

# CONFIDENTIAL

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## PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PUNJAB REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR AND HUMAN RESOURCE REGARDING THE PUNJAB BONDED LABOUR SYSTEM (ABOLITION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018 (BILL NO.19 OF 2018)

The Punjab Bonded Labour System (Abolition) (Amendment) Bill 2018 (Bill No.19 of 2018) was referred to the Standing Committee on Labour and Human Resource on 27 April 2018. The Committee considered the Bill in its meeting held on 8 May 2018.

2. The following were present:—

1.	Mr Zafar Iqbal Nagra, MPA (PP-64)	Chairman
2.	Mrs Shazia Kamran, MPA (W-304)	Member
3.	Mrs Shah Jahan, MPA (W-307)	Member
4.	Mrs Haseena Begum, MPA (W-327)	Member

3. Dr Muhammad Sohail Shahzad, Additional Secretary, Government of the Punjab, Labour and Human Resource Department and Mr Mohsin Bukhari, Deputy Director, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Department represented their Departments. Ch Amer Habib, Deputy Secretary (Committees), Provincial Assembly of the Punjab functioned as Secretary to the Committee.

4. Dr Muhammad Sohail Shahzad, Additional Secretary, Government of the Punjab, Labour and Human Resource Department apprised the Committee about the aims and objects of the Bill. He stated that it was necessary to amend the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 (III of 1992) for purposes of making more effective provisions to deal with the menace of exploitation of the persons subjected to any form of bonded or forced labour. He added that the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 (III of 1992) provided for abolition of bonded labour system across the board, however, the term “bonded labour” used in the 1992 Act did not include forced labour as enshrined in Article 11(2) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Similarly, the composition of District Vigilance Committees, its functions and procedure required elaboration. Moreover, there was a need to constitute a Provincial Monitoring Mechanism for effective implementation of the law. This amendment Bill inter alia seeks to make the Act of 1992 more effective as well as compatible with International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions (C-29 and C-105) adopted by the Government of Pakistan. He requested the Committee that the Bill, as introduced, may be recommended to be passed by the Assembly.

5. The Committee after hearing the Members, having view point of the Administrative Department & Law and Parliamentary Affairs Department and discussing various points, unanimously decided to recommend that the Bill may be passed by the Assembly subject to the following amendments:-

**AMENDMENTS IN THE BILL**

**(1) GENERAL AMENDMENT**

the words "the said Act", wherever occur in the Bill be substituted by the words "the Act"

**(2) CLAUSE 10**

Clause 10 be substituted as under:-

**"10. Amendment in section 11 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 11, after the word "fine", the expression "which may extend to two hundred thousand rupees but" shall be inserted."

**(3) CLAUSE 11**

in sub-section (1) of the proposed section 12 of the Principal Act of the words "one hundred thousand rupees" appearing at the end, be substituted by the words "three hundred fifty thousand rupees".

**(4) CLAUSE 13**

in para (c), in the proposed subsection (3) of section 15 of the Principal Act, the words "consisting of" be substituted by the words "from amongst"

**(5) CLAUSE 16**

Rider Clause be substituted as under:-

"In the Act, section 17 be re-numbered as subsection (1) and after renumbered subsection (1), the following subsection (2) shall be inserted:"

6. A copy of the Bill as introduced in the Assembly is at Annexure-A and a copy of the Bill as recommended by the Committee is at Annexure-B.

Lahore  
8 May 2018

**(ZAFAR IQBAL NAGRA)**

Chairman

*Standing Committee on Labour and Human Resource*

Lahore  
8 May 2018

  
**(RAI MUMTAZ HUSSAIN BABAR)**  
Secretary

ANNEXURE – A

(BILL AS INTRODUCED IN THE ASSEMBLY)  
**PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PUNJAB**  
Bill No. 19 of 2018  
**THE PUNJAB BONDED LABOUR SYSTEM (ABOLITION)**  
**(AMENDMENT) BILL 2018**

A  
BILL

*further to amend the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992.*

It is necessary further to amend the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 (*III of 1992*) for purposes of making more effective provisions to deal with the menace of exploitation of the persons subjected to any form of bonded or forced labour; and, for other purposes.

Be it enacted by Provincial Assembly of the Punjab as follows:

**1. Short title and commencement.**— (1) This Act may be cited as the Punjab Bonded Labour System (Abolition) (Amendment) Act 2018.  
(2) It shall come into force at once.

**2. Amendment in the long title and the preamble of Act III of 1992.**— In the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 (*III of 1992*), for brevity cited as ‘the Act’:

- (a) in the long title, for the words “bonded labour”, the words “bonded and forced labour” shall be substituted; and
- (b) in the preamble, for the words “bonded labour”, the words “bonded and forced labour” shall be substituted.

**3. Amendment in section 1 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 1, in subsection (1), after the words “called the”, the word “Punjab” shall be inserted.

**4. Amendment in section 2 of Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, in section 2:

- (1) after clause (a), the following clause (aa) shall be inserted:  
“(aa) “authorised officer” means an officer authorized under subsection (1) of section 9 of the Act;
- (2) in clause (b), for the words “bonded labour”, the words “bonded and forced labour” shall be substituted;
- (3) in clause (c), for the words “bonded labour system”, the words “bonded and forced labour system” shall be substituted;
- (4) after clause (e), the following clauses (ea), (eb) and (ec) shall be inserted:  
“(ea) “designated officer” means an officer designated under subsection (2) of section 9 of the Act;  
(eb) “employer” means a person owning or having charge of the business of an establishment and includes an agent or manager or any other person acting on behalf of such person for the

general management or control of such establishment;

- “(ec) “establishment” means:
- (i) an establishment as defined under the Punjab Shops and Establishments Ordinance, 1969 (*VIII of 1969*);
  - (ii) a factory as defined under the Factories Act, 1934 (*XXV of 1934*); and
  - (iii) a mine as defined under the Mines Act, 1923 (*IV of 1923*);”;
- (5) after clause (f), the following clause (fa) shall be inserted:
- “(fa) “forced labour” means the work extracted from a person under threat of penalty or the work for which a person has not offered himself voluntarily but does not include:
- (i) penalty imposed by a court;
  - (ii) compulsory military service;
  - (iii) action taken in an emergency;
  - (iv) normal civil and social obligations; and
  - (v) minor communal services;”;
- (6) after clause (ff), the following clause (ffa) shall be inserted:
- “(ffa) “inspector” means any person appointed as inspector:
- (i) in case of a factory, under section 10 of the Factories Act, 1934 (*XXV of 1934*);
  - (ii) in case of an establishment, under section 25 of the Punjab Shops and Establishment Ordinance, 1969 (*VIII of 1969*); and
  - (iii) in case of a mine, under section 4 of the Mines Act, 1923 (*IV of 1923*);”.

**5. Amendment in section 4 of Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, in section 4, after subsection (2), the following subsections (3), (4) and (5) shall be inserted:

“(3) An employer shall not make or receive any advance (*peshgi*) inconsistent with, or in violation of, any law for the time being in force or beyond the prescribed limit.

(4) The advance (*peshgi*) under subsection (3) shall be recovered in such manner as may be prescribed.

(5) The employer shall maintain a record in respect of the advance (*peshgi*) made or received by him under subsection (3) in such manner as may be prescribed.”.

**6. Insertion of section 7A in Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, after section 7, the following section 7-A shall be inserted:

**“7A. Eviction.**— (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, a bonded labourer, whether released, resigned, retired, retrenched, discharged, dismissed, terminated or otherwise, occupying residential accommodation provided by his employer, shall not be evicted by the employer for a period of two months from the date of occurrence of any of the above eventualities, failing which the

employer, without prejudice to any other liability, shall pay to the labourer compensation at such rate as may be prescribed.

(2) If the employer fails to discharge his obligations or if a labourer fails to vacate any residential accommodation provided by the employer after the expiry of the period specified in subsection (1), the employer or, as the case may be, the labourer may lodge a complaint to the Magistrate of the first class having jurisdiction in the area where such residential accommodation is located.

(3) The Magistrate may, after hearing the parties, notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, summarily decide the case and may pass an order directing the employer to pay compensation to the labourer or directing the labourer to vacate the premises within such time as the court may determine.

(4) Where a labourer occupying a residential accommodation provided to him by the employer, dies, the provisions of subsections (1), (2) and (3) shall, with such modifications as may be necessary, apply to the dependents of the deceased labourer, occupying such accommodation."

**7. Amendment in section 8 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 8, for subsection (2), the following shall be substituted:

"(2) A person, who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1), shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine which may extend to one hundred thousand rupees but which shall not be less than twenty thousand rupees or with both."

**8. Substitution of section 9 of Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, for section 9, the following shall be substituted:

**"9. Implementation of the Act.**— (1) The Government may, by notification, authorize any officer in a District to exercise such powers and perform such duties as may be necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

(2) The authorized officer may further designate any officer subordinate to him to perform such of his functions and duties as may be delegated to him and specify the local limits for the purpose."

**9. Substitution of section 10 of Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, for section 10, the following shall be substituted:

**"10. Duties of Authorized Officer etc.**— (1) The authorized officer shall, as far as practicable, take necessary measures to promote the welfare of the persons freed from bonded or forced labour by securing and protecting the economic interests of such persons.

(2) The designated officer shall inquire whether any ongoing bonded labour system or any other form of forced labour is being continued by or on behalf of any person who is resident within the local limits of his jurisdiction and if, as a result of such inquiry, any person is found to be continuing the bonded labour system or any other system of forced labour, he shall forthwith submit the

matter to the authorized officer for such action as may be necessary under this Act.

(3) An inspector shall, during the course of inspection of an establishment, inquire whether any bonded labour system or any other form of forced labour is being continued by or on behalf of the employer, within the local limits of his jurisdiction and if, as a result of such inquiry, any person is found to be continuing the bonded labour system or any other system of forced labour, the inspector shall forthwith submit the matter to the authorized officer for such action as may be necessary under this Act.

(4) The authorized officer may refer the matter to the District Vigilance Committee for resolution of the dispute, or may direct the designated officer or the inspector to lodge a complaint in the court of competent jurisdiction.

(5) If the emigrant labourers are involved in the bonded or forced labour, the authorized officer may refer the matter to the Federal Investigating Agency established under the Federal Investigation Agency Act, 1974 (*VIII of 1975*) for taking cognizance of the matter.”.

**10. Amendment in section 11 of Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, in section 11, after the word “fine”, the expression “which may extend to two hundred thousand rupees but shall not be less than fifty thousand rupees or with both” shall be inserted.

**11. Substitution of section 12 of Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, for section 12, the following shall be substituted:

**“12. Punishment for extracting bonded labour.**— (1) A person who enforces any custom, tradition, practice, contract, agreement or other instrument by virtue of which any person or any member of his family is required to render any service under the bonded labour system, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years but which shall not be less than two years and with fine which may extend to one hundred thousand rupees but shall not be less than one hundred thousand rupees.

(2) The Government may make arrangements for payment to the bonded labourer at the rate of minimum wages notified by the Government for that category of work or similar work out of the fine recovered under subsection (1).”.

**12. Amendment in section 13 of Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, in section 13:

- (a) for the words “one thousand”, the words “twenty thousand” shall be substituted; and
- (b) for the words “one hundred”, the words “five hundred” shall be substituted.

**13. Amendment in section 15 of Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, in section 15:

- (a) in subsection (1), for the words "recognized Social Services and Labour Department of the Government", the expression "social services organizations, representatives of recognized workers' organizations, representatives of recognized employers' organizations; and Public Prosecution and Labour and Human Resource Departments of the Government" shall be inserted;
- (b) in subsection (2):
  - (i) in clause (c), the word "and" shall be omitted;
  - (ii) in clause (d), for the full stop, a semicolon shall be substituted;
  - (iii) after clause (d), the following clauses (e) and (f) shall be inserted:
    - "(e) to create awareness amongst the labourers and the employers about their rights and liabilities under this Act; and
    - (f) to resolve the disputes amongst the labourers and the employers referred to it by the authorized officer"; and
- (c) after subsection (2), the following subsection (3) shall be added:
  - "(3) A Vigilance Committee may constitute a Sub-Committee consisting of its members for carrying out the functions assigned to it under subsection (2).".

**14. Insertion of section 15A in Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, after section 15, the following section 15A shall be inserted:

**"15A. Provincial Vigilance Committee.**— (1) The Government shall constitute a Provincial Vigilance Committee consisting of such members as the Government may appoint.

- (2) The Provincial Vigilance Committee shall:
  - (a) review the implementation of this Act and the action plan relating to abolition of bonded or forced labour and the rehabilitation of persons freed from bonded labour;
  - (b) monitor the working of the District Vigilance Committees constituted under this Act and the rules made thereunder; and
  - (c) address the concerns of national and international bodies on matters relating to the bonded or forced labour."

**15. Amendment in section 16 of Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, in section 16, for subsection (1), the following shall be substituted:

"(1) A Magistrate of the first class may, within the local area of his jurisdiction, try any offence under this Act."

**16. Amendment in section 17 of Act III of 1992.**— In the said Act, in section 17, after subsection (1), the following subsection (2) shall be inserted:

“(2) An offence under this Act, except an offence punishable under section 12, shall be compoundable with the permission of the court of competent jurisdiction.”.

#### **STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS**

The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 (III of 1992) provides for abolition of bonded labour system across the board. However, the definition of “bonded debt” does not include forced labour as enshrined in Article 11(2) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Similarly, the composition of District Vigilance Committees, its functions and procedure require elaboration. Moreover, there is need to constitute a Provincial Monitoring Mechanism for effective implementation of the law. This amendment Bill *inter alia* seeks to make the Act of 1992 more effective to make it compatible with International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions (C-29 and C-105) adopted by the Government of Pakistan; Hence, this Bill.

#### **MINISTER INCHARGE**

Lahore:  
27 April 2018

**RAI MUMTAZ HUSSAIN BABAR**  
Secretary



**ANNEXURE - B**

**(BILL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
LABOUR AND HUMAN RESOURCE)**

A  
BILL

*further to amend the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992.*

It is necessary further to amend the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 (*III of 1992*) for purposes of making more effective provisions to deal with the menace of exploitation of the persons subjected to any form of bonded or forced labour; and, for other purposes.

Be it enacted by Provincial Assembly of the Punjab as follows:

**1. Short title and commencement.**— (1) This Act may be cited as the Punjab Bonded Labour System (Abolition) (Amendment) Act 2018.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

**2. Amendment in the long title and the preamble of Act III of 1992.**— In the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 (*III of 1992*), for brevity cited as 'the Act':

- (a) in the long title, for the words "bonded labour", the words "bonded and forced labour" shall be substituted; and
- (b) in the preamble, for the words "bonded labour", the words "bonded and forced labour" shall be substituted.

**3. Amendment in section 1 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 1, in subsection (1), after the words "called the", the word "Punjab" shall be inserted.

**4. Amendment in section 2 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 2:

- (1) after clause (a), the following clause (aa) shall be inserted:  
"(aa) "authorised officer" means an officer authorized under subsection (1) of section 9 of the Act;
- (2) in clause (b), for the words "bonded labour", the words "bonded and forced labour" shall be substituted;
- (3) in clause (c), for the words "bonded labour system", the words "bonded and forced labour system" shall be substituted;
- (4) after clause (e), the following clauses (ea), (eb) and (ec) shall be inserted:
  - "(ea) "designated officer" means an officer designated under subsection (2) of section 9 of the Act;
  - (eb) "employer" means a person owning or having charge of the business of an establishment and includes an agent or manager or any other person acting on behalf of such person for the general management or control of such establishment;
  - (ec) "establishment" means:

- (i) an establishment as defined under the Punjab Shops and Establishments Ordinance, 1969 (*VIII of 1969*);
  - (ii) a factory as defined under the Factories Act, 1934 (*XXV of 1934*); and
  - (iii) a mine as defined under the Mines Act, 1923 (*IV of 1923*);”;
- (5) after clause (f), the following clause (fa) shall be inserted:  
 “(fa) “forced labour” means the work extracted from a person under threat of penalty or the work for which a person has not offered himself voluntarily but does not include:
- (i) penalty imposed by a court;
  - (ii) compulsory military service;
  - (iii) action taken in an emergency;
  - (iv) normal civil and social obligations; and
  - (v) minor communal services;”;
- (6) after clause (ff), the following clause (ffa) shall be inserted:  
 (ffa) “inspector” means any person appointed as inspector:
- (i) in case of a factory, under section 10 of the Factories Act, 1934 (*XXV of 1934*);
  - (ii) in case of an establishment, under section 25 of the Punjab Shops and Establishment Ordinance, 1969 (*VIII of 1969*); and
  - (iii) in case of a mine, under section 4 of the Mines Act, 1923 (*IV of 1923*);”.

**5. Amendment in section 4 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 4, after subsection (2), the following subsections (3), (4) and (5) shall be inserted:

“(3) An employer shall not make or receive any advance (*peshgi*) inconsistent with, or in violation of, any law for the time being in force or beyond the prescribed limit.

(4) The advance (*peshgi*) under subsection (3) shall be recovered in such manner as may be prescribed.

(5) The employer shall maintain a record in respect of the advance (*peshgi*) made or received by him under subsection (3) in such manner as may be prescribed.”.

**6. Insertion of section 7A in Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, after section 7, the following section 7-A shall be inserted:

**“7A. Eviction.**— (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, a bonded labourer, whether released, resigned, retired, retrenched, discharged, dismissed, terminated or otherwise, occupying residential accommodation provided by his employer, shall not be evicted by the employer for a period of two months from the date of occurrence of any of the above eventualities, failing which the employer, without prejudice to any other liability, shall pay to the labourer compensation at such rate as may be prescribed.

(2) If the employer fails to discharge his obligations or if a labourer fails to vacate any residential accommodation provided by the employer after the expiry of the period specified in subsection (1), the employer or, as the case may be, the labourer may lodge a complaint to the Magistrate of the first class having jurisdiction in the area where such residential accommodation is located.

(3) The Magistrate may, after hearing the parties, notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, summarily decide the case and may pass an order directing the employer to pay compensation to the labourer or directing the labourer to vacate the premises within such time as the court may determine.

(4) Where a labourer occupying a residential accommodation provided to him by the employer, dies, the provisions of subsections (1), (2) and (3) shall, with such modifications as may be necessary, apply to the dependents of the deceased labourer, occupying such accommodation.”.

**7. Amendment in section 8 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 8, for subsection (2), the following shall be substituted:

“(2) A person, who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1), shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine which may extend to one hundred thousand rupees but which shall not be less than twenty thousand rupees or with both.”.

**8. Substitution of section 9 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, for section 9, the following shall be substituted:

**“9. Implementation of the Act.**- (1) The Government may, by notification, authorize any officer in a District to exercise such powers and perform such duties as may be necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

(2) The authorized officer may further designate any officer subordinate to him to perform such of his functions and duties as may be delegated to him and specify the local limits for the purpose.”.

**9. Substitution of section 10 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, for section 10, the following shall be substituted:

**“10. Duties of Authorized Officer etc.**— (1) The authorized officer shall, as far as practicable, take necessary measures to promote the welfare of the persons freed from bonded or forced labour by securing and protecting the economic interests of such persons.

(2) The designated officer shall inquire whether any ongoing bonded labour system or any other form of forced labour is being continued by or on behalf of any person who is resident within the local limits of his jurisdiction and if, as a result of such inquiry, any person is found to be continuing the bonded labour system or any other system of forced labour, he shall forthwith submit the matter to the authorized officer for such action as may be necessary under this Act.

(3) An inspector shall, during the course of inspection of an establishment, inquire whether any bonded labour system or any other form of forced labour is being continued by or on behalf of the employer, within the local limits of his jurisdiction and if, as a result of such inquiry, any person is found to be continuing the bonded labour system or any other system of forced labour, the inspector shall forthwith submit the matter to the authorized officer for such action as may be necessary under this Act.

(4) The authorized officer may refer the matter to the District Vigilance Committee for resolution of the dispute, or may direct the designated officer or the inspector to lodge a complaint in the court of competent jurisdiction.

(5) If the emigrant labourers are involved in the bonded or forced labour, the authorized officer may refer the matter to the Federal Investigating Agency established under the Federal Investigation Agency Act, 1974 (*VIII of 1975*) for taking cognizance of the matter.”.

**10. Amendment in section 11 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 11, after the word “fine”, the expression “which may extend to two hundred thousand rupees but” shall be inserted.

**11. Substitution of section 12 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, for section 12, the following shall be substituted:

**“12. Punishment for extracting bonded labour.**— (1) A person who enforces any custom, tradition, practice, contract, agreement or other instrument by virtue of which any person or any member of his family is required to render any service under the bonded labour system, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years but which shall not be less than two years and with fine which may extend to one hundred thousand rupees but shall not be less than three hundred fifty thousand rupees.

(2) The Government may make arrangements for payment to the bonded labourer at the rate of minimum wages notified by the Government for that category of work or similar work out of the fine recovered under subsection (1).”.

**12. Amendment in section 13 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 13:

- (a) for the words “one thousand”, the words “twenty thousand” shall be substituted; and
- (b) for the words “one hundred”, the words “five hundred” shall be substituted.

**13. Amendment in section 15 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 15:

- (a) in subsection (1), for the words “recognized Social Services and Labour Department of the Government”, the expression “social services organizations, representatives of recognized workers’ organizations, representatives of recognized employers’ organizations; and Public Prosecution and Labour

- and Human Resource Departments of the Government" shall be inserted;
- (b) in subsection (2):
- (i) in clause (c), the word "and" shall be omitted;
  - (ii) in clause (d), for the full stop, a semicolon shall be substituted;
  - (iii) after clause (d), the following clauses (e) and (f) shall be inserted:
    - (e) to create awareness amongst the labourers and the employers about their rights and liabilities under this Act; and
    - (f) to resolve the disputes amongst the labourers and the employers referred to it by the authorized officer"; and
- (c) after subsection (2), the following subsection (3) shall be added:
- "(3) A Vigilance Committee may constitute a Sub-Committee from amongst its members for carrying out the functions assigned to it under subsection (2).".

**14. Insertion of section 15A in Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, after section 15, the following section 15A shall be inserted:

**"15A. Provincial Vigilance Committee.**— (1) The Government shall constitute a Provincial Vigilance Committee consisting of such members as the Government may appoint.

- (2) The Provincial Vigilance Committee shall:
- (a) review the implementation of this Act and the action plan relating to abolition of bonded or forced labour and the rehabilitation of persons freed from bonded labour;
  - (b) monitor the working of the District Vigilance Committees constituted under this Act and the rules made thereunder; and
  - (c) address the concerns of national and international bodies on matters relating to the bonded or forced labour."

**15. Amendment in section 16 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, in section 16, for subsection (1), the following shall be substituted:

"(1) A Magistrate of the first class may, within the local area of his jurisdiction, try any offence under this Act."

**16. Amendment in section 17 of Act III of 1992.**— In the Act, section 17 be re-numbered as subsection (1) and after renumbered subsection (1), the following subsection (2) shall be inserted:

"(2) An offence under this Act, except an offence punishable under section 12, shall be compoundable with the permission of the court of competent jurisdiction."

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