



## Dramatic Performances Act, 1876

[Source: IE](#)

Recently, the **Prime Minister**, while highlighting the government's efforts to repeal archaic and obsolete laws, referenced the **Dramatic Performances Act, 1876**.

- This law was among those **enacted by the British to clamp down on the budding Indian nationalist sentiment**.
- **Article 372** of the Constitution **allows pre-independence laws to remain in force**, but colonial laws **lack the presumption of constitutionality**, requiring government defense when challenged.
- **Dramatic Performances Act, 1876**, gave the government (British) powers to “prohibit public dramatic performances which are scandalous, defamatory, seditious or obscene”.
  - The Act had been declared unconstitutional by the Allahabad [High Court](#) in ***State versus Baboo Lal And Ors Case, 1956***. The law was formally repealed in 2018 as part of the government’s exercise to weed out obsolete laws.
- The [Vernacular Press Act, 1878](#), and the [sedition law of 1870](#) were among the harsh laws enacted during this period to **suppress nationalist activities** and stifle opposition to colonial rule.

**Read more:** [Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/dramatic-performances-act-1876>