



THE DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES ACT, 1876



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THE DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES ACT, 1876

¹Act No. XIX OF 1876

[16th December, 1876]

An Act for the better control of public dramatic performances

Preamble. WHEREAS it is expedient to empower the Government to prohibit public dramatic performances which are scandalous, defamatory, seditious or obscene; It is hereby enacted as follows :—

1. Short title. This Act may be called the Dramatic Performances Act. 1876.

¹For the Statement of Objects and Reasons, see Gazette of India, 1876, Pt. V, p. 347 : for Proceedings in Council, see *ibid.*, Supplement, pp. 328, 343 and 1341. This Act has been declared to be in force in the Balochistan, see the Balochistan Laws Regulation, 1913 (Reg. 2 of 1913), s. 3, as amended by Regulation No. 5 of 1939.

Local extent. It extends to ¹[the whole of Pakistan].

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2. “Magistrate” defined. In this Act “Magistrate” means, ³* * * the Magistrate of the district.

3. Power to prohibit certain dramatic performances. Whenever the ⁴[Provincial Government] is of opinion that any play, pantomime or other drama performed or about to be performed in a public place is—

- (a) of a scandalous or defamatory nature, or
- (b) likely to excite feelings of disaffection to the Government established by law in ⁵[Pakistan], or
- (c) likely to deprave and corrupt persons present at the performance,

the ⁴[Provincial Government], ⁶* * * or such Magistrate as it may empower in this behalf, may by order prohibit the performance.

Explanation.—Any building or enclosure to which the public are admitted to witness a performance on payment of money shall be deemed a “public place” within the meaning of this section.

4. Power to serve order of prohibition. Penalty for disobeying order. A copy of any such order may be served on any person about to take part in the performance so prohibited, or on the owner or occupier of any house, room or place in which such performance is intended to take place; and any person on whom such copy is served, and who does, or willingly permits, any act in disobedience to such order, shall be punished on conviction before a Magistrate with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months, or with fine, or with both.

5. Power to notify order. Any such order may be notified by proclamation, and a written or printed notice thereof may be stuck up at any place or places adapted for giving information of the order to the persons intending to take part in or to witness the performance so prohibited.

6. Penalty for disobeying prohibition. Whoever after the notification of any such order—

- (a) takes part in the performance prohibited thereby or in any performance substantially the same as the performance so prohibited, or
- (b) in any manner assists in conducting any such performance, or

¹Subs. by the Central Laws (Statute Reform) Ordinance, 1960 (21 of 1960), s. 3 and 2nd Sch. (with effect from 14th October, 1955), for “all the Provinces and the Capital of the Federation” which had been subs. by A.O., 1949, Arts. 3 (2) and 4, for “the whole of British India”.

²The words “And it shall come into force at once” rep. by the Repealing and Amending Act, 1914 (10 of 1914).

³The words “in the Presidency-towns, a Magistrate of Police, and else where” omitted by A. O., 1949, Sch.

⁴Subs. by A. O., 1937 for “L. G.”.

⁵Subs. by the Federal Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1951 (26 of 1951), for “British India [or British Burma]”. The words in brackets had been ins. by A.O., 1937.

⁶The words “or outside the Presidency-towns the Provincial Government” omitted by A.O., 1949, Sch.