
CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PARTICIPATION OF THE HON'BLE SPEAKER OF THE TAMIL NADU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AT THE MARCH FOR LIFE 2026

Don Siyon, B.A. LL.B., Christ Academy Institute of Law,
Bengaluru, Karnataka State Law University

ABSTRACT

This article seeks to discuss the constitutional and legal issues that were raised upon the Honourable Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly's participation at the March for Life 2026. The controversy stems from the Speaker's remarks on the sanctity of unborn lives, the right to free conscience, freedom from speech and expression, secularism, the mother's right to choose, and a set of statutes related to induced abortions.

Furthermore, the article entertains the argument that such participation in a religiously motivated event could not have resulted in a direct or indirect endorsement of one particular religion by the State.

It also explores the notion that his involvement with the said event might have been exploited to advance his convictions under the guise of public office. The article's arguments rely on references to India's Constitution, statutes, and court decisions, which serve to highlight the difference between expressing one's philosophical standpoint and utilising one's position to impose it on others. Therefore, the article concludes that a perceived dissonance between the political and personal ideologies of the involved officials and those of the Constitution and statutory law does not constitute a constitutional or legal issue by default, and no violation of the said principles has been formally demonstrated.

It is worth noting that none of the arguments entertain the possibility of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly having endorsed one particular religious viewpoint. All of the following points focus on the potential of the Honourable Speaker's participation in the March for Life having resulted in abuse of his public office. Nevertheless, none of the referenced documents address this particular concern directly or explicitly.

1. Introduction:

On 9th August 2026, the Honourable Speaker of the State Legislature of Tamil Nadu, Thiru JCD Prabhakar, had participated in the 5th National March for Life held in the capital of the State of Tamil Nadu - Chennai, which had created considerable public and political discussion all over the country through various National media.¹

This event in which the Speaker had participated was organised as a pro-life movement advocating for the right to life and protection of life for the unborn human being and opposing abortion.² During his participation, the Speaker, Thiru JCD Prabhakar, expressed his personal belief regarding the beginning of human life at conception, along with referring to every child as a gift of God.³

Following this event, various political leaders and sections of the media criticized the Speaker, as his participation and statements were inconsistent with secularism and neutrality expected from a constitutional position holder.⁴ Allegations also included that his participation promoted a Christian or a Catholic agenda.

Now, the controversy which had arisen is not a question of the pro-life position itself but also a question of whether a person holding constitutional office retains the freedom of conscience, religious belief and expression guaranteed by the Constitution of India and whether participation in a religious event necessarily amounts to state endorsement of the religion.

The purpose of this note is to examine these questions from the standpoint of the Constitution of India, applicable statutory provisions and judicial precedents, and the very important aspect of this research concentrates on constitutional secularism, Articles 14, 19(1)(a), 21, 25 and 178 of the Constitution, the constitutional position and impartiality of the Speaker, and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, particularly in the topics such as abortion and reproductive choices in constitutional democracy.⁵

¹ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/life-begins-at-conception-tamil-nadu-speaker-sparks-row-over-anti-abortion-remarks/articleshow/133144435.cms>

² <https://marchforlifeindia.org/registration/>

³ <https://youtu.be/Ju9YMEPtLe8?si=dk4CZuq1PIQJYKJj>

⁴ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2026/Aug/11/tn-speaker-jcd-prabhakar-joins-anti-abortion-rally-draws-condemnation>

⁵ The Constitution of India, Preamble, arts. 14, 19(1)(a), 21, 25 and 178; Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.

2. Background of the Event:

The Fifth National March for Life 2026 is a two-day program held on 8th and 9th August 2026 at Stella Maris College, Chennai, a well-known reputed institution for women.⁶ This event was hosted by the Archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore.⁷ The two-day program included various events such as a marathon, life exhibition showcasing various stages of pregnancy and childbirth, effects of abortion, public meeting and pro-life rally. At last, it also followed religious prayer and the celebration of Holy Mass, which is sacred for Catholics.

According to the organisers, the event aimed at promoting awareness of the dignity of human life and increasing active public participation in protecting life, particularly of the unborn.

Now, according to reports, attendance records at the event say that there were more than 5,000 people who participated in the event.⁸ At last, the participation of the Speaker subsequently brought the event into wider political and media discussion, which forms the basic questions which are examined in this note.

3. Statement Made by the Honourable Speaker:

The address delivered by the Speaker in March for Life 2026 highlighted protection of human life and dignity of the unborn child, along with circumstances faced by women during unexpected pregnancy. The Speaker also expressed that the society and community to show her support and care for her and her child.

The following are translated extracts from the Speaker's address. The original Tamil wording is retained separately where relevant.

3.1 Human Life and the Dignity of the Unborn

The Speaker stated: *"The fact that a child has not yet been born does not diminish its value... it is nevertheless a life; that life has a future and that life has a life of its own."*⁹

⁶ <https://marchforlifeindia.org/registration/>

⁷ <https://www.catholicconnect.in/news/archdiocese-of-madras-mylapore-invites-faithful-to-fifth-national-march-for-life-2026>

⁸ <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2026-08/from-parish-to-nation-charis-india-s-five-year-fight-for-life.html>

⁹ JCD Prabhakar, Address at the Fifth National March for Life 2026, Chennai, 9 August 2026 (Tamil; English)

He referred to the belief of the movement in the following terms: *“Life begins at conception... the fundamental belief of this movement is that the value of a child's life should not be considered only from the day of birth, but that it should be recognised as life beginning in the womb.”*

3.2 Religious Basis of the Speaker's Belief

The Speaker also expressed that: *“Life is a sacred gift given by God.”* He very particularly acknowledged that Christians hold this belief that every child is a gift of God and hold invaluable gift of life.

3.3 On Women Facing Unexpected Pregnancies:

“When a woman faces an unexpected pregnancy, she may face various difficulties. There may be economic problems, lack of family support, social pressure and health problems.”

He further stated: *“The first thing we should say is, ‘You are not alone; I am with you.’ There is a great responsibility and duty upon everyone gathered here to instil that assurance in her heart.”*

3.4 On Support Rather Than Condemnation

The Speaker expressly emphasised that women should receive support rather than social condemnation: *“She should not be shamed or blamed. What she needs is support, not judgment; compassion, not condemnation; community, not isolation.”*

3.5 On Healthcare and Social Support

The Speaker further called for practical support for women and children: *“She and the child should have access to medical facilities. We must stand by her emotionally. Only then can we create a genuine culture of life.”*

4. Nature of the Controversy and Allegations Raised:

The participation of the Honourable Speaker generated criticism from various political parties

as well as sections of the media.¹⁰ The principal objection was on his participation in a Catholic-organised pro-life event.¹¹ His belief and expression that life begins at conception were questioned as to whether a constitutional office bearer can have or say such things.¹² Questions were also raised on secularism, reproductive rights, women's autonomy over her body, and neutrality expected from the office of the Speaker.¹³

The key opposition was from the Bharatiya Janata Party through its Tamil Nadu State President and other political writers belonging to the party.¹⁴

5. Constitutional Framework:

The controversy in this matter concerning the participation and statements made by the Honourable Speaker should be taken and examined within the broader framework of the Constitution. It is very crucial to understand that the Constitution does not read secularism, freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, and individual dignity as separate, individual, isolated topics or principles, but these principles operate together in clearly understanding the limits of both individual rights and exercise of public authority.

The very clear formation of the Preamble of the Constitution grants liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, and which also declares India to be a secular Republic.¹⁵ Also, Part III of the Constitution, speaking on the Fundamental Rights, lists down Article 14, which establishes equality before law; Article 19(1)(a), which protects the freedom of speech and expression; and Article 21, which protects life and personal liberty¹⁶ and has been interpreted by the Honourable Supreme Court to include dignity, privacy and reproductive autonomy.¹⁷ Article 25, which guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion, subject to the constitutional limitations;¹⁸ and Article 178,

¹⁰ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2026/Aug/11/tn-speaker-jcd-prabhakar-joins-anti-abortion-rally-draws-condemnation>

¹¹ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2026/Aug/11/tn-speaker-jcd-prabhakar-joins-anti-abortion-rally-draws-condemnation>

¹² <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/life-begins-at-conception-tamil-nadu-speaker-sparks-row-over-anti-abortion-remarks/articleshow/133144435.cms>

¹³ <https://theprint.in/politics/question-of-faith-vijay-faces-secularism-test-over-speakers-abortion-stand-ministers-bible-remark/3011786/>

¹⁴ <https://organiser.org/2026/08/11/374669/politics/tamil-nadu-speaker-jcd-prabhakar-joins-church-anti-abortion-event-in-chennai-bjp-questions-stand-despite-indian-law/>

¹⁵ The Constitution of India, Preamble.

¹⁶ The Constitution of India, arts. 14, 19(1)(a) and 21.

¹⁷ *Suchita Srivastava v. Chandigarh Administration*, (2009) 9 SCC 1.

¹⁸ The Constitution of India, art. 25(1).

which provides for the office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, are articles of the Constitution which are relevant to answer the issue.¹⁹

6. Indian Secularism, Freedom of Conscience and Religious Expression:

The criticism against the Hon'ble Speaker is mainly based on the argument that his participation in the March for Life 2026 is against the secular character of India. Before considering that argument, it is necessary to understand what secularism means under our Constitution. Secularism does not mean that religion must be completely removed from public life. It means that the State cannot favour one religion over another and that every person is entitled to his or her own faith and conscience.

The Supreme Court, in *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, (1994) 3 SCC 1, recognised secularism as a basic feature of the Constitution and described it as “a positive concept of equal treatment of all religions.”²⁰ The principle is therefore mainly concerned with how the State treats religion. It does not say that a person who holds a public office must stop having religious beliefs or cannot express those beliefs as an individual.

This distinction is important in the present case. There is a difference between a government promoting a particular religion and an individual public office-holder expressing a belief which comes from his faith. If the Speaker had used the authority of the Assembly or the Government to impose Catholic teaching upon the people, that would raise a serious constitutional issue. But simply saying that he personally believes that life is a gift from God is not the same thing as declaring that the Government has adopted Catholic teaching as its policy.

Article 25 of the Constitution also has to be considered. It begins by giving “all persons” the freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to the limitations provided by the Constitution. The wording is important. It does not say that only private citizens enjoy freedom of conscience. A person does not cease to have a conscience merely because he occupies a public office.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala*, (1986) 3 SCC 615²¹ also shows the importance given to freedom of conscience. In that case, schoolchildren who

¹⁹ The Constitution of India, art. 178.

²⁰ *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, (1994) 3 SCC 1, ¶304

²¹ *Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala*, (1986) 3 SCC 615.

belonged to a particular religious belief respectfully declined to sing the National Anthem. The Supreme Court protected their rights under Articles 19(1)(a) and 25(1). The facts of that case are obviously different from the present controversy, since it did not concern a Speaker or participation in a religious rally. However, the case is important for the simple principle that the Constitution protects genuine matters of conscience even when a person's belief is different from that of others.

At the same time, Article 25 does not give anyone a free pass to do anything in the name of religion. Religious freedom is subject to public order, morality, health and the other fundamental rights.²² Therefore, if a public office-holder uses his official authority to discriminate against another religion, force people to follow a particular belief, or use government machinery for religious purposes, that conduct can certainly be questioned.

That, however, is different from what the Speaker said at the March for Life. He openly referred to his Christian belief and stated that “life is a sacred gift given by God.” We do not have to hide the religious nature of that statement. The real question is whether that personal religious belief was converted into an official position of the Government or the Legislative Assembly.

The fact that a belief has a religious foundation does not automatically make the expression of that belief a religious act of the State. A person may arrive at a view on human life because of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, philosophy, or simply personal moral conviction. The Constitution does not require every public discussion to be stripped of the personal beliefs of the people participating in it.

At the same time, the office of Speaker carries responsibilities. Therefore, the fact that the Speaker has freedom of conscience does not mean that everything he does in his official capacity is beyond question. We must look at what he actually did, in what capacity he did it, and whether he used the powers of his office to impose his belief on anyone.

This is therefore where the criticism needs to be tested carefully. The question is not simply, “Is the Speaker a Christian?” or “Was the event organised by Catholics?” The real question is whether his participation and statements amounted to an exercise of governmental authority in favour of a particular religion.

²² The Constitution of India, art. 25(1); *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, (1994) 3 SCC 1, ¶¶ 145–148.

On the facts presently considered, his participation and his expression of a Christian belief should therefore not automatically be treated as a violation of secularism. Whether his position crossed the line into the misuse of his office requires a separate examination of the constitutional role of the Speaker and the nature of his participation in the event. That issue is considered in the following sections.

7. Article 19(1)(a) – Freedom of Speech and Expression:

Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to freedom of speech and expression.²³ This is particularly relevant in the present case because the Speaker did more than merely participate in the March for Life; he also expressed his personal beliefs concerning the value of human life and the dignity of unborn children.

In a democracy, people are allowed to have different opinions on legal, moral, and public policy issues. Abortion is one such topic. Some people support a woman's right to end a pregnancy, while others believe that unborn children deserve protection. Even though these views are very different, neither of them is illegal just because they are controversial. The Supreme Court explained this clearly in the case *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India*, (2015) 5 SCC 1. "mere discussion or even advocacy of a particular cause howsoever unpopular is at the heart of Article 19(1)(a)"²⁴ and that it is only when such discussion or advocacy reaches the level of incitement that Article 19(2) becomes relevant.

in the present matter, the Speaker expressed his pro-life views at a public event, including his personal belief or shared belief of those in the audience that life begins at conception. People may strongly disagree with that view, but disagreement alone does not make an opinion illegal. For restraining and making it illegal, the fact that his belief comes from his Christian faith does not by itself provide such ground to accuse, because religion can naturally influence a person's views on life, morality, and even matters related to family. The Constitution protects both freedom of expression and freedom of conscience at the same time.

At the same time, it is also important to understand that a public office-holder cannot use his power to force others to accept or impose his personal beliefs. If the Speaker had used the Assembly or Government machinery to impose a religious belief, or to discriminate against

²³ The Constitution of India, art. 19(1)(a).

²⁴ *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India*, (2015) 5 SCC 1, ¶¶ 13–21.

those having a differing belief or opinion, that would be a different matter. However, attending an event and expressing an opinion is not the same as exercising State power.

Here, in particular, the Speaker was not only speaking about the unborn child; he also addressed women facing unexpected pregnancies, including financial difficulties, lack of family support, healthcare concerns, and social pressure, and called for support and compassion.

8. Constitutional Position, Role and Impartiality of the Speaker:

The chair and the office which the Speaker holds is undoubtedly an important constitutional post. The Speaker is entrusted with maintaining order in the House as well as being required by law to protect the integrity and dignity of the House, especially to hold the proceedings fairly and without partiality. Because of this position, there might be a question on the public conduct of the Speaker. However, this does not mean that the person occupying the office loses every personal opinion, belief, freedom and all the rights guaranteed to him outside the proceedings of the House.

Article 178 provides for the office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.²⁵ The requirement of impartiality is particularly important when the Speaker presides over debates, decides procedural questions or exercises powers attached to the office given to him by the Constitution, the Rules of Procedure or other law. This distinction is very important for the present matter since the Speaker did not make a statement while he was presiding over the Legislative Assembly or while deciding a matter concerning the Legislative Assembly. He attended a public event and spoke as a participant. Therefore, it cannot simply be said that every opinion and choice which the Speaker holds is an official decision of the Speaker or a decision of the Legislative Assembly.

At the same time, it is important to understand that this does not mean that the Speaker's conduct is irrelevant. The manner in which the Speaker acts in public can legitimately be questioned, particularly where the event involves politically or religiously sensitive matters. In the present matter, there is no indication from the speech that the Speaker presented his remarks as an order of the Legislative Assembly or announced that the Assembly had adopted his religious belief. He did not claim that the House had decided that abortion must be prohibited, nor did he exercise any legislative power at the event. His statements, therefore, need to be

²⁵The Constitution of India, art. 178.

separated from the institution of the State Assembly itself.

9. Religious Participation, Secularism and State Endorsement:

The March for Life was held in a Catholic setting, and the Speaker attended the event as a guest. This fact is not disputed at all. The real question is whether his presence at this event can be considered as the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly or the State Government supporting a specific religion.²⁶

For this, the answer cannot simply be yes. Attending a religious event is different from using the power of the State to promote a particular religious belief. The Constitution requires the State to remain neutral towards all religions,²⁷ but this does not mean that religion has to be absent from public life.

The Supreme Court has clearly made this distinction in *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, (1994). The Court held that the State has a duty to treat all religions equally and recognised secularism as an important part of the Constitution. The Court has also stated that “Our Constitution does not prohibit the practice of any religion either privately or publicly.” It also referred to Article 25, which allows people to believe in, practise and propagate their religion, subject to the limits set by the Constitution.

In this context, the Speaker exercised his freedom of religion and expressed his personal belief; it does not mean that the State itself adopted that religion. There is also another important difference between the nature of the event and the role of the Speaker. Just because an event is organised by a religious group, it does not mean that a public figure who attends it automatically becomes a representative of that religion.

The Speaker's speech should therefore be looked at separately from the beliefs, demands and statements of the organisers or other participants. The fact that the event was Catholic and that the Speaker attended it cannot, by itself, establish that the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly or the State Government endorsed Catholicism.

The argument that “a Catholic event was attended by the Speaker, therefore the State endorsed Catholicism” is therefore too broad. Secularism requires the State to treat all religions equally;

²⁶ The Constitution of India, art. 25(1); *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, (1994) 3 SCC 1, ¶¶ 145–148.

²⁷ *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, (1994) 3 SCC 1, ¶¶ 146, 148.

it does not require a public official to stop believing in his faith or to stay away from religious gatherings merely because he holds a constitutional office.

10. Pro-Life Advocacy, Abortion Law and Reproductive Rights:

The important criticism raised here raises the question of whether the Speaker supporting the protection of the unborn child contradicts the Constitution, and it is important here not to confuse two different questions, which are what the law presently permits and what a person is constitutionally free to believe and advocate for.

First and foremost, Indian law does recognise that, in certain circumstances, termination of pregnancy is permitted.²⁸ The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, as amended in the year 2021, provides a clear statutory framework for the termination of certain pregnancies, subject to the specified conditions. That means that abortion is not an absolute right but is only permitted by law in certain situations. Section 3 of the Act does not create an unrestricted right to terminate every pregnancy at any stage of the development of the growing foetus; it lays down certain circumstances and safeguards under which termination may be legally allowed. The constitutional protection of reproductive autonomy does not mean that the MTP Act permits termination in every circumstance or at every stage of pregnancy. The Act creates the legal framework within which termination is permitted.

At the same time, the Supreme Court has clearly recognised the reproductive rights of a woman in a decided matter concerning Article 21. In the matter of *Suchita Srivastava v. Chandigarh Administration*, decided in the year 2009, the Supreme Court clearly recognised women's reproductive autonomy as an important part of Article 21.²⁹ In this matter, the Supreme Court clearly held that a woman's right to make reproductive choices is also a dimension of personal liberty as understood under Article 21 of the Constitution of India along with that The Honourable court observed “there is also a ‘compelling state interest’ in protecting the life of the prospective child.”³⁰ This is the grounding principle upon which the later cases relating to abortion have relied.

The pro-life position does not necessarily involve the denial of this particular principle adopted

²⁸ The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, § 3, as amended by the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021.

²⁹ *Suchita Srivastava v. Chandigarh Administration*, (2009) 9 SCC 1, ¶ 11..

³⁰ *Suchita Srivastava v. Chandigarh Administration*, (2009) 9 SCC 1, ¶ 11.

by the Supreme Court, but it raises another different question: whether the unborn child should be regarded as deserving of moral and legal concern. A supporter of the pro-life principle emphasises that both the mother and the child require the protection of life and hold dignity for their livelihood. This is clearly reflected in the Speaker's speech, where he also emphasised that society and the community should work to protect women and that women should not be abandoned. Further, he explained that women facing unexpected pregnancies might face financial difficulties, lack of family support, healthcare problems and social pressure. During this, the community should work with compassion, support and societal assistance. That really means that his message was therefore not simply that women should be denied help; it was that society should create conditions in which both the mother and child will be protected.

A genuine pro-life position can be understood as more than opposition to abortion. It can include support for the survival of the mother with proper healthcare, counselling, assistance, family support and protection from the social pressure which may make a woman feel that abortion is her only option. Protecting unborn life and supporting women need not be treated here as competing objectives but as co-existing principles of the pro-life organisation.

Since there is an existence of a reproductive right, that does not mean disagreement with abortion is unconstitutional. The Supreme Court may recognise bodily autonomy, but that does not mean that every citizen must personally agree with abortion and remain silent about the moral and legal consequences it brings. A person may argue that life should be given greater protection to unborn life, may participate in a pro-life movement and may advocate legislative change through democratic means. Participation in such events expresses his personal right to freedom of expression.

This distinction is particularly important to the present matter. The Speaker did not just participate in the rally and express his belief and thereby take away women's legal rights. He did not announce or prohibit abortion, direct a doctor to refuse treatment, or issue an order preventing women from exercising their rights. He expressed his position in a public debate. That means there is a clear difference between advocating for a change in the law and unlawfully enforcing that change.

It is also important not to treat the MTP Act as though Parliament has declared abortion to be an unlimited or absolutely constitutionally valid right. The Act permits termination of

pregnancy only under the conditions permitted by law.³¹ Therefore, there is still legitimate room for democratic debate about whether the present balance between reproductive choice, the health and dignity of the mother, and the protection of unborn life is the right one. Hence, the participation of the Speaker falls within his moral position that life should be protected from conception, and he supported a movement seeking to promote a culture of life.

The protection of reproductive choice and concern for the unborn should therefore not be treated as mutually exclusive subjects in a constitutional democracy. While the law presently provides a framework for abortion and reproductive choices, citizens retain the freedom to express their opinions, question that framework, argue for greater protection of unborn life and seek changes through democratic means.

11. Speaker's Office, Religious-Bias Allegations and Alleged Misuse of Office:

Another important and one of the strongest criticisms is that the Speaker attended an event conducted by the Church and openly spoke about his Christian beliefs. Various political parties have criticised this participation, and some have gone further by describing it as evidence that he was promoting a Church agenda or allowing religious influence to enter a constitutional office. This criticism, however, needs to be carefully understood in the light of the Constitution.

A person's religious belief and the use of public office are not the same thing. It is an undisputed fact that the Speaker is a Christian and that he openly expressed his Christian beliefs at the event. It is also true that he attended an event organised in a Catholic setting. But these facts alone do not establish that he was acting on behalf of the Church.

The real questions are different: What did he actually do in his capacity as Speaker? Did he use his office or act in an official capacity to impose a religious doctrine? Did he use Government machinery to advance the interests of the Church? Did he discriminate against anyone because of their religious faith? Did he exercise any power given to him as Speaker under the Constitution or the Rules of the Assembly to impose a religious belief? These are the questions that can properly be examined, but they require actual evidence.

In the present case, the Speaker attended the event and expressed his personal belief concerning

³¹ The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, § 3, as amended by the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021.

the dignity of the unborn child. Nothing in those statements, by itself, shows that he claimed to speak on behalf of the Catholic Church or announced that the Legislative Assembly had adopted any such religious position.

Religious belief on its own cannot be seen as proof that a person is biased in their role. A person can have a religious belief and still have a certain opinion on a public issue without being an agent or representative of a religious organization. So the real question is not just “Why does he believe this?”. “Did he use his position to push that belief?”

The Speaker is supposed to be fair when doing their job in the Assembly. That does not mean they have to give up personal beliefs outside the House. If there was proof that they used their role to stop people who disagreed change the way the Assembly works or support a religious view then the issue of bias would be important. But going to a rally and sharing a belief on their own does not show any of that.

The same is true for the claim that he misused his office. At the March for Life he did not use the power of the Assembly to pass anything give orders or make anyone follow a belief. He talked at an event. Said he supports protecting unborn life. That is different from using the power of the State.

The claim that he acted as a “Church agent” or was pushing a “Church agenda” needs more than just the fact that he is a Christian went to a Catholic event or shared a belief that matches his faith. There should be proof that he was working for the Church or using his official role for that purpose.

It is also important to remember that support for life is not something only one religion has. People can agree with it for reasons like religion, philosophy, ethics, science, personal beliefs or other causes. So linking the Speaker’s Pro -life views to his Christian faith does not mean he was acting as a Church representative.

At the end the main question is simple: Was the power of the State actually used to support a religion or stop others from their rights? If not then the Speaker’s personal views and being at the event cannot on their own show that they misused their office.

Looking at the facts in this note what is clear is the Speaker’s support for protecting unborn life and his Christian view of that belief. That is not the same, as proving he worked for the

Church made the Legislative Assembly into a group or forced his beliefs on others.

12. Constitutional Findings and Observations:

Having considered the Speaker's speech, his association with the March for Life, the constitutional and legal provisions on abortion and the role of the Speaker, we can evaluate the charges levelled against him one by one. We can reject all of them as groundless since they are not a necessary consequence of any action he has taken, nor have they been proven by sufficient evidence. Therefore, let us examine these allegations one by one.

First, attending a Catholic mass does not possibly be considered a breach of secularism as demanded by the Constitution. The principle of secularism in the Indian Constitution does not prohibit a member of the State from practising his religion. It only obliges the State to treat all religions equally. This principle does not forbid any official from attending any religious event.

Second, advocating a pro-life stance is not unconstitutional either. The Speaker's statement on life beginning at conception and being a gift from God constitute his deeply-held personal beliefs. These beliefs can be seen as an expression of his religion.

It is true that many people in India disagree with these views. However, their unpopularity cannot make them unconstitutional.

Third, the right to choose, as enshrined in Article 21, does not prevent the Government from restricting abortions. The present constitutional and statutory framework does not recognise a constitutional right to life from conception identical to the pregnant woman's Article 21 rights. However, this does not mean that the Government cannot pursue a policy of protecting life. It should be noted that there is a difference between lobbying for a pro-life amendment and misusing the post of the Speaker to depose a woman's right to abortion as established by the law.

The allegations that the Speaker acted as a "Church agent" or promoted "Church agenda" should similarly be rejected. The mere fact that he is a Christian and that he attended a Catholic event cannot suggest that he promoted the views of the Church. At best, they can indicate that his faith made him adhere to a certain viewpoint on the sanctity of life.

The same goes for allegations of the Speaker's lack of impartiality. The Speaker of the

Assembly is obliged to remain neutral when presiding over the House. However, this does not mean that he is not allowed to have any personal beliefs at all. If it turned out that he has misused his position to suppress dissent in the Assembly on this issue, intimidate his colleagues, or obstruct the passage of any bills on abortions or foetal protection, these allegations would have some grounds. However, as it stands, his participation in the March for Life cannot be seen as an anti-secular or anti-democratic act.

The crucial question, in our view, is whether the Speaker of the Assembly has abused his office by way of using the power inherent in that office to impose his will on the people. If it can be proved that he has misused those powers for the purpose of advancing his personal views, such conduct would raise a serious constitutional and legal concern and could attract appropriate accountability under the law. However, the mere fact that he voiced pro-life opinions at the March for Life rally does not, on the materials at hand, provide sufficient grounds for holding his actions as anti-secular or in any other way illegal, let alone criminal.

Consequently, based on the evidence presented in this note, the allegations of the speaker's religious bias, misusing his post, violating secularism, and obstructing the right to choose cannot be substantiated. Nevertheless, everyone is free to criticise the Speakers for attending the March for Life and expressing his views with which others may strongly disagree. We believe that such criticism may well be a perfectly normal manifestation of democratic debate and freedom of speech. However, it should not be treated as a basis for finding constitutional or legal wrongdoing merely because a person in public office expressed a personal opinion.

The line between mere criticism and blasphemy against the Republic, between defending democracy and obstructing abortions, between having personal beliefs and abusing one's office to impose them on others, is not difficult to discern. Unless there is evidence that the Speaker of the Assembly has actually abused his post to advance his religious or pro-life views, such allegations have no grounds.

13. Conclusion:

The controversy surrounding the Hon'ble Speaker's participation in the March for Life 2026 seems to appear to have arisen in part from the argument that a person holding a Christian belief about the sanctity of life from conception cannot publicly express that belief while

holding constitutional office.³²

However, the facts of the case fail to establish such a violation of the law. The Constitution protects freedom of speech and expression, subject to the restrictions recognised under Article 19(2). The speaker can indeed hold and publish his view that life begins at conception and, thus, should be protected from abortion by virtue of his Christian faith. This might be a view that many people do not share, but this, in and of itself, does not make it unconstitutional.

The Constitution prohibits the abuse of offices by lawfully elected officials. Therefore, if the speaker had abused his position to impose a specific religious viewpoint, deny women the right to abortion, discriminate against people who hold different views, or use the resources of the Legislative Assembly to advance the cause of Church and its agenda, then his actions would indeed be unconstitutional. However, this note fails to establish such conduct on the part of the speaker. It merely states that he participated in the March and gave a speech defending the pro-life position.

Furthermore, the allegations of the speaker promoting the Church's agenda seem to be built on unsubstantiated claims as well. Being a devout Christian does not mean that every activity the person engages in is done in the name of the Church. Furthermore, it is unclear how exactly the speaker promoted the Church's agenda by participating in the March.

The Constitution protects reproductive autonomy, but it also protects the freedom to express and advocate different views on abortion, including the protection of unborn life.

In the end, the speaker can be criticized for holding such views, but his criticism does not stem from a constitutional violation. It is not a violation in and of itself for the speaker to express a pro-life position using his platform as a member of the assembly. Even if such positions are often held on religious grounds that many people reject and even if the March is, in fact, organized by the Catholic Church, this does not mean that the speaker promotes its agenda. It is up to the people to decide, but a constitutional democracy should make those decisions based on facts, not unsubstantiated allegations.

³² <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/life-begins-at-conception-tamil-nadu-speaker-sparks-row-over-anti-abortion-remarks/articleshow/133144435.cms>