
JAN VISHWAS (AMENDMENT OF PROVISIONS) BILL, 2025

What is the Bill?

The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025 has been introduced to propose amendments in 100+ provisions across 16 Central Acts administered by 10 Ministries. This is done with a view of decriminalizing a number of minor offences in the legal areas of apprenticeship, motor-vehicle regulations, and municipal governance, to name a few. This Bill expands the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act 2023, which had previously amended 183 provisions in 42 Central Acts across 19 Departments. The objective behind the Bill is to transform countless offences that are punishable by fines into civil penalties. The result of such decriminalization would be an ease in administration without the need for court interference and an increase in trust-based regulation of the citizens. Another aim of the Bill is to enforce laws through fines or penalties while doing away with imprisonment as a punishment for minor violations. ¹

Why it is required?

The idea behind both, the Act of 2023 and the 2025 Bill, as stated in the Statement of Object and Reasons of the Jan Vishwas Bill of 2023 is to- promote ease of doing business and ease of living reforms; removing the fear of harassment and punitive imprisonment for minor violations; and reducing the burden on the judiciary by instilling intervention at the administrative level. The impact of such changes includes encouragement of business and individual confidence without the fear of prosecution and an increase in compliance ease. ²

One of the biggest reasons for the introduction of these reforms was due to the myriad of outdated laws and regulations that were repetitive, uncertain and inconsistent. Additionally, these laws often disproportionately subjugated the marginalized communities to more punitive scrutiny, thereby creating an atmosphere of fear of the law in daily activities and business.

The backbone of these reformatory laws is the reliance on a trust-based form of regulation. It is important to note that “Jan Vishwas” literally translates to “Trusting the People”. Additionally, the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025 states that, “the corner stone of democratic governance lies in the Government trusting its own people and institutions. A web of outdated rules and regulations causes trust deficit. It has been the endeavour of the Government to achieve the principle of ‘Minimum Government Maximum

¹ https://prsindia.org/billtrack/the-jan-vishwas-amendment-of-provisions-bill-2025#_ednref1

² <https://theleaflet.in/explainer/bringing-jan-vishwas-to-the-jan-vishwas-bill>

Governance’, redefining the regulatory landscape of the country under the Ease of Living and Ease of Doing Business reforms.”³

This mode of governance reduces the bureaucratic red tape around laws and shifts them from policing and overcriminalization to partnership and encouragement of both individual and business growth. Previously, colonial laws such as the Indian Forest Act 1927, Salt Act 1882, Charter Act 1813, were highly suspicious of the Indian citizen and sought to control rather than facilitate economic activity. The colonial governance was aimed at draining India of its wealth and resources and enriching the British Empire in the process. Hence, these laws imposed criminal punishments on minor violations, thereby subjugating small businesses, artisans, peasants and traders from conducting free economic activity. Many of these colonial era laws remain enforceable in modern-day India and must be transformed. This is because, not only have these laws caused economic underdevelopment, but they are also inconsistent with the modern economic, social and technological advancement of present-day India.

Therefore, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment to Provisions) Act 2023 and its extension, the Bill of 2025, were formulated to do away with such archaic and obsolete laws. The reforms suggested were in favour of laws that foster more trust in citizens and are consistent with India’s Amrit Kaal Viksit Bharat vision of 2047 that promotes “**Minimum Government Maximum Governance.**” The Bill of 2025 takes a step towards bringing India’s regulatory framework closer to “global business standards, promoting investor confidence and facilitating smoother business operations”.⁴

What is the difference between the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act 2023 and the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill 2025?

The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act 2023 is a central law that has already been enacted. It is the first major step taken by the Central Government in decriminalizing minor offences across various laws. The Act amended 42 Central Acts and decriminalized 183 provisions.⁵ It primarily removed imprisonment clauses and instead levied civil penalties such as fines. The main aim of this enactment was to curb overcriminalization and reduce the fear of law enforcement, thereby improving ease of doing business.

In contrast, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025 is an expansion of the 2023 Act that has been introduced in the Parliament and is currently under examination by a Select Committee. It is also called Jan Vishwas 2.0 as it adopts a more structural and detailed approach

³ Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill 2025

⁴ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=2059868®=3&lang=2>

⁵ <https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/govt-introduces-jan-vishwas-amendment-bill-2025-in-ls-sent-to-committee-125081800386>

to decriminalization. Instead of covering a large number of laws, the Bill proposes to alter, in-depth, 16 central laws and 355 provisions.⁶ Therefore, the Bill of 2025 presents a preference for detail-oriented change in a few laws as opposed to the 2023 Act which focused on introductory change in a wide range of laws.

Another key difference between the two is the enforcement philosophy. While the Act of 2023 focuses on the removal of criminal penalties, the Bill of 2025 introduces a ‘first warning, correction and penalization’ formula. A highlight of the Bill is its inclusion of advisory or warnings for 76 first-time minor offences under 10 Acts that were previously criminalized.⁷

Therefore, the Act of 2023 is viewed as a starting point in curbing excessive criminalization, whereas the Bill of 2025 represents the next stage in correcting it by institutionalizing trust-based regulation, increasing ease of living and facilitating growth of business that is consistent with modern global standards.

What are the key features of the Bill of 2025?

As previously mentioned, the Bill proposed to amend 16 Acts. Some significant Acts to be amended include the Reserve Bank of India Act 1934, the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act 1957, the Apprentices Act 1961, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) Act 1994, the Motor Vehicles Act 1988, etc.

The Jan Vishwas Bill of 2025 proposes-⁸

1. **Inclusion of advisories or warnings-** The Bill alters many Acts to provide warnings for first-time offences instead of civil penalties or fines⁹. For example, the Central Silk Board Act, 1948 punished providing false information with imprisonment, fines or both. The Bill proposes to amend this by providing a warning to first time offenders and subsequent monetary penalties for repeated offences. Another example is the Legal Metrology Act 2009, where use of non-standard weights, mislabeling and missing documents would previously attract fines. However, under the Bill, for the first instance of such an offence, the authorities issue an “improvement notice” or a warning to provide time to first offenders to fix the non-compliance.
2. **Imprisonment clauses for technical or procedural defaults to be replaced with monetary penalties or warnings-** For example, the Electricity Act of 2003 criminalized

⁶ <https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/govt-introduces-jan-vishwas-amendment-bill-2025-in-ls-sent-to-committee-125081800386>

⁷ <https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/govt-introduces-jan-vishwas-amendment-bill-2025-in-ls-sent-to-committee-125081800386>

⁸ https://prsindia.org/billtrack/the-jan-vishwas-amendment-of-provisions-bill-2025#_ednref1

⁹ <https://theprint.in/india/governance/jan-vishwas-2-0-over-36-minor-offences-to-be-decriminalised-replaced-with-warning-or-penalty/2722586>

non-compliance with an order or direction as punishable with imprisonment for up to 3 months. The Bill removed this imprisonment clause and introduced a fine instead. Additionally, the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957 punished failure to give notice of intention to make/ alter a building with imprisonment for 6 months or a fine of Rs. 5000. The Bill removed the jail component for this and allowed for only monetary compensation for this offence.

- 3. Introduction of proportionate graduated penalties for repeated offences-** The overall design of the Jan Vishwas Bill of 2025 consistently embedded graduated penalties as a policy objective by matching the severity of penalties with frequency of offences rather than punishing all contraventions equally. For example, the Apprentice Act 1961 criminalized the offence of making an apprentice work overtime without approval or refusal to furnish information for the same with imprisonment and fine. The Bill transformed this into a civil penalty by issuing a warning at the first contravention and then a graduated fine regime based on escalated and recurring offences.
- 4. Adjudication and appeal-** The Bill authorized the central government to appoint one or more adjudicating officers to determine penalties. These officers had the authority to summon people for inquiries regarding violations of Acts. The Bill also laid down the appeal mechanism for any order passed by these officers. For example, under the NDMC Act 1994, an officer below the position of Assistant Commissioner could be appointed as an adjudicating officer.
- 5. An automatic 10% increase every 3 years-** To maintain deterrence, the Bill introduced a gradual increase of fines and penalties by 10%, every 3 years for various offences.

Key Takeaways-

Finally, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025 is representative of a continued shift in India's regulatory approach from punishment to deterrence. It is a step taken toward the growing business future of India, consistent with global investor standards, modern technologies and trading systems. However, some factors remain to pose an issue including- concerns regarding excessive delegation of powers to adjudicating officers, identical fine amounts in the Bill and the Act, different penalties for offences involving similar degrees of culpability, similar offences attracting civil penalties under some laws and imprisonment under another, etc.¹⁰ Overall, while the strengthens regulatory rationalization, its success depends on fair implementation and transparency in enforcement.

¹⁰ https://prsindia.org/billtrack/the-jan-vishwas-amendment-of-provisions-bill-2025#_ednref1