



The Punjab Bhudan Yagna Act, 1955

Act 45 of 1956

Keyword(s):

Bhudan Holder, Bhudan Yagna, Purposes, Land, Landless Person

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THE PUNJAB BHUDAN YAGNA ACT, 1955.

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THE PUNJAB BHUDAN YAGNA ACT, 1955.

(PUNJAB ACT NO. 45 OF 1956)

[Received the assent of the President on the 29th October, 1956 and was first published in the Punjab Government Gazette (Extraordinary) of 31st October, 1956].

1	2	3	4
Year	No.	Short title	Whether affected by later legislation
1956	45	The Punjab Bhudan Yagna Act, 1955	Amended and extended to the territories which, immediately before the 1st November, 1956, were comprised in the State of Patiala and East Punjab State Union by Punjab Act No. 23 of 1957 ¹ Amended by Punjab Bhudan Yagna Board (Reorganisation) Order, 1969 ² Amended by Haryana Act 32 of 1976 ³ Amended by Haryana Act 8 of 1977 ⁵ Amended by Haryana Act 12 of 1995 ⁶

AN

ACT

to facilitate activities in connection with the Bhudan Yagna initiated by Shri Acharya Vinoba Bhave, to provide for the constitution of a Bhudan Yagna Board, the donation of lands to the said Board, the distribution of lands received in donation to landless persons as also their utilisation for community purposes ; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Punjab in the Seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows :—

1. For Statement of objects and reasons, see *Punjab Government Gazette* (Extraordinary), 1955, page 738.
2. For Statement of objects and reasons, see *Punjab Government Gazette* (Extraordinary), 1957, page 391.
3. See S.O. 1303, dated the 28th March, 1969, published in the *Gazette of India* (Extraordinary), part II, section 3 (ii) dated the 31st March, 1969.
4. For Statement of objects and reasons, see *Haryana Government Gazette* (Extraordinary), dated the 5-7-1976 page 1270.
5. For Statement of objects and reasons, see *Haryana Government Gazette* (Extraordinary), dated the 18th March, 1977 page 348.
6. For Statement of objects and reasons, see *Haryana Government Gazette* (Extraordinary), dated the 8th March, 1995 page 354.

Short title
extent and
commence-
ment.

1. (1) This Act may be called the Punjab Bhudan Yagna Act, 1955.

¹[(2) It extends to the territories, which immediately before the 1st day of November, 1966 were comprised in the State of Punjab, excluding the Union Territory of Chandigarh formed under section 4 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966 (31 of 1966)].

(3) It shall come into force at once.

Definitions.

2. In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,—

(a) "Bhudan holder" means a person recorded in village papers or record of rights as a Bhudan holder under section 25 ;

(b) "Bhudan Yagna" means the movement initiated by Shri Acharya Vinoba Bhave for the acquisition of lands through voluntary gifts in favour of the Board ;

¹[(c) "Board" means the Punjab Bhudan Yagna Board or the Haryana Bhudan Yagna Board or the Himachal Pradesh Bhudan Yagna Board established or deemed to be established for the State of Punjab or the State of Haryana or the transferred territory as the case may be ;]

(d) "Community purposes" means any purposes which is for the good of the community of the village in general ;

(e) "land" means land which is occupied or let for agricultural purposes or for purposes subservient to agriculture or for pasture ;

(f) "landless person" means a person holding no land or land less than the area which may be prescribed in this behalf ;

(g) "Revenue Officer" means such Revenue Officer appointed under the Punjab Land Revenue Act, 1887

1. Substituted by the Punjab Bhudan Yagna Board (Re-organisation) Order, 1969.

¹[or any other corresponding law for the time being in force], as the State Government may, by notification, appoint to discharge the functions of a Revenue Officer under that Act ¹[or law] ;

(h) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act ;

¹[(i) "transferred territory" means the territory transferred to the Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh under section 5 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966 (31 of 1966).]

¹[2A. In the application of the provisions of this Act,—

Construction of certain references in the Act.

(1) to the State of Haryana any reference therein to any expression mentioned in column (1) of the Table below shall be construed as a reference to the corresponding expression mentioned in column (2) of the said Table.

TABLE

(1)	(2)
State Government	The Government of the State of Haryana
Punjab Bhudan Yagna Board	Haryana Bhudan Yagna Board.
Gazette	Official Gazette of the Government of Haryana.

(2) ²[* * * *]

CHAPTER II—Establishment of the Board

3. (1) There shall be established a Board by the name of the ³[Haryana Bhudan Yagna Board.]

Incorporation of Bhudan Yagna Board.

1. Added by the Punjab Bhudan Yagna Board (Re-organisation) Order, 1969.
2. Not applicable to State of Haryana.
3. See section 2A.

(2) The Board shall be a body corporate having perpetual succession and common seal with power to acquire and dispose of property both movable and immovable and shall, by the said name, sue and be sued.

(3) It shall be the duty of the Board to administer all lands vested in it for the benefit of the Bhudan Yagna in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder.

Powers of the Board in respect of the transferred territories.

[3A. Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, the Himachal Pradesh Bhoodan Yagna Board established under the Himachal Pradesh Bhoodan Yagna Act, 1954 (Himachal Pradesh Act 2 of 1955) shall, until the establishment of a Board under section 3, be deemed to be the Board established under this Act and accordingly shall perform the functions, discharge the duties and exercise the powers of such Board.]

Constitution of Board.

4. ²[(1) The Board shall consist of a Chairman and such other number of members not more than ten and not less than six, as the State Government may, from time to time, nominate.

(2) The State Government shall appoint one of the members to be the Secretary of the Board.]

(3) The Board may delegate any of its powers and functions under the Act except the power to make regulations under section 34 to the Secretary or any member or to a sub-committee of three or more of its members.

Term of office of members or Chairman.

5. (1) A Chairman, Secretary or member nominated under section 4 shall hold office for a term of four years and shall be eligible for re-nomination.

(2) The nomination of Chairman, Secretary and the members shall be notified in the Gazette and the term of office shall commence from such date as may be notified in this behalf :

Provided that the Board may remove from office any of its members who, in its opinion, has failed to perform or is unable to carry out his duties or has so abused his position as a member of the Board as to render his continuance as such detrimental to the interest of the public or the Bhudan Yagna.

1. Section 3A added by the Punjab Bhudan Yagna Board (Reorganisation) Order, 1969, but not applicable to the State of Haryana.

2. Inserted by Haryana Act 32 of 1976 and further substituted by Haryana Act 8 of 1977.

[(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), the Chairman, Secretary and Members of the Board notified,—*vide* Haryana Government notification No. 1662-ARIV-70/1810, dated the 20th January, 1971, under sub-section (2) shall continue to function as such until a new Chairman, Secretary and Members are nominated and notified in accordance with the provisions of section 4.]

6. (1) The Chairman, Secretary or any member of the Board may, at any time, resign his office by submitting his resignation to ^{Filling of vacancy.} 2[the State Government]. No such resignation shall take effect until it is accepted.

(2) Any vacancy of a Chairman, Secretary or a member shall be filled as early as practicable.

7. Anything done or any proceedings taken under this Act, shall not be questioned on account of the existence of any vacancy in the Board or any defect or irregularity in the nomination of the Chairman, Secretary or any member of the Board. Validity of proceedings.

8. The Board may appoint such officers and servants as it considers necessary for the efficient performance of its functions. Appointment of officers and servants.

9. The remuneration and other conditions of service of the officer and servants of the Board shall be such as may be determined by regulations made in this behalf by the Board. Conditions of service of officers and servants.

10. The Board shall meet and shall, from time to time, make such arrangements with respect to the day, time, notice, management and adjournment of its meetings as it thinks fit, subject to the following provisions, namely :— Conduct of business.

- (a) the Chairman may, whenever he thinks fit, call special meetings ;
- (b) every meeting shall be presided over by the Chairman and, in his absence, by any member chosen by the meeting to preside for the occasion ;
- (c) all questions at any meeting shall be decided by a majority of the members present and in case of equality of votes, the person presiding shall have and exercise a second or casting vote ; and
- (d) the minutes of the proceedings of each meeting shall be recorded in a book to be provided for the purpose.

1. Inserted by Haryana Act 32 of 1976.

2. Inserted by Haryana Act 32 of 1976 and further substituted by Haryana Act 8 of 1977.

Quorum.

11. (1) The quorum for the meeting shall be of five members.

(2) If at any meeting of the Board a quorum is not present, the Chairman shall adjourn the meeting to such other date as he may think fit, and the business, which would have been brought before the original meeting, if there had been a quorum present, shall be brought before, and transacted at, the adjourn meeting, whether there is a quorum present there at or not.

Board's funds.

12. The Board shall have its own fund and may accept grants, donations, gifts or loans from the Central or the State Governments or any local authority or any individual or body of persons, whether incorporated or not, for all or any of the purposes of this Act.

Application of funds.

13. All property, fund and other assests vesting in the Board shall be held and applied by it in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the Rules made thereunder.

Power to make contract.

14. The Board may enter into and perform all such contracts as it may consider necessary or expedient for carrying out any of the purposes of this Act.

Dissolution of the Board.

15. (1) If at any time the State Government is satisfied that—

- (a) the Board has failed without reasonable cause or excuse to discharge duties or to perform functions imposed or assigned by or under this Act,
- (b) circumstances have so arisen that the Board is rendered unable or may be rendered unable to discharge duties or to perform functions imposed or assigned by or under this Act, or
- (c) it is otherwise expedient or necessary to dissolve the Board,

it may by notification in the official Gazette—

- (i) dissolve the Board for the period to be specified ;
- (ii) direct the reconstitution of the Board in accordance with the provisions of section 4 of this Act ; and
- (iii) declare that the duties, powers and functions of the Board under this Act shall for the period for which it

has been dissolved be discharged, exercised and performed by such person or authority and subject to such restrictions as may be specified therein.

(2) The State Government may make such incidental and consequential provisions as may appear to be necessary for this purpose.

16. (1) The Board may, for any Tahsil where it considers necessary so to do, constitute Tahsil committees consisting of not less than three and not more than seven members to be appointed by the Board. Tahsil
Committees.

(2) The Tahsil Committee may delegate any of its powers and functions under the Act to any member or to a sub-committee of three or more of its members.

CHAPTER III—Donation of land

17. (1) Any person owning a transferable interest in land desiring to make a gift thereof to the Board may submit a declaration making the offer in the prescribed form to the Board. Procedure for
making
donation of
land.

(2) The Board shall, if it considers the gift acceptable forward the declaration to the Revenue Officer having jurisdiction in the Tahsil where the land is situate.

(3) On receipt of the declaration mentioned in sub-section (1), the Revenue Officer shall, if satisfied, after such enquiry as he thinks necessary, that the donor is competent to make the gift and has valid title in the land, issue a notice in the prescribed form to such person as he may consider interested in the property calling upon them, before a date specified in the notice, to show cause why the gift should not be accepted.

(4) The Revenue Officer shall also affix a copy of the notice referred to in sub-section (3) on the notice board of his Court and shall cause it to be published by beat of drum in the village where the land is situate.

(5) Any person interested in the property may, before the date specified in the notice, file an objection before the Revenue Officer showing cause why the gift should not be accepted.

(6) All such objections shall be enquired into and decided by the Revenue Officer.

(7) If no objection is filed before the specified date, or if all the objections filed have been rejected by Revenue Officer, he shall pass an order accepting the gift on behalf of the Board.

(8) On the acceptance of the gift, all title and interest of the donor in the land shall be extinguished and the land shall, subject to the provisions of section 18, vest in the Board in the same rights in which it was held by the donor.

(9) The Revenue Officer may at any stage of the proceeding reject the officer of the donor on any of the following grounds, namely :—

- (i) that the donor is incompetent to make the gift ;
- (ii) that the title of the donor is defective ;
- (iii) that there are encumbrances on the land ;
- (iv) such other grounds as may be prescribed.

Order of Revenue Officers subject of civil suit.

18. The order of the Revenue Officer, rejecting an objection passed under sub-section (7) of section 17, shall not, be subject to appeal or revision but any party aggrieved by the order or any other person interested in the land who had no notice of the proceedings under section 17 may, within six months from the date of such order, institute a suit in the Civil Court having jurisdiction to have the order set aside and the decision of such Court shall be binding on the Board, and subject to the result of such suit, if any, the order of the Revenue Officer shall be conclusive.

Gifts to be irrevocable.

19. Every gift of land in respect of which an order has been passed under section 17 shall, after the date of the order, be irrevocable.

Land vesting Board not attachable.

20. Except for any decree passed under section 18 the lands vesting in the Board shall not be liable to attachment or sale in execution of any decree or order passed by a Civil Court against the Board.

Donation of land prior to commencement of Act.

21. (A) (1) Where any land has been donated for purposes of the Bhudan Yagna prior to the commencement of this Act, the Board shall prepare a list of all such lands showing therein—

- (a) the area and description ;
- (b) the name of the donor ;
- (c) the nature of the interest of the donor in the land ;

- (d) if the land has been granted to any person in pursuance of the Bhudan Yagna, the name of the person to whom the land has been granted ;
- (e) the date of the grant under clause (d) ; and
- (f) such other particulars as may be prescribed.

(2) The list so prepared shall be forwarded to the Deputy Commissioner of the district within whose jurisdiction the land is situate.

(3) On receipt of such list the Deputy Commissioner shall cause action to be taken in accordance with section 17 in respect of the lands described in the list.

(4) The provisions of sections 17 to 20 and 21 (b) shall apply in respect of all the donations of the said lands as they apply in respect of all donations of lands made after the commencement of this Act :

Provided that where an order is made by a Revenue Officer under sub-section (7) of section 17, the gift shall be deemed to have been accepted with effect from the date on which the donation of land was made and for this purpose this Act shall be deemed to have been in force on such date.

(5) If any land of which the donation so received before the commencement of this Act has already been granted to any person in pursuance of the Bhudan Yagna, it shall be deemed to have been granted by the Board to such person on the date on which such person takes possession thereof and the grant shall be subject to all liabilities to which any grant made by the Board in general shall be subject.

(B) Notwithstanding the provisions of any law to the contrary, a tenant holding land directly from the State Government shall, for the purposes of this Chapter, be deemed to be owning a transferable interest in such land.

22. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any law an owner shall not, for purposes of this Act, be competent to donate—

Lands which cannot be donated.

- (a) land recorded or by usage treated as pasture, cremation or burial ground, tank pathway or thrashing floor ; and

(b) such other land as the State Government may by notification in the Gazette specify.

(2) The holder of a life-estate shall be competent to donate only his life interest therein.

CHAPTER IV—Distribution of land.

Power of Board to allot land.

23. Notwithstanding any thing provided in any law to the contrary—

(i) the Board shall have power to allot the land vesting in it ; and

(ii) the allottee shall not have and shall not be entitled to claim any rights except as provided for in this Act.

Tehsil Committees to distribute land.

24. The Tahsil Committee shall, in accordance with such regulations as may be made by the Board in this behalf, distribute the land vesting in the Board to landless persons who are capable of cultivating the same personally.

Bhudan holders, Conditions of allotment.

25. The person to whom land is allotted under sections 23 or 24 shall be recorded in village papers or record-of-rights as a Bhudan holder and shall hold the land subject to the following terms and conditions, namely :—

(a) he shall be deemed to hold the land directly from the Board and shall be liable to pay the land revenue that may have been or may be assessed on such land ;

(b) his rights shall, on his death, pass to his heirs ;

(c) he shall not transfer any interest in the land ;

(d) he shall not allow the land to lie fallow for a period in excess of two years ;

(e) he shall pay the land revenue on the due date.

[(f) If a co-operative farming society is formed in the village, he shall if so required by the Revenue Officer become a member of the co-operative farming society and abide by its by laws and regulations.]

¹[25A. Any person holding land as a Bhudan holder for ten years continuously in accordance with the provisions of this Act shall, at the expiry of the said period, acquire proprietary rights of the said land and the title and interest of the Board in the said land shall cease. Entry to the acquisition of such proprietary rights shall have to be made in village papers or record-of-rights :

Acquisition of proprietary rights.

Provided that no person shall transfer or sell any interest in such land for a period of ten years after acquiring the proprietary rights:

Provided further that a person may sell or transfer the land in question after a period of ten years having acquired the proprietary rights in very rare cases where the Collector or Deputy Commissioner of the district concerned is satisfied that the difficulty is genuine.]

26. If any Bhudan holder commits a breach of any of the conditions in section 25, the Revenue Officer may after such enquiry as he deems fit determine the right the holder and the land shall thereupon vest in the Board without affecting his liability to pay the arrears of land revenue recoverable from him.

Ejection of Bhudan holder on breach of conditions.

27. Subject to any decree passed under section 18, the land held by a person as a Bhudan holder shall not be liable to attachment or sale in execution of any decree or order passed by a Civil Court.

Land held by Bhudan holder not liable to attachment.

CHAPTER V—Miscellaneous.

28. The acceptance of a gift under section 17 or a grant of land made or deemed to be made under the provisions of this Act, shall be deemed always to have been exempt from (a) payment of stamp duty and (b) registration or attestation under the law relating to registration and execution of documents, any law to the contrary notwithstanding.

Exemption from stamp duty and registration.

29. Any person in possession of the land on the date of the order passed under section 17 and any person who takes possession, otherwise than in accordance with law, of the land received in donation for purposes of the Bhudan Yagna may, on application to a Revenue Officer by the Board or the Bhudan holder concerned, be ejected.

Ejection of persons unlawful in possession.

1. Inserted by Haryana Act 12 of 1995.

Partition of holdings.

30. (1) If the land gifted to the Board forms a part, of a holding, the Board or the Bhudan holder concerned may apply to a Revenue Officer for possession and the Revenue Officer may notwithstanding any provision in any law to the contrary partition the holding and demarcate the land and apportion the rent or the land revenue, as the case may be.

(2) If there are any arrears of rent or revenue as the case may be, on the holding partitioned under sub-section (1), the Revenue Officer shall determine the portion of the arrears due on the part of the holding gifted to the Board and thereupon the Board and the Bhudan holder shall be liable to pay the portion of the arrears so determined and notwithstanding anything contained in the Punjab Land Revenue Act, 1887 ¹[or any other corresponding law for the time being in force], the Board or the Bhudan holder shall not be liable for the arrears in respect of the remaining part of the holding.

Procedure.

31. The proceedings under this Act shall be deemed for all purposes to be proceedings under the Punjab Land Revenue Act, 1887 ¹[or any other corresponding law for the time being in force], and the procedure applicable to proceedings under the said Act ¹[or corresponding law] shall be followed.

Board's power to act as Tahsil Committee.

32. If no Tahsil Committee has been formed for any Tahsil the functions of a Tahsil Committee under this Act shall be performed by the Board.

33. ²[* * *]

Powers of Board to allot land for Community purposes.

34. The Board may allot any land vesting in it for a community purpose or exchange any such land with other land.

Regulations.

35. The Board may, from time to time, with the previous sanction of the State Government, make regulations consistent with this Act and

1. Added by the Punjab Bhudana Yagna Board (Re-organisation) Order, 1969.

2. Omitted by Haryana Act 32 of 1976.

any rules made thereunder—

- (a) for regulating its procedure and the disposal of its business ;
- (b) for the remunerations and conditions of service of its employees ;
- (c) for regulating the procedure, disposal of business, constitution and supersession of Tahsil Committee, the term of office and the filling of casual vacancies of office-bearers and members of such committees and removal of office-bearers and members thereof ;
- (d) for the principles to be followed for the distribution of lands, qualifications of persons to whom lands may be given and the maximum area to be allotted to one family ;
- (e) for the appointment of the sub-committees and for the delegation of powers to sub-committees and office-bearers and individual members thereof ;
- (f) for any other matter arising out of Board's function under this Act for which it is necessary or expedient to make regulations.

36. Nothing in this Act shall apply to evacuee property as defined in the Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 1950 (XXXI of 1950). Act not to apply to evacuee property.

37. (1) The State Government may, by notification and subject to the condition of previous publication, make rules to carry out the purposes of this Act. Power to make rules.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, the State Government may make rules,—

- (a) prescribing the area, of land for purposes of clause (f) of section 2 ;
- (b) prescribing the form of declaration under sub-section (1) of section 17 for submitting a declaration to make a gift of land ;

- (c) prescribing the form of notice under sub-section (3) of section 17 calling upon persons to show cause why a gift of land should not be accepted ;
- (d) stating other grounds under item (iv) of sub-section (9) of section 17 for rejecting the offer to make a gift ; and
- (e) prescribing other particulars under clause (f) of sub-section (1) of section 21.