

## **'Forced conversion' of minor girl creates uproar in Pakistan's Hindu community**

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The minority Hindus in Thar area of Pakistan is enraged over the alleged abduction, forcible conversion and marriage of a minor Hindu girl from their community.

### **Representational Pic**

According to a report in Dawn, 16-year-old Ravita Meghwar was allegedly abducted by men from the Syed community of Wanharo village near Nagarparkar, Thar, on June 6.

On Thursday, the girl appeared with her 'husband' Nawaz Ali Shah in Umerkot and informed media persons of her consent in both embracing Islam and her marriage.

The minor girl claimed to have embraced Islam in the presence of Pir Mohammad Ayub Jan Farooqui, an Islamic preacher, near the Samarro town of Umerkot district.

However, the girl's family insists that she was kidnapped and forced to convert.

Satram Das Meghwar, Ravita's father, has alleged that influential members of the Syed community had kidnapped his daughter after giving sleeping pills to the family.

He also accused police of not trying to trace her daughter till she was forced to convert.

According to the marriage certificate issued by the preacher, the girl is approximately eighteen years old, can marry the person of her choice and her Islamic name is Gulnaz.

However, her primary school certificate clearly states that she was born on July 14, 2001.

Expressing concern over the alleged abduction and the subsequent conversion of Ravita, the PML-N MNA from Thar and chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council, Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani said that a Hindu girl below 18 years of age cannot be converted according to the Hindu Marriage Act.

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