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¹[153A. Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony.- (1) Whoever-

(a) by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise, promotes or attempts to promote, on grounds or religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, or

(b) commits any act which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, and which disturbs or is likely to disturb the public tranquility.

Shall be punished with imprisonment ¹[which shall not be less than four years but may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine].

²[(c) organizes any exercise, movement, drill or other similar activity intending that the participants in such activity shall use or be trained to use criminal force or violence or knowing it to be likely that the participants in such activity will use or be trained to use criminal force or violence or participates in such activity intending to use or be trained to use criminal force or violence or knowing it to be likely that the participants in such activity will use or be trained to use criminal force or violence, against any religious, racial language or regional group or caste or community and such activity for any reason whatsoever causes or is likely to cause fear or alarm or a feeling of insecurity amongst members of such religious, racial, language or regional group or caste or community.]

(2) **Offence committed in place of worship, etc.-** whoever commits an offence specified in subsection (1) in any place of worship or in any assembly engaged in the performance of religious worship or religious ceremonies, shall be punished with imprisonment ³[which shall not be less than five years but may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine.]

⁴{153B. Assertions etc. prejudicial to maintenance of harmony-

(1) Whoever, by words either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise,-

1. Subs. by Act XII of 1980, s.5.
2. Ins. by Act X of 1983.
3. Subs. by Act XII of 1980, s.5.
4. Ins. by Act X of 1983.

(a) asserts, counsels, advises, propagates or publishes that any class of persons shall, by reason of their being members of any religious, racial, language or regional group or caste or community, be denied or deprived of their rights as citizens of India, or

(b) makes or publishes any assertion, counsel, plea or appeal concerning the obligation of any class of persons, by reason of their being members of any religious, racial, language, or regional group or caste or community, and such assertion, counsel, plea or appeal causes or is likely to cause disharmony or feelings of enmity or hatred or ill-will between such members and other persons,

shall be punished with imprisonment which shall not be less than 4 years but may extend to 10 years and shall also be liable to fine.

(2) Whoever commits an offence specified in sub-section (1) in any place of worship or in any assembly engaged in the performance of religious worship or religious ceremony, shall be punished with imprisonment which shall not be less than 4 years but may extend to 10 years and shall also be liable to fine.]

CHAPTER IX-A

OF OFFENCES RELATING TO ELECTIONS

171-A. “Candidate”, “electoral right” defined.-

For the purposes of this chapter-

(a) “candidate means a person who has been nominated as a candidate at any election and includes a person who, when an election is in contemplation, holds himself out as a prospective candidate thereat; provided that he is subsequently nominated as a candidate at such election;

(b) “electoral right” means the right of a person to stand or not to stand as, or to withdraw from being a candidate or to vote or refrain from voting at an election.

171-B. Bribery

(1) Whoever-

(i) gives a gratification to any person with the object of inducing him or any other person to exercise any electoral right or of rewarding any person for having exercised any such right; or

(ii) accepts either for himself or for any other person any gratification as a reward for exercising any such right or for inducing or attempting to induce any other person to exercise any such right; commits the offence of bribery:

Provided that a declaration of public policy or a promise of public action shall not be an offence under this section .

(2) A person who offers, or agrees to give, or offers or attempts to procure, a gratification shall be deemed to give a gratification.

(3) A person who obtains or agrees to accept or attempts to obtain a gratification, shall be deemed to accept a gratification and a person who accepts a gratification as a motive for doing what he does not intend to do, or as a reward for doing what he has not done, shall be deemed to have accepted the gratification as a reward.

171-C. Under influence at elections

(1) Whoever voluntarily interferes or attempts to interfere with the free exercise of any electoral right commits the offence of undue influence at an election.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of sub-section (1), whoever-

(a) threatens any candidate or voter, or any person in whom a candidate or voter is interested, with injury of any kind, or

(b) induces or attempts to induce a candidate or voter to believe that he or any person in whom he is interested will become or will be rendered an object of Divine displeasure or of spiritual censure,

shall, be deemed to interfere with the free exercise of the electoral right of such candidate or voter, within the meaning of sub-section (1).

(3) A declaration of public policy or a promise of public action, or the mere exercise of a legal right without intent to interfere with an electoral right, shall not be deemed to be interference with the meaning of this section.

171-D. Personation at elections

Whoever at an election applies for a voting paper or votes in the name of any other person, whether living or dead, or in a fictitious name or who having voted once at such election applies at the same election for a voting paper in his own name, and whoever abets, procures or attempts to procure the voting by any person in any such way, commits the offence of personation at an election.

171-E. Punishment for bribery

Whoever commits the offence of bribery shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both;

Provided that bribery by treating shall be punished with fine only.

Explanation.- “Treating” means that form of bribery where the gratification consists in food, drinks, entertainment or provision.

171-F. Punishment for undue influence or personation at an election

Whoever commits the offence of undue influence or personation at an election shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.

171-G. False statement in connection with an election

Whoever with intent to affect the result of an election makes or publishes any statement purporting to be a statement of fact which is false and which he either knows or believes to be false or does not believe to be true, in relation to the personal character or conduct of any candidate, shall be punished with fine.

171-H. Illegal payment in connection with an election

Whoever without the general or special authority in writing of a candidate incurs or authorizes expenses on account of the holding of any public meeting, or upon any advertisement, circular or publication, or in any other way whatsoever for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of such candidate, shall be punished with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees:

Provided that if any person having incurred any such expenses not exceeding the amount of ten rupees without authority obtains within ten days from the date on which such expenses

were incurred the approval in writing of the candidate, he shall be deemed to have incurred such expenses with the authority of the candidate.

171-I. Failure to keep election accounts

Whoever being required by any law for the time being in force or any rule having the force of law to keep accounts of expenses incurred at or in connection with an election fails to keep such accounts, shall be punished with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees.

505. Statements conducing to public mischief.-

¹[(1)] Whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement, rumour or report,-

(a) with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, ²[any officer, soldier, sailor or airman in the Army, Navy or Air Force of India to mutiny or otherwise disregard or fail in his duty as such; or

(b) with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm to the public, or to any section of the public whereby any person may be induced to commit an offence against the state or against the public tranquillity; or

(c) with intent to incite, or which is likely to incite, any class or community of persons to commit any offence against any other class or community,

Shall be punished with imprisonment ³[which shall not be less than three years but may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine.]

⁴[(2) **Statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes.-** Whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement or report containing rumour or alarming news with intent to create or promote, or which is likely to create or promote, on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, feeling of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, shall be punished with imprisonment ¹[which shall not be less than three years but may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine.]

(3) **Offence under sub-section (2) committed to place of worship, etc.-** Whoever commits an offence specified in sub-section (2) in any place of worship or in any assembly engaged in the performance of religious worship or religious ceremonies, shall be punished with imprisonment ²[which shall not be less than four years but may extend to ten years.]

Exception.- It does not amount to an offence, within the meaning of this section, when the person making, publishing or circulating any such statement, rumour or report, has responsible grounds for believing that such statement, rumour or report is true and makes, publishes or circulates it in good faith and without any such intent as aforesaid.

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1. Section 505 re-numbered as sub-section (1) by Act XVII of 1970.

2. Substituted by Act III of 1967.

3. Substituted by Act III of 1967.

4. Sub-section (2) and (3) inserted by Act XVII of 1970.