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**Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996**

**Section 8 - POWER TO REFER PARTIES TO ARBITRATION WHERE THERE IS AN ARBITRATION AGREEMENT**

1) A judicial authority before which an action is brought in a matter which is the subject of an arbitration agreement shall, if a party so applies not later than when submitting his first statement on the substance of the dispute, refer the parties to arbitration. (2) The application referred to in sub-section (1) shall not be entertained unless it is accompanied by the original arbitration agreement or duly certified copy thereof. (3) Notwithstanding that an application has been made under sub-section (1) and that the issue is pending before the judicial authority, an arbitration may be commenced or continued and an arbitral award made.