

THE IMMORAL TRAFFIC (PREVENTION) ACT, 1956

An Act to provide in pursuance of the International Convention signed at New York on the 9th day of May, 1950, for the prevention of immoral traffic.

Be it enacted by Parliament in the Seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:

1. Short title, extent and commencement.—(1) This Act may be called The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.

(2) It extends to the whole of India.

(3) This section shall come into force at once; and the remaining provisions of this come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, appoint.

2. Definitions.—In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

(a) “brothel“ includes any house, room, conveyance or place, or any portion of any house, room, conveyance or place, which is used for purposes of sexual exploitation or abuse for the gain of another person or for the mutual gain of two or more prostitutes;

(aa) “child“ means a person who has not completed the age of eighteen years;

(b) “corrective institution“ means an institution, by whatever name called (being an institution established or licenced as such under Section 21), in which persons, who are in need of correction, may be detained under this Act, and includes a shelter where under trials may be kept in pursuance of this Act;

(c) “magistrate“ means a Magistrate specified in the second column of the Schedule as being competent to exercise the powers conferred by the section in which the expression occurs and which is specified in the first column of the Schedule;

(d) “prescribed“ means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(e) [1] [* * * * *].

(f) “prostitution“ means the sexual exploitation or abuse of persons for commercial purposes or for consideration in money or in any other kind, and the expression “prostitute” shall be construed accordingly;

(g) “protective home“ means an institution, by whatever name called (being an institution established or licenced as such under Section 21), in which persons who are in need of care and protection, may be kept under this Act and where appropriate technically qualified persons, equipments and other facilities have been provided but does not include,—

(i) a shelter where undertrials may be kept in pursuance of this Act, or

(ii) a corrective institution;

(h) “public place“ means any place intended for use by, or accessible to, the public and includes any public conveyance;

(i) “special police officer“ means a police officer appointed by or on behalf of the State Government to be in charge of police duties within a specified area for the purpose of this Act;

(j) “trafficking police officer“ means a police officer appointed by the Central Government under sub-section (4) of Section 13.

2-A. Rule of construction regarding enactments not extending to Jammu and Kashmir.—Any reference in this Act to a law which is not in force in the State of Jammu and Kashmir shall in relation to that State, be construed as a reference to the corresponding law, if any, in force in that State.

3. Punishment for keeping a brothel or allowing premises to be used as a brothel.— (1) Any person who keeps or manages, or acts or assists in the keeping or management of, a brothel shall be punishable on first conviction with rigorous imprisonment for a term of not less than two years and which may extend to three years and also with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees and in the event of a second or subsequent conviction, with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three years and which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to two lakh rupees

(2) a any person who,—

(a) being the tenant, lessee, occupier or person in charge of any premises, uses, or knowingly allows any other person to use, such premises or any part thereof as a brothel, or

(b) being the owner, lessor or landlord of any premises or the agent of such owner, lessor or landlord, lets the same or any part thereof with the knowledge that the same or any part thereof is intended to be used as a brothel, or is wilfully a party to the use of such premises or any part thereof as a brothel,

shall be punishable on first conviction with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years and with fine which fine which may extend to two thousand rupees and in the event of a second or subsequent conviction, with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and also with fine.

(2-A) For the purposes of sub-section (2), it shall be presumed, until the contrary is proved, that any person referred to in clause (a) or clause (b) of that sub-section, is knowingly allowing the premises or any part thereof to be used as a brothel or, as the case may be, has knowledge that the premises or any part thereof are being used as a brothel, if,—

(a) a report is published in a newspaper having circulation in the area in which such person resides to the effect that the premises or any part thereof have been found to be used for prostitution as a result of a search made under this Act; or

(b) a copy of the list of all things found during the search referred to in clause (a) is given to such person.

(3) Notwithstanding any thing contained in any other law for the time being in force, on conviction of any person referred to in clause (a) or clause (d) of sub-section (2) of any offence under that sub-section in respect of any premises or any part thereof, any lease or agreement under which such premises have been leased out or held or occupied at the time of the commission of the offence, shall become void and inoperative with effect from the date of the said conviction.

4. Punishment for living on the earnings of prostitution .—(1) Any person over the age of eighteen years who knowingly lives, wholly or in part, on the earnings of the prostitution of any other person shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both, and where such earnings relate to the prostitution of a child, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term of not less than seven years and not more than ten years.

(2) Where any person over the age of eighteen years is proved,—

(a) to be living with, or to be habitually in the company of, a prostitute; or

(b) to have exercised control, direction or influence over the movements of a prostitute in such a manner as to show that such person is aiding abetting or compelling her prostitution; or

(c) to be acting as a tout or pimp on behalf of a prostitute,

it shall be presumed, until the contrary is proved, that such person is knowingly living on the earnings of prostitution of another person within the meaning of sub-section (1).

5. Procuring, inducing or taking person for the sake of prostitution .—(1) Any person who—

(a) procures or attempts to procure a person whether with or without his/her consent, for the purpose of prostitution; or

(b) induces a person to go from any place, with the intent that he/she may for the purpose of prostitution become the inmate of, or frequent, a brothel; or

(c) takes or attempts to take a person or causes a person to be taken, from one place to another with a view to his/her carrying on, or being brought up to carry on prostitution ; or

(d) causes or induces a person to carry on prostitution;

shall be punishable on conviction with rigorous imprisonment for a term of not less than three years and not more than seven years and also with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees, and if any offence under this sub-section is committed against the will of any person, the punishment of imprisonment for a term of seven years shall extend to imprisonment for a term of fourteen years:

Provided that if the person in respect of whom an offence committed under this subsection, is a child, the punishment provided under this sub-section shall extend to rigorous imprisonment for a term of not less than seven years but may extend to life.

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(3) An offence under this section shall be triable,—

(a) in the place from which a person is procured, induced to go, taken or caused to be taken or from which an attempt to procure or taken such persons made; or

(b) in the place to which she may have gone as a result of the inducement or to which he/she is taken or caused to be taken or an attempt to take him/her is made.

5A. Whoever recruits, transports, transfers, harbours, or receives a person for the purpose of prostitution by means of,—

(a) threat or use of force or coercion, abduction, fraud, deception; or

(b) abuse of power or a position of vulnerability; or

(c) giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of such person having control over another person,

commits the offence of trafficking in persons.

Explanation.—Where any person recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives a person for the purposes of prostitution, such person shall, until the contrary is proved, be presumed to have recruited, transported, transferred, harboured or received the person with the intent that the person shall be used for the purpose of prostitution.

5B. (1) Any person who commits trafficking in persons shall be punishable on first conviction with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years and in the event of a second or subsequent conviction with imprisonment for life.

(2) Any person who attempts to commit, or abets trafficking in persons shall also be deemed to have committed such trafficking in persons and shall be punishable with the punishment hereinbefore described.

5C. Any person who visits or is found in a brothel for the purpose of sexual exploitation of any victim of trafficking in persons shall on first conviction be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months or with fine which may extend to twenty thousand rupees or with both and in the event of a second or subsequent conviction with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to fifty thousand rupees.

6. Detaining a person in premises where prostitution is carried on.—(1) Any person who detains any other person, whether with or without his consent,—

(a) in any brothel, or

(b) in or upon any premises with intent that such person may have sexual intercourse with a person who is not the spouse of such person,

shall be punishable on conviction, with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than seven years but which may be for life or for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to one lakh rupees:

Provided that the court may for adequate and special reasons to be mentioned in the judgment, impose a sentence of imprisonment for a term which may be less than seven years.

(2) Where any person is found with a child in a brothel, it shall be presumed, unless the contrary is proved, that he has committed an offence under sub-section (1).

(2-A) Where a child found in a brothel, is, on medical examination, detected to have been sexually abused, it shall be presumed unless the contrary is proved, that the child has been detained for purposes of prostitution or, as the case may be, has been sexually exploited for commercial purposes.

(3) A person shall be presumed to detain a person in a brothel or in upon any premises for the purpose of sexual intercourse with a man other than her lawful husband, if such person, with intent to compel or induce her to remain there,—

(a) withholds from her any jewellery, wearing apparel, money or other property belonging to her, or

(b) threatens her with legal proceedings if she takes away with her any jewellery, wearing apparel, money or other property lent or supplied to her by or by the direction of such person.

(4) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, no suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against such woman or girl at the instance of the person by whom she has been detained, for the recovery of any jewellery, wearing apparel or other property alleged to have been lent or supplied to or for such woman or girl or to have been pledged by such woman or girl or for the recovery of any money alleged to be payable by such woman or girl.

7. Prostitution in or in the vicinity of public place .—(1) Any person who carries on prostitution and the person with whom such prostitution is carried on, in any premises:

(a) which are within the area or areas, notified under sub-section (3), or

(b) which are within a distance of two hundred meters of any place of public religious worship, educational institution, hotel, hospital, nursing home or such other public place of any kind as may be notified in this behalf by the Commissioner of Police or Magistrate in the manner prescribed,

shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months.

(1-A) Where an offence committed under sub-section (1) is in respect of a child, the person committing the offence shall be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which not be less than seven years but which may be for life or for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine:

Provided that the Court may, for adequate and special reasons to be mentioned in the judgment, impose a sentence of imprisonment for a term of less than seven years.

(2) Any person who:

(a) being the keeper of any public place knowingly permits prostitutes for purposes of their trade to resort to or remain in such place; or

(b) being the tenant, lessee, occupier or person in charge of any premises referred to in sub-section (1) knowingly permits the same or any part thereof to be used for prostitution; or

(c) being the owner, lessor or landlord of any premises referred to in sub-section (1), or the agent of such owner, lessor or landlord, lets the same or any part thereof with the knowledge that the same or any part thereof may be used for prostitution, or is wilfully a party to such use.

shall be punishable on first conviction with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months, or with fine which may extend to two hundred rupees, or with both, and in the event of a second or subsequent conviction with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months and also with fine, which may extend to two hundred rupees, and if the public place or premises happen to be a hotel, the licence for carrying on the business of such hotel under any law for the time being in force shall also be liable to be suspended for a period of not less than three months but which may extend to one year:

Provided that if an offence committed under this sub-section is in respect of a child in a hotel, such licence shall also be liable to be cancelled.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this sub-section, “hotel” shall have the meaning as in clause (6) of Section 2 of the Hotel-Receipts Tax Act, 1980 (54 of 1980).

(3) The State Government may, having regard to the kinds of persons frequenting any area or areas in the State, the nature and the density of population therein and other relevant considerations, by notification in the official Gazette, direct that the prostitution shall not be carried on in such area or areas as may be specified in the notification.

(4) Where the notification is issued under Sub-section (3) in respect of any area or areas, the State Government shall define the limits of such area or areas in the notification with reasonable certainty.

(5) No such notification shall be issued so as to have effect from a date earlier than the expiry of a period of ninety days after the date on which it is issued.

9. Seduction of a person in custody .—Any person who having the custody, charge or care of or in a position of authority over any person causes or aids or abets the seduction for prostitution of that shall be punishable on conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than seven years but which may be for life or for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine:

Provided that the court may, for adequate and special reasons to be mentioned in the judgment, impose a sentence of imprisonment for a term of less than seven years.

[3][2) *****]

[4][10. *****]

10-A. Detention in a corrective institution .—(1) Where,—

(a) a female offender is found guilty of an offence under Section 7, and

(b) the character, state of health and mental condition of the offender and the other circumstances of the case are such that it is expedient that she should be subject to detention for such term and such instruction and discipline as are conducive to her correction,

it shall be lawful for the court to pass, in lieu of a sentence of imprisonment, an order for detention in a corrective institution for such term, not being less than two years and not being more than seven years, as the court thinks fit:

Provided that before passing such an order,—

(i) the court shall give an opportunity to the offender to be heard and shall also consider any representation which the offender may make to the court as to the suitability of the case for treatment in such an institution, as also the report of the Probation Officer appointed under the Probation of Offender Act, 1958; and

(ii) the court shall record that it is satisfied that the character, state of health and mental condition of the offender and the other circumstances of the case are such that the offender is likely to benefit by such instruction and discipline as aforesaid.

(2) Subject to the provisions of sub-section (3), the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, relating to appeal, reference and revision, and of the Limitation Act, 1963 as to the period within which an appeal shall be filed, shall apply in relation to an order of detention under sub-section (1) as if the order had been a sentence of imprisonment for the same period as the period for which the detention was ordered.

(3) Subject to such rules as may be made in this behalf, the State Government or authority authorised in this behalf may, at any time after the expiration of six months from the date of an order for detention in a corrective institution, if it is satisfied that there is a reasonable probability that the offender will lead a useful and industrious life, discharge her from such an institution, without condition or with such conditions as may be considered fit, and grant her a written licence in such form as may be prescribed.

(4) The conditions on which an order is discharged under sub-section (3), may include requirements relating to residence of the offender and supervision over the offenders activities and movements.

11. Notification of address of previously convicted offenders .—(1) When any person having been convicted—

(a) by a court in India of an offence punishable under this Act or punishable under Section 363, Section 365, Section 366, Section 366-A, Section 366-B, Section 367, Section 368, Section 370, Section 371, Section 372 or Section 373 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), with imprisonment for a term of two years or up wards; or

(b) by a court or tribunal in any other country of an offence which would, if committed in India, have been punishable under this Act, or under any of the aforesaid sections with imprisonment for a like term,

is within a period of five years after release from prison, again convicted of any offence punishable under this Act or under any of those section with, imprisonment for a term of two years or upwards by a court, such court may, if it thinks fit, at the time of passing the sentence of imprisonment on such person, also order that his residence, and any change of, or absence from, such residence, after release, be notified according to rules made under Section 23 for a period not exceeding five years from the date of expiration of that sentence.

(2) If such conviction is set aside on appeal or otherwise, such order shall become void.

(3) An order under this section may also be made by an Appellate Court or by the High Court when exercising its powers of revision.

(4) Any person charged with a breach of any rule referred to in sub-section (1) may be tried by a Magistrate of competent jurisdiction in the District in which the place last notified as his residence is situated.

[5][12.*****]

13. Special police officer and advisory body .—(1) There shall be for each area to be specified by the State Government in this behalf a special police officer appointed by or on behalf of that government for dealing with offences under this Act in that area.

(2) The special police officer shall not be below the rank of a sub-inspector of Police.

(2-A) The District Magistrate may, if he considers it necessary or expedient so to do, confer upon any retired police or military officer all or any of the powers conferred by or under this Act on a special police officer, with respect to particular cases or classes of cases or to cases generally:

Provided that no such power shall be conferred on,—

(a) a retired police officer unless such officer, at the time of his retirement, was holding a post not below the rank of an inspector;

(b) a retired military officer unless such officer, at the time of his retirement, was holding a post not below the rank of a commissioned officer.

(3) For the efficient discharge of his functions in relation to offences under this Act,—

(a) the special police officer of an area shall be assisted by such number of subordinate police officers (including women police officers wherever practicable) as the State Government may think fit; and

(b) the State Government shall associate with the special police officer a non-official advisory body consisting of not more than five leading social welfare workers of that area (including women social welfare workers wherever practicable) to advise him on questions of general importance regarding the working of this Act.

(4) The Central Government may, for the purpose of investigating any offence under this Act or under any other law for the time being in force dealing with sexual exploitation of persons and committed in more than one State appoint such number of police officers as trafficking police officers and they shall exercise all the powers and discharge all the functions as are exercisable by special police officers under this Act with the modification that they shall exercise such powers and discharge such functions in relation to the whole of India.

13A. (1) The Central Government may constitute an Authority for the purposes of effectively preventing and combating the offence of trafficking in persons.

(2) The members of the Authority shall be appointed by the Central Government and shall be of such number and chosen in such manner as may be prescribed.

(3) The Chairperson of the Authority shall be one of the members appointed under sub-section (2) to be nominated by the Central Government.

(4) The term of office of the members of the Authority, the manner of filling vacancies among and the procedure to be followed in the discharge of their functions by the members shall be such as may be prescribed.

13B. (1) The State Government may constitute an Authority for the purposes of effectively preventing and combating the offence of trafficking in persons.

(2) The members of the Authority shall be appointed by the State Government and shall be of such number and chosen in such manner as may be prescribed.

(3) The Chairperson of the Authority shall be one of the members appointed under sub-section (2) to be nominated by the State Government.

(4) The term of office of the members of the Authority, the manner of filling vacancies among and the procedure to be followed in the discharge of their functions by the members shall be such as may be prescribed.

14. Offences to be cognizable .—Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974), an offence punishable under this Act shall be deemed to be a cognizable offence within the meaning of that Code:

Provided that, notwithstanding anything contained in that Code,—

(i) arrest without warrant may be made only by the special police officer or under his direction or guidance, or subject to his prior approval;

(ii) when the special police officer requires any officer subordinate to him to arrest without warrant otherwise than in his presence any person for an offence under this Act, he shall give that subordinate officer an order in writing, specifying the person to be arrested and the offence for which the arrest is being made; and the latter officer before arresting the person shall inform him of the substance of the order and, on being required by such person, show him the order;

(iii) any police officer not below the rank of sub-inspector specially authorised by the special police officer may, if he has reason to believe that on account of delay involved in obtaining the order of the special police officer, any valuable evidence relating to any offence under this Act is likely to be destroyed or concealed, or the person who has committed or is suspected to have committed the offence is likely to escape, or if the name and address of such a person is unknown or there is reason to suspect that a false name or address has been given, arrest the person concerned without such order, but in such a case he shall report, as soon as may be, to the special police officer the arrest and the circumstances in which the arrest was made.

15. Search without warrant .—(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, whenever the special police officer or the trafficking police officer as the case may be, has reasonable grounds for believing that an offence punishable under this Act has been or is being committed in respect of a person living in any premises, and that search of the premises with warrant cannot be made without undue delay, such officer may, after recording the grounds of his belief, enter and search such premises without a warrant.

(2) Before making a search under sub-section (1), the special police officer or the trafficking police officer, as the case may be shall call upon two or more respectable inhabitants (at least one of whom shall be a woman) of the locality in which the place to be searched is situate, to attend and witness the search and may issue an order in writing to them or any of them so to do:

Provided that the requirement as to the respectable inhabitants being from the locality in which the place to be searched is situate shall not apply to a woman required to attend and witness the search.

(3) Any person who, without reasonable cause, refuses or neglects, to attend and witness a search under this section, when called upon to do so by an order in writing delivered or tendered to him, shall be deemed to have committed an offence under Section 187 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860).

(4) The special police officer or the trafficking police officer, as the case may be, entering any premises under sub-section (1) shall be entitled to remove therefrom all the persons found therein.

(5) The special police officer or the trafficking police officer, as the case may be, after removing person under sub-section (4) shall forthwith produce her before the appropriate Magistrate.

(5-A) Any person who is produced before a Magistrate under sub-section (5), shall be examined by a registered medical practitioner for the purposes of determination of the age of such person, or for the detection of any injuries as a result of sexual abuse or for the presence of any sexually transmitted diseases.

Explanation.—In this sub-section, “registered medical practitioner” has the same meaning as in the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 (102 of 1956).

(6) The special police officer or the trafficking police officer, as the case may be, and other persons taking part in, or attending, and witnessing a search shall not be liable to any civil or criminal proceeding against them in respect of anything lawfully done in connection with, or for the purpose of, the search.

(6-A) The special police officer or the trafficking police officer, as the case may be, making a search under this section shall be accompanied by at least two women police officers, and where any woman or girl removed under sub-section (4) is required to be interrogated it shall be done by woman police officer and if no woman police officer is available, the interrogation shall be done only in the presence of a lady member of a recognised welfare institution or organization.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this sub-section and Section 17-A, “recognised welfare institution or organisation” means such institution or organisation as may be recognised in this behalf by the State Government.

(7) The provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) shall, so far as may be, apply to any search under this section as they apply to any search made under the authority of a warrant issued under 94 of the said Code.

16. Rescue of person—(1) Where a Magistrate has reason to believe from information received from the police or from any other person authorised by State Government in this behalf or otherwise, that any person is living, or is carrying, or is being made to carry on, prostitution in a brothel, he may direct a police officer not below the rank of a sub-inspector to enter such brothel, and to remove therefrom such person and produce her before him.

(2) The police officer, after removing the person shall forthwith produce her before the Magistrate issuing the order.

17. Intermediate custody, of persons removed under Section 15 or rescued under Section 16.—(1) When the special police officer removing a person under sub-section (4) of Section 15 or a police officer rescuing a person under sub-section (1) of Section 16, is for any reason unable to produce her before the appropriate Magistrate as required by sub-section (5) of Section 15, or before the Magistrate issuing the order under sub-section (2) of Section 16, he shall forthwith produce her before the nearest Magistrate of any class, who shall pass such orders as he deems proper for her safe custody until she is produced before the appropriate Magistrate, or, as the case may be, the Magistrate issuing the order:

Provided that no person shall be,

(i) detained in custody under this sub-section for a period exceeding ten days from the date of the order under this sub-section; or

(ii) restored to or placed in the custody of a person who may exercise a harmful influence over her.

(2) when the person is produced before the appropriate Magistrate under sub-section (5) of Section 15 or the Magistrate under sub-section (2) of Section 16, he shall, after giving her an opportunity of being heard, cause an inquiry to be made as to the correctness of the information received under sub-section (1) of Section 16, the age, character and antecedents of the person and the suitability of her parents, guardian or husband for taking charge of her and the nature of the influence which the conditions in her home are likely to have on her if she is sent home, and, for this purpose, he may direct a Probation Officer appointed under the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, to inquire into the above circumstances and into the personality of the person and the prospects of her rehabilitation.

(3) The Magistrate may, while an inquiry is made into a case under sub-section (2), pass such orders as he deems proper for the safe custody of the person:

Provided that where a person rescued under Section 16 is a child, it shall be open to the magistrate to place such child in any institution established or recognised under any Children Act for the time being in force in any State for the safe custody of children:

Provided further that no person shall be kept in custody for this purpose for a period exceeding three weeks from the date of such an order, and no person shall be kept in the custody of a person likely to have a harmful influence over her.

(4) Where the Magistrate is satisfied, after making an inquiry as required under sub-section (2),—

(a) that the information received is correct; and

(b) that she is in need of care and protection,

he may, subject to the provisions of sub-section (5), make an order that such person be detained for such period, being not less than one year and not more than three, as may be specified in the order, in a protective home, or in such other custody, as he shall, for reasons to be recorded in writing, consider suitable:

Provided that such custody shall not be that of a person or body of persons of a religious persuasion different from that of the person, and that those entrusted with the custody of the person, including the persons in charge of a protective home; may be required to enter into a bond which may, where necessary

and feasible contained undertaking based on directions relating to the proper care, guardianship, education, training and medical and psychiatric treatment of the person as well as supervision by a person appointed by the Court, which will be in force for a period not exceeding three years.

(5) In discharging his functions under sub-section (2), a Magistrate may summon a panel of five respectable persons, three of whom shall, wherever practicable, be women, to assist him; and may, for this purpose, keep a list of experienced social welfare workers, particularly women social welfare workers, in the field of suppression of immoral traffic in persons.

(6) An appeal against an order made under sub-section (4) shall lie to the Court of Session whose decision on such appeal shall be final.

17-A. Conditions to be observed before placing persons rescued under Section 16 to parents or guardians .—Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (2) of Section 17, the magistrate making an inquiry under Section 17, may, before passing an order for handing over any person rescued under Section 16 to the parents, guardian or husband, satisfy himself about the capacity or genuineness of the parents, guardian or husband to keep such person by causing an investigation to be made by a recognised welfare institution or organisation.

18. Closure of brothel and eviction of offenders from the premises .—(1) A Magistrate may, on receipt of information from the police or otherwise, that any house, room, place or any portion thereof within a distance of two hundred metres of any public place referred to in sub-section (1) of Section 7 is being run or used as a brothel by any person, or is being used by prostitutes for carrying on their trade, issue notice on the owner, lessor or landlord or such house, room, place or portion or the agent of the owner, lessor or landlord or on the tenant, lessee, occupier of, or any other person in charge of such house, room, place, or portion, to show cause within seven days of the receipt of the notice why the same should not be attached for improper use thereof, and if, after hearing the person concerned, the Magistrate is satisfied that the house, room, place or portion is being used as a brothel or for carrying on prostitution, then the Magistrate may pass orders,—

(a) directing eviction of the occupier within seven days of the passing of the order from the house, room, place, or portion;

(b) directing that before letting it out during the period of one year or in a case where a child has been found in such house, room, place or portion during a search under Section 15, during the period of three years, immediately after the passing of the order, the owner, lessor or landlord or the agent of the owner, lessor or landlord shall obtain the previous approval of the Magistrate;

Provided that, if the Magistrate finds that the owner, lessor or landlord as well as the agent of the owner, lessor or landlord, was innocent of the improper user of the house, room, place, or portion, he may cause the same to be restored to the owner, lessor or landlord or the agent of the owner, lessor or landlord, with a direction that the house, room, place or portion shall not be leased out, or otherwise given possession of, to or for the benefit of the person who was allowing the improper use therein.

(2) A court convicting a person of any offence under Section 3 or Section 7 may pass orders under sub-section (1), without further notice to such person to show cause as required in that sub-section.

(3) Orders passed by the Magistrate or court under sub-section (1) or sub-section (2), shall not be subject to appeal and shall not be stayed or set aside by the order of any court, civil or criminal, and the said orders shall cease to have validity after the expiry of one year or three years, as the case may be:

Provided that where a conviction under Section 3 or Section 7 is set aside on an appeal on the ground that such house, room, place, or any portion thereof is not being run or uses as a brothel or is not being used by prostitutes for carrying on their trade, any order passed by the trial court under sub-section (1) shall also be set aside.

(4) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, when a Magistrate passes an order under sub-section (1), or a Court passes an order under sub-section (2), any lease or a agreement under which the house, room, place or portion is occupied at the time shall become void and inoperative.

(5) When an owner, lessor or landlord, or the agent of such owner, lessor or landlord fails to comply with a direction given under clause (b) of sub-section (1) he shall be punishable with fine which may extend to

five hundred rupees or when he fails to comply with a direction under the proviso to that sub-section, he shall be deemed to have committed an offence under clause (b) of sub-section (2), of Section 3 or clause (c) of sub-section (2) of Section 7, as the case may be, and punished accordingly.

19. Application for being kept in a protective home or provided care and protection by court.—(1) A person who is carrying on, or is being made to carry on prostitution, may make an application, to the Magistrate within the local limits of whose jurisdiction she is carrying on, or is being made to carry on prostitution, for an order that she may be—

(a) kept in a protective home, or

(b) provided care and protection by the court in the manner specified in sub-section (3).

(2) The Magistrate may pending inquiry under sub-section (3) direct that the person be kept in such custody as he may consider proper, having regard to the circumstances of the case.

(3) If the Magistrate after hearing the applicant and making such inquiry as he may consider necessary, including an inquiry by a Probation Officer appointed under the Probation of Offender Act, 1958, (20 of 1958) into the personality, conditions of home and prospects of rehabilitation of the applicant, is satisfied that an order should be made under this section, he shall for reasons to be recorded, make an order that the applicant to be kept:

(i) in a protective home, or

(ii) in a corrective institution, or

(iii) under the supervision of a person appointed by the Magistrate for such period as may be specified in the order.

21. Protective homes.— (1) The State Government may in its discretion establish as many protective homes and corrective institutions under this Act as it thinks fit and such homes and institutions when established shall be maintained in such manner as may be prescribed.

(2) No person or no authority other than the State government shall, after the commencement of this Act, establish or maintain any protective home or corrective institution except under and in accordance with the conditions of, a licence issued under this section by the State Government.

(3) The State Government may, on application made to it in this behalf by a person or authority, issue to such person or authority a licence in the prescribed form for establishing and maintaining or as the case may be, for maintaining a protective home or corrective institution and a licence so issued may contain such conditions as the State Government may think fit to impose in accordance with the rules made under this Act:

Provided that any such condition may require that the management of the protective home or corrective institution shall, wherever practicable, be entrusted to women:

Provided further that a person or authority maintaining any protective home at the commencement of this Act shall be allowed a period of six months from such commencement to make an application for such licence:

Provided also that a person or authority maintaining any corrective institution at the commencement of the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls (Amendment) Act, 1978, shall be allowed a period of six months from such commencement to make an application for such licence.

(4) Before issuing a licence, the State Government may require such officer or authority as it may appoint for this purpose, to make a full and complete investigation in respect of the application received in this behalf and report to it the result of such investigation and in making any such investigation the officer or authority shall allow such procedure as may be prescribed.

(5) A licence, unless sooner revoked, shall remain in force for such period as may be specified in the licence and may, on application made in this behalf atleast thirty days before the date of its expiration, be renewed for a like period.

(6) No licence issued or renewed under this Act shall be transferable.

(7) Where any person or authority to whom a licence has been granted under this Act or any agent or servant of such person or authority commits a breach of any of the conditions thereof or any of the provisions of this Act or of any of the rules made under this Act, or where the State Government is not satisfied with the conditions, management or superintendence or any protective home or corrective institution the State Government may, without prejudice to any other penalty which may have been incurred under this Act, for reasons to be recorded, revoke the licence by order in writing:

Provided that no such order shall be made until an opportunity is given to the holder of the licence to show cause why the licence shall not be revoked.

(8) Where a licence in respect of a protective home or corrective institution has been revoked under the foregoing sub-section such protective home or corrective institution shall cease to function from the date of, such revocation.

(9) Subject to any rule that may be made in this behalf, the State Government may also vary or amend any licence issued or renewed under this Act.

(9-A) The State Government or any authority authorised by it in this behalf may, subject to any rules that may be made in this behalf, transfer an inmate of a protective home to another protective home or to a corrective institution or an inmate of a corrective institution to another corrective institution or to a protective home, where such transfer is considered desirable having regard to the conduct of the person to be transferred, the kind of training to be imparted and other circumstances of the case:

Provided that,—

(i) no person who is transferred under this sub-section shall be required to stay in the home or institution to which she is transferred for a period longer than she was required to stay in the home or institution from which she was transferred;

(ii) reasons shall be recorded for every order of transfer under this sub-section.

(10) Whoever establishes or maintains a protective home or corrective institution except in accordance with the provisions of this section, shall be punishable in the case of a first offence with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees and in the case of second or subsequent offence with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees, or with both.

21-A. Production of records .—Every person or authority who is licensed under sub-section (3) of Section 21 to establish or maintain, or, as the case may be, for maintaining, a protective home or corrective institution shall whenever required by a Court, produce the records and other documents maintained by such home or institution before such court.

22. (1) Trials .—No Court, inferior to that of a Metropolitan Magistrate or a Judicial magistrate of the first class, shall try any offence under Section 3, Section 4, Section 5, Section 5B, Section 5C, Section 6 or Section 7.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, the trial of the proceedings under this Act shall be conducted *in camera*.

22-A. Power to establish special Courts .—(1) If the State Government is satisfied that it is necessary for the purpose of providing for speedy trial of offences under this Act in any district or metropolitan area, it may, by notification in the official Gazette and after consultation with the High Court, establish one or more Courts of Judicial Magistrates of the first class, or, as the case may be, Metropolitan Magistrate, in such district or metropolitan area.

(2) Unless otherwise directed by the High Court, a court established under sub-section (1) shall exercise jurisdiction only in respect of cases under this Act.

(3) Subject to the provisions of sub-section (2), the jurisdiction and powers of the presiding officer of a court established under sub-section (1) in any district or metropolitan area shall extend throughout the district or the metropolitan area, as the case may be.

(4) Subject to the foregoing provisions of this section, a Court established under sub-section (1) in any district or metropolitan area shall be deemed to be a court established under sub-section (1) of Section 11,

or, as the case may be, sub-section (1) of Section 16 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) and provisions of the Code shall apply accordingly in relation to such courts.

Explanation.—In this section, “High Court” has the same meaning as in clause (e) of Section 2 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

[\[6\]](#) [22-AA. Power of Central Government to establish special courts .—(1) If the Central Government is satisfied that it is necessary for the purpose of providing for speedy trial of offences under this Act and committed in more than one State, it may, by notification in the official Gazette and after consultation with the High Court concerned, establish one or more courts of Judicial Magistrates of the first class or Metropolitan Magistrates for the trial of such offences.

(2) The provisions of Section 22-A, shall, so far as may be, apply to the courts established under sub-section (1), as they apply to Courts established under that section.

22-B. Power of court to try cases summarily .—Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, the State Government may, if it considers it necessary so to do, direct that offences under this Act shall be tried in a summary way by a Magistrate including the presiding officer of a court established under sub-section (1) of Section 22-A and the provisions of Section 262 to 265 (both inclusive) of the said Code, shall, as far as may be, apply to such trial:

Provided that in the case of any conviction in a summary trial under this section, it shall be lawful for the Magistrate to pass a sentence of imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year:

Provided further that when at the commencement of, or in the course of, a summary trial under this section, it appears to the Magistrate that the nature of the case is such that a sentence of imprisonment for a term exceeding one year may have to be passed or that it is, for any other reason, undesirable to try the case summarily, the Magistrate shall, after hearing the parties record an order to that effect and thereafter recall any witness, who may have been examined and proceed to hear or re-hear the case in the manner provided by the said Code].

23. Power to make rules .—(1) The State Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, make rules for carrying on the purposes of this Act.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing powers, such rules may provide for :

(a) the notification of any place as a public place;

(b) the placing in custody of persons for whose safe custody orders have been passed under sub-section (1) of Section 17 and their maintenance;

(bb) the discharge of an offender under sub-section (3) of Section 10-A from a corrective institution and the form of licence to be granted to such offender;

(c) the detention and keeping in protective homes or, as the case may be, in corrective institutions or person under this Act and their maintenance;

(d) the carrying out of the provisions of Section 11 regarding notification of residence or change of or absence from residence by released convicts;

(e) the delegation of authority to appoint the special police officer under sub-section (1) of Section 13;

(f) the carrying into effect of the provisions of Section 18;

(g) (i) the establishment, maintenance, management and superintendence of protective homes and corrective institutions under Section 21 and the appointment, powers and duties of persons employed in such home or institution;

(ii) the form in which an application for a licence may be made and the particulars to be contained in such application;

(iii) the procedure for the issue or renewal of a licence, the time within which such licence shall be issued or renewed and the procedure to be followed in making a full and complete investigation in respect of an application for licence;

(iv) the form of a licence and the condition to be specified therein;

- (v) the manner in which the accounts of a protective home and a corrective institution shall be maintained and audited;
- (vi) the maintenance of registers and statements by a licensee and the form of such registers and statements;
- (vii) the care, treatments, maintenance, training, instruction, control and discipline of the inmates of protective home and corrective institutions;
- (viii) the visits to and communications with inmates;
- (ix) the temporary detention of persons sentenced to detention in protective homes or in corrective institution until arrangements are made for sending them to such homes or institutions;
- (x) the transfer of an inmate from:
 - (a) protective home to another, or to a corrective institution,
 - (b) one corrective institution to another, or to a protective home, under sub-section (9-A) of Section 21;
 - (xi) the transfer in pursuance of an order of the Court from a protective home or a corrective institution to a prison of a person found to be incorrigible or exercising bad influence upon other inmates of the protective home or the corrective institution and the period of her detention in such prison;
 - (xii) the transfer to a protective home or corrective institution of persons sentenced under Section 7 and the period of their detention in such home or institution;
 - (xiii) the discharge of inmates from a protective home or corrective institution either absolutely or subject to conditions, and their arrest in the event of breach of such conditions;
 - (xiv) the grant of permission to inmates to absent themselves for short periods;
 - (xv) the inspection of protective homes and corrective institutions and other institutions in which a persons may be kept, detained and maintained;
 - (ga) number of the members of the Authority and the manner in which such members shall be chosen for appointment under sub-section (2) of section 13B;
 - (gb) the term of office of the members of the Authority and the manner of filling vacancies among, and the procedure to be followed in the discharge of their functions by, the members under sub-section (4) of section 13B;
 - (h) any other matter which has to be, or may be prescribed.

(3) In making any rule under clause (d) or clause (g) or sub-section (2), the State Government may provide that a breach thereof be punishable with fine which may extend to two hundred and fifty rupees.

(4) All rules made under this Act shall, as soon as may be after they are made, be laid before the State Legislature.

23A. (1) The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing powers, such rules may provide for,—

- (a) the number of the members of the Authority and the manner in which such members shall be chosen for appointment under sub-section (2) of section 13A;
- (b) the term of office of the members of the Authority, the manner of filling vacancies among, and the procedure to be followed in the discharge of their functions by the members under sub-section (4) of section 13A.

(3) Every rule made by the Central Government shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or both Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

24. Act not to be in derogation of certain other Acts.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to be in derogation of the provisions of the Reformatory Schools Act, 1897 or any State Act enacted in modification of the said Act or otherwise, relating to juvenile offenders.

25. Repeal and savings.—(1) As from the date of the coming into force in any State of the provisions other than Section 1 of this Act, all State Acts relating to suppression of immoral traffic in persons or to the prevention of prostitution, in force in that State immediately before such date shall stand repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding the repeal by this Act, of any State Act referred to in sub-section (1), anything done or any action taken including any direction given in any register, rule or order made, any restriction imposed under the provision of such State Act shall in so far as such thing or action is not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act be deemed to have been done or taken under the provisions of this Act as if the said provisions were in force when such thing was done or such action was taken and shall continue in force accordingly until superseded by anything done or any action taken under this Act.

Explanation.—In this section, the expression `State Act` includes a `Provincial Act`.

THE SCHEDULE

[See Section 2(c)]

Section Magistrate competent to exercise the powers

7(1) District Magistrate.

11 (4) Metropolitan Magistrate of Judicial Magistrate of the first class.

12 (4) [7][* * * * *]

15(5) Metropolitan Magistrate, Judicial Magistrate of the first class, District Magistrate or Sub-divisional Magistrate.

16 Metropolitan Magistrate, Judicial Magistrate of the first class, District Magistrate or Sub-divisional Magistrate.

18 District Magistrate or Sub-divisional Magistrate.

19 Metropolitan Magistrate, Judicial Magistrate of the first class, District Magistrate or Sub-divisional Magistrate.

22-B Metropolitan Magistrate of Judicial Magistrate of the first class.

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[1] Sub-section (e) omitted by Act No 46 of 1978.

[2] Sub-sec. (2) omitted by Act No. 44 of 1986.

[3] Sub-section (2) omitted by Act No. 44 of 1986.

[4] Sec. 10 omitted by Act No. 44 of 1986.

[5] Section 12 omitted by Act No. 44 of 1986.

[6] Ins. by Act No. 44 of 1986 (w.e.f. 26-1-1987).

[7] Figures and words omitted by Act No. 44 of 1986 (w.e.f. 2-6-1987).