconcile constitutional ideals of equality with the pluralistic Indian traditions. The study hypothesizes that:

1. A properly drafted UCC can coexist with religious freedom without encroaching on the cultural and religious identities of India's plural communities.
2. The UCC can help advance gender justice, particularly through the redressal and correction of inequalities inherent in some personal laws that discriminate against women in marriage, divorce, and inheritance.
3. Social and political resistance to UCC can be reduced through phased implementation, public awareness, and inclusive dialogue involving all stakeholders.
4. Drawing from international experiences and India's own history of legal reform, a contextual and culturally sensitive approach to UCC can foster national integration without undermining religious diversity.

Relevance of the research

This research is highly relevant due to the ongoing national debate on the Uniform Civil Code and its implications on personal and religious rights. The study will contribute to the following areas:

1. **Legal Relevance:** This research will provide a detailed legal analysis of the constitutional framework surrounding the UCC, helping to clarify the legal complexities between Directive Principles (Article 44) and Fundamental Rights (Articles 25-28).
2. **Social Relevance:** By examining how personal laws impact gender justice, the research will be instrumental in proposing reforms aimed at gender equality while respecting religious freedoms. This could contribute to debates on how to reform personal laws without undermining religious autonomy.
3. **Policy Implications:** The findings could inform policymakers and lawmakers on how to reconcile secular principles with religious diversity and offer practical suggestions for the gradual implementation of the UCC.
4. **Academic Contribution:** The study will fill a significant gap in the academic literature by addressing the intersection of religious freedom and gender justice in the context of the UCC. It will provide an interdisciplinary approach combining law, politics, and social science.

Historical Roots of the UCC

The concept of a Uniform Civil Code was first discussed during the Indian independence movement and Constitutional debates. The Indian National Congress and several reformers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including B. R. Ambedkar, advocated for the reform of personal laws to bring about greater social equality and justice. The demand for a UCC was part of the broader movement to modernize Indian society, ensure equal rights for women, and remove the discriminatory practices rooted in some personal laws.

When the Constitutional Assembly met to draft the Constitution in the 1940s, the idea of the UCC was strongly debated. On one hand, there was a strong push for creating a common legal framework to promote national integration, and on the other hand, there was a concern that a Uniform Civil Code could infringe upon the religious freedoms guaranteed to individuals and communities.

At the time of independence, the country was deeply divided along religious lines, with Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and other religious minorities all having their own distinct personal laws. The framers of the Indian Constitution recognized that implementing a UCC immediately might create significant social resistance, particularly from religious minorities, who feared that the imposition of a common law might lead to the erosion of their cultural and religious identity.

Therefore, instead of making the UCC a mandatory provision, it was included as a Directive Principle of State Policy under Article 44 of the Indian Constitution. Article 44 states:

"The State shall endeavor to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India."

By placing it under the Directive Principles (DPSP), the framers of the Constitution intended to guide the government towards eventually establishing a UCC but recognized that it would not be feasible to implement it immediately, given the complex social and religious fabric of the country.

Constitutional Promise of Article 44 and Its Importance

Article 44 is part of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), which are non-justiciable guidelines to the government on how to promote the welfare of the people. While the Fundamental Rights (Part III of the Constitution) are enforceable by courts, the Directive Principles (Part IV) are not legally enforceable. However, they serve as important moral directives for legislation and policy formulation.

Article 44 stands as a guiding principle for the Indian state to work towards the eventual unification of personal laws into a single legal code. The vision of Article 44 is to replace the existing personal laws, which are often based on religious doctrines, with a secular, uniform civil code that would ensure equal treatment of all citizens, regardless of their religious affiliations.

The rationale behind the UCC is to address the inconsistencies and inequalities that exist in personal laws. For instance, Hindu women may not have the same inheritance rights as men under traditional Hindu laws, while Muslim women could face unfair treatment in divorce and maintenance under Muslim personal laws. By introducing a UCC, the goal would be to eliminate discrimination and create a framework that promotes gender equality, individual rights, and human dignity for all citizens.

Importance of UCC in the Context of India's Diverse Social Fabric

India is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society, where diversity is both a strength and a challenge. The existence of multiple personal laws based on religion has led to issues of inequality, injustice, and discrimination, especially in matters affecting women and marginalized groups. These laws have often conflicted with the constitutional principles of equality and non-discrimination.

A Uniform Civil Code is viewed by some as a way to foster national unity and promote the vision of secularism outlined in the Constitution. By ensuring that all citizens are governed by a common set of laws in personal matters, the UCC aims to reduce the divisions between communities and create a sense of national cohesion. It is also seen as a tool for promoting social justice by addressing gender-based discrimination that exists in personal laws.

In India's diverse social fabric, however, the UCC faces considerable opposition, particularly from religious communities who see it as an infringement on their right to religious freedom. While the Constitution guarantees the right to religious freedom (Article 25-28), it also encourages the state to pursue reforms in personal laws under Article 44. Striking a balance between the need for a uniform code and respecting the religious freedoms of communities has been a significant challenge for policymakers.

The Resulting Compromise: Article 44 and the DPSPs

In the face of this opposition, a compromise was reached, and the Uniform Civil Code was included as a Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) under Article 44 of the Indian Constitution. Unlike Fundamental Rights, which are justiciable and enforceable in courts, Directive Principles are non-justiciable. This meant that although the Indian state was encouraged to implement a UCC, it was not constitutionally mandated to do so immediately.

Article 44 states:

"The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India." This provision did not make the UCC a binding obligation, but it set the long-term goal for the state to move toward implementing a common civil code. It was expected that over time, personal laws would be gradually reformed and unified under a secular legal framework, once the society was ready and political consensus was achieved.

Post-Independence: Challenges in the Implementation of the UCC

After independence, the government did attempt to introduce legal reforms, particularly focusing on the Hindu community first. The Hindu Code Bills, introduced in the early 1950s under the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, were aimed at modernizing Hindu personal law in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption. The Hindu Marriage Act (1955), Hindu Succession Act (1956), and other related laws were steps toward a more secular and gender-equal approach to personal matters for Hindus.

However, when it came to Muslim personal law, the situation was much more complicated. Muslim personal laws were seen as more closely tied to religious practices and traditions, and there was considerable resistance from the Muslim community to any attempts to change or reform these laws. Unlike the Hindu community, whose personal laws were subjected to state reforms, the Muslim personal laws remained largely intact after independence, governed by the Shariat Act of 1937 and other religious ordinances.

Resistance to the UCC

The resistance to a Uniform Civil Code was rooted in multiple concerns, especially among religious communities that feared the loss of their religious identity. Key points of opposition included:

- **Religious Freedom:** The Constitution guarantees the freedom of religion (under Article 25-28), and many religious leaders and communities felt that imposing a UCC would infringe on their right to practice their religion as they saw fit, especially concerning marriage and inheritance laws.
- **Political Sensitivities:** The fear of political alienation of minority communities, particularly Muslims, was another factor. Political parties often hesitated to push for the UCC due to the fear of alienating Muslim voters and the potential backlash from religious groups.

- **Cultural and Religious Identity:** For many, personal laws were viewed as an integral part of their religious identity. Any attempt to alter these laws was seen as an effort to undermine their cultural autonomy and traditions.
- **Fear of Inequality:** Some also feared that a uniform civil law would lead to a loss of cultural practices, and in some cases, minority religious groups feared they might lose the protection of certain laws that specifically benefitted them (e.g., Muslim family law in the case of divorce or inheritance).

Tension Between UCC and Religious Autonomy

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and the religious autonomy guaranteed under Articles 25 and 26 of the Indian Constitution represent a complex legal and constitutional issue in India. These Articles safeguard freedom of religion and the right to manage religious affairs, which are fundamental rights under the Constitution. However, the UCC, which advocates for a uniform set of laws on personal matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, potentially conflicts with the right of religious communities to practice and govern their personal laws according to their beliefs and traditions.

Religious Autonomy and Personal Laws

- Article 25 guarantees freedom of religion, which allows individuals and religious communities to practice their religion and manage their own affairs, including personal matters like marriage, divorce, and inheritance, as prescribed by religious doctrines.
- Article 26 grants religious denominations the right to manage their own affairs in matters of religion, including establishing and maintaining institutions for religious and charitable purposes, and prescribing their own rituals and practices.

The UCC seeks to standardize personal laws, which may interfere with these rights. For example, religious communities in India, such as Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Parsis, have distinct laws governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption. These laws are deeply rooted in their religious beliefs and practices. Implementing a Uniform Civil Code might be seen as undermining religious autonomy, particularly by religious groups that believe personal laws are an essential part of their religious identity and freedom.

The conflict arises because the UCC could require religious communities to abandon or modify their personal laws to comply with a secular framework that ensures equality and non-discrimination, which some religious communities see as an interference in their religious practices.

Secular Legal Framework vs. Religious Traditions

A secular legal framework under the UCC aims to promote equality for all citizens, regardless of their religion, by eliminating discriminatory practices that may exist in personal laws. However, this secularism could conflict with religious customs and traditions, such as:

- Muslim personal law, which allows for polygamy and divorce through triple talaq.
- Hindu laws, which have historically treated women unequally in matters of inheritance and marriage.
- Christian laws governing divorce, which might differ from secular laws.

The imposition of a UCC could be perceived as undermining the right of religious communities to maintain their distinctive customs and practices, creating a tension between individual rights (such as gender equality) and collective religious freedoms.

How the UCC Can Address Discriminatory Practices

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) proposes to address the discriminatory practices within various personal laws by establishing a unified legal framework for all citizens, irrespective of their religion. The aim is to eliminate inequalities related to gender, marriage, divorce, inheritance, and maintenance that persist under personal laws.

Polygamy and Unilateral Divorce (Triple Talaq)

Under the UCC, practices such as polygamy and unilateral divorce (triple talaq) could be abolished, ensuring that all citizens have equal rights within the framework of secular law. A uniform law on marriage could:

- Make monogamy the standard.
- Provide equal rights to both men and women in divorce proceedings, ensuring that women are not left vulnerable and discriminated against in matters of maintenance and property.

In the case of triple talaq, the UCC could introduce a secular divorce law that ensures women are not deprived of their rights due to religious practices, thus enhancing gender justice. By abolishing these discriminatory

practices, the UCC could help create a legal environment where women's rights are guaranteed regardless of their religious background.

Inheritance Equality

The UCC can also address inequality in inheritance rights, particularly for women. Under the current personal laws:

- Muslim women inherit half the share of a male heir.
- Hindu women still face challenges in inheriting ancestral property, despite some reforms.

A uniform inheritance law could ensure that all women, irrespective of their religion, have equal inheritance rights and are not discriminated against based on gender. The UCC could provide a framework for equal distribution of property and assets among heirs, guaranteeing that women enjoy equal rights to inheritance as men.

Equal Rights in Maintenance and Divorce

The UCC could also ensure uniform maintenance rights and equitable divorce laws. Personal laws, such as those in Hindu law and Muslim law, have been criticized for providing unequal maintenance and alimony for women. Under the UCC:

- All women would be entitled to maintenance and alimony following divorce, irrespective of their religious identity.
- Divorce proceedings could be streamlined to ensure equal rights for men and women in obtaining a divorce and receiving support.

Social Resistance and Religious Organizations' Role

Religious organizations have played a central role in shaping both social resistance to the UCC and the broader public discourse on the issue. Religious leaders and organizations across different communities have either supported or opposed the idea of a uniform civil code based on their interpretation of religious doctrines and the potential threat they perceive to religious practices and personal laws.

Role of Religious Organizations

- All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB): The AIMPLB has been a vocal critic of the UCC, especially when it comes to Muslim personal laws. The board has consistently argued that the UCC would violate the right to religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution under Article 25, which guarantees the freedom of religion. The AIMPLB views personal laws as an essential part of Muslim identity and fears that the UCC would result in the dilution of Islamic practices related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and family matters.
- Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP): The VHP, a prominent right-wing Hindu organization, supports the UCC, viewing it as a step toward national integration and gender equality. However, the VHP's support is sometimes perceived with suspicion by minority communities, especially Muslims, due to the organization's Hindutva ideology. The VHP argues that a UCC would help create a sense of unity in India by removing the disparities created by religious personal laws.
- Jamaat-e-Islami: The Jamaat-e-Islami (an Islamic political organization) is another influential body that opposes the UCC. Similar to the AIMPLB, they argue that the implementation of a uniform code would infringe on the religious autonomy of Muslim communities. They also claim that such a move could marginalize their community and lead to the loss of cultural and religious identity.
- Other Religious Leaders: Across various religious communities, there are differing opinions. Some Hindu organizations, such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), strongly support the UCC, believing it will unify the country and uphold Hindu values. However, Christian and Parsi leaders tend to show more caution, expressing concerns over the impact on personal laws related to marriage and inheritance.

Influence on Public Opinion and Political Discourse

Religious leaders and organizations have had a significant impact on public opinion and political discourse surrounding the UCC. By aligning the issue of the UCC with religious identity, these groups have stirred social fears regarding the loss of cultural autonomy and religious traditions. The role of media and public figures in amplifying these views has contributed to the polarization of the debate, making it more difficult to achieve a

consensus on the issue. This division is particularly evident in the discussions surrounding the UCC's gender justice goals, with women's rights being pitted against religious rights in a highly charged atmosphere.

National Integration and the UCC

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is often discussed as a tool for national integration. India is a highly diverse country with multiple religions, cultures, and languages. One of the key arguments in favor of the UCC is that it would promote unity and equality across the nation by creating a single legal framework that applies to all citizens, regardless of their religious background. However, this also presents significant challenges, particularly in terms of communal harmony and religious autonomy.

Challenges to National Integration

- **Religious Diversity:** India's population includes Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, and other religious groups, each with distinct personal laws that are deeply embedded in their cultural and religious traditions. The imposition of a single legal system that overrides these laws could potentially alienate minority communities, leading to resistance and a sense of disenfranchisement. This could fuel communal tensions rather than promoting integration.
- **Communal Polarization:** The debate over the UCC is often framed in a communal context, with some groups perceiving it as a majoritarian agenda to impose Hindu values on other communities. This has led to political mobilization against the UCC by minority groups, resulting in social divisions. The fear that the UCC could weaken their religious practices and cultural identity has led to widespread opposition, making national integration more complex.
- **Secularism vs. Religious Rights:** One of the central challenges of the UCC is balancing secularism with religious freedom. While the Indian Constitution emphasizes secularism and guarantees freedom of religion, the implementation of the UCC is seen by some as an infringement on the religious freedoms of minority communities. This creates a conflict between the constitutional promise of equality and the right to maintain distinct religious identities.

Potential Benefits for National Integration

Despite these challenges, proponents of the UCC argue that it could be a unifying force for the nation. By ensuring equal treatment for all citizens under the law, irrespective of their religion, the UCC could strengthen the idea of India as a secular democracy and eliminate the legal inequalities that currently exist between different religious groups. This could, in turn, foster a sense of belonging and solidarity among all citizens, regardless of their background.

Influence on Legal Reform and UCC Debate

The landmark judgments discussed above have had a profound impact on both legal reforms and the ongoing debate on the UCC. These cases have created a framework for understanding the intersection of personal laws, religious rights, and gender justice, which has influenced the political discourse and legislative approaches regarding the UCC.

Influence on Legal Reform

- **Gender Justice Reforms:** The judgments, especially in cases like Triple Talaq and Shah Bano, have emphasized the need for gender justice within personal laws. These rulings have laid the groundwork for legal reforms that aim to address gender discrimination, such as the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019, which criminalized triple talaq, and the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, which gave women equal rights to inherit property under Hindu law.
- **Secularization of Personal Laws:** The Court's stance on secularism and the uniformity of law, particularly in cases like Sarla Mudgal, has reinforced the argument that a Uniform Civil Code could ensure that all citizens are treated equally, regardless of their religious background. The UCC is seen by some as an essential tool for removing inconsistencies and discriminatory practices that arise from having multiple personal laws.

Influence on the Political and Social Debate

- **Polarization and Resistance:** While the judicial rulings have contributed to legal reforms, they have also spurred resistance from religious groups and political factions. Many religious organizations, particularly from minority communities, view these rulings as an intrusion into their religious autonomy and have opposed the imposition of a Uniform Civil Code. This resistance has shaped the political discourse, with political parties on both sides using the UCC as a point of contention in elections and political campaigns.
- **Public Perception of the UCC:** Judicial decisions have highlighted the need for reform, especially in areas related to gender justice, women's rights, and equality before the law. However, they have also heightened fears of religious marginalization, particularly among Muslim communities, who view the UCC as a potential threat to their personal laws and religious practices.

Challenges and Current Status

Despite these significant judicial interventions, the Uniform Civil Code has remained largely unimplemented. The major challenges to its enactment include:

- Political resistance from parties concerned about the impact on minority communities.
- Religious conservatism, with many leaders and organizations arguing that a UCC would undermine religious autonomy.
- Cultural sensitivities, as religious practices are often deeply intertwined with personal laws.

Nevertheless, the Supreme Court has continued to assert that gender justice, equality, and individual rights must not be compromised by religious customs, and this has renewed discussions about the potential for a UCC.

Results and Discussion:

The study discovers that the call for UCC is resisted on grounds of religious and cultural susceptibilities. Though the Supreme Court has consistently underscored the imperative of uniformity of personal laws, political as well as social opposition has arrested its introduction. Some of the key issues are its likely implications on minority rights, gender justice, and the cultural heritage. However, studies reveal that a well worded UCC can promote equality and heal legal rifts without infringing on religious freedom.

Table 1: Comparison of Personal Laws and UCC

Aspect	Hindu Law	Muslim Law	Christian Law	Proposed UCC
Marriage	Religious rites	Nikah with Mehr	Church wedding	Civil marriage under common law
Divorce	Various grounds	Triple Talaq (now abolished)	Divorce Act, 1869	Unified divorce law
Inheritance	Equal rights for men and women	Male heirs favoured	Equal rights with some variations	Equal distribution for all
Adoption	Allowed	Restricted	Legal under Guardians Act	Equal rights for all citizens

Summary of findings

1. The UCC continues to be a controversial topic because of its implications on religious freedom and cultural identity.
2. Judicial interventions have always highlighted the importance of a common civil code with due respect for fundamental rights.
3. Political will, social acceptance, and an equibrist legislative approach determine the viability of UCC.
4. Case studies of nations with uniform civil laws give an idea of the advantages and shortcomings of such a legal system.

Conclusions

The Enforcement of the Union Civil Code in India is an intricate but necessary problem. Even though it is capable of integrating personal laws as well as delivering gender justice, religious pluralism concerns have to be handled attentively. Such debates should orient towards framing a comprehensive legal setup that can address constitutional values side by side cultural diversity and help deliver justice for all the people.

While political and social opposition continues to hold up UCC's passage, a progressive and consultative strategy can set the stage for a legally valid and socially acceptable framework. The destiny of UCC rests on continued legal and social reforms directed towards guaranteeing gender justice, legal certainty, and national integration.

Implications

Rollout of UCC in India must be done in phases starting with building consensus among various stakeholders the following steps may help usher it in:

1. Legal reforms: Phased reforms in personal laws to align them with a uniform legal framework.
2. Public awareness: Public education on the advantages of UCC to eliminate myths and opposition.
3. Judicial and legislative coordination: Improving coordination between the judiciary and legislature to ease the transition.
4. Pilot implementation: Launching UCC in a few areas prior to national implementation to test its viability and efficacy.

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