



THE PUNJAB DOMESTIC WORKERS ACT 2019



Introduction

Women in Struggle for Empowerment (WISE) is a women-led registered organization located in Punjab. Its leadership comprises women rights activists, with background of active struggle for women empowerment in Pakistan.

WISE thematic areas comprise women human, political and labor rights. Our projects are located in vulnerable and marginalized communities with focus on women folk. Since its inception 8 years ago, WISE has achieved significant milestones through its set objectives of awareness raising, capacity building, advocacy & campaigning for improved governance structures, sensitization and supporting government bodies and departments through escalating the implementation of women human rights in Pakistan.

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[1] THE PUNJAB DOMESTIC WORKERS ACT 2019

(Act-II-of 2019)

An Act to provide for the regulation of employment of domestic workers in Province of the Punjab.

It is necessary to protect the rights of the domestic workers, to regulate their terms of employment and working conditions of service, to provide them social protection and ensure their welfare and to provide for the matters ancillary there to;

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

1 Short Title, Extent and Commencement

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Punjab Domestic workers Act 2019.
- (2) It extends to whole of the Punjab.
- (3) It shall come into force at once.

2 Definitions

In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context:

- (a) “Act” means the Punjab Domestic Workers Act 2019;
- (b) “Appellate Authority” means an Authority appointed under the Act;
- (c) “beneficiary” means a domestic worker or a heir of a deceased domestic worker eligible to receive benefits from the Domestic Workers

Welfare Fund;

- (d) “Board” means the Minimum Wages Board established under section 3 of the Minimum Wages Ordinance, 1961 (XXXIX of 1961);
- (e) “Committee” means a Dispute Resolution Committee constituted under the Act;
- (f) “dispute” means any dispute or conflict between employers and domestic workers concerning employment or the terms of employment or the conditions of work of domestic workers;
- (g) “domestic work” means any work which takes place within or for the household and includes child care, old age care, sick care or natal / post-natal care and the matters ancillary thereto;
- (h) “domestic worker” is a person who provides services of a domestic nature in a household;
- (i) “employer” means:
 - (i) in relation to a person or a group of persons registered under the Act and employing domestic workers collectively responsible for employment of domestic workers;
 - (ii) in relation to an establishment or agency, the owner(s) of the establishment or agency or a person registered under the Act and having the ultimate control over the affairs of the establishment or agency as well as any other person to whom the affairs of such establishment or agency are entrusted whether such person is called an agent, a manager, an occupier or by any other name;
- (j) “family” in relation to a domestic worker, means

- the spouse, a child below the age of 18 years and includes a disabled child above the age of 18 years with disability of fifty percent or more;
- (k) “Fund” means Domestic Workers Welfare Fund constituted under section 22 of the Act;
 - (l) “Government” means Government of the Punjab;
 - (m) “Governing Body” has the same meaning as in section 5 of the Provincial Employees Social Security Ordinance, 1965 (X of 1965);
 - (n) “household” means individuals who comprise a family unit and who live together under the same roof;
 - (o) “Inspector” means a Labour Inspector notified under section 35 of the Act;
 - (p) “Labour Court” means a Labour Court established under section 44 of the Punjab Industrial Relations Act, 2010 (XIX of 2010);
 - (q) “prescribed” means prescribed by the rules; and
 - (r) “wages” means all remuneration capable of being expressed in terms of money, which shall, if the terms and conditions of employment, express or implied, are fulfilled, be payable to a person employed in respect of his employment or of work done in such employment, but does not include—
 - (a) any contribution paid by the employer in respect of such person under any scheme of social insurance or to a pension fund or provident fund;
 - (b) gift or anything given in kind.

3 Prohibition on Employment

No child under the age of 15 years shall be allowed to work in a household in any capacity:

Provided that no domestic worker under the age of 18 years shall be engaged in a domestic work except involving light work in a household.

Explanation: “light work” means a domestic work which is part-time in nature and is not likely to harm health, safety and education of a domestic worker.

4 Rights and Entitlements of Domestic workers

- (1) A domestic worker shall not be employed under the bonded labour system or forced or partly forced labor system.
- (2) No domestic worker shall be discriminated in recruitment, continuance of employment, deciding wages, benefits and other rights on grounds of religion, race, caste, creed, sex, ethnic background, and place of birth/residence, domicile, migration or any other reason.
- (3) The domestic worker shall be addressed as «domestic worker», not «servant».
- (4) No extra work may be assigned to the domestic worker without free will of the domestic worker and extra remuneration.
- (5) The employer shall provide dignified working conditions and occupational safety and health measures to the domestic worker.
- (6) The benefits for a domestic worker shall include sickness benefits and medical care during

sickness and medical care of dependents, injury benefits, disablement pension and survivor's pension under the Punjab Employees Social Security Ordinance, 1965 (X of 1965) and the rules made thereunder.

5 Employment on Work

- (1) Every employment or appointment of a domestic worker shall be subject to issuance of a letter of employment in the prescribed form showing the terms and conditions of his employment including nature of work and amount of wages.
- (2) The employer shall send a copy of the letter of employment issued under subsection (1) to the Inspector concerned, and the employer may keep a copy of identification documents of a domestic worker during the course of employment.
- (3) An employer shall, within sixty days of the commencement of the Act, arrange for the issuance of a letter of employment under subsection (1) to each of the domestic workers employed on work in a household.
- (4) No domestic worker shall be required to perform any work other than what is specifically mentioned in the letter of employment.
- (5) No domestic worker shall be required to work for more than eight hours in a day, however, a domestic worker, at free will, may work for such time duration and for such remuneration as may be prescribed.
- (6) Any work by a domestic worker in excess of forty eight hours shall incur over time rates as may

be prescribed, and weekly working time shall not exceed fifty six hours.

6 Leave and Holidays

- (1) Every domestic worker engaged in domestic work shall be entitled to a holiday of at least one whole day in a week.
- (2) Every domestic worker shall be entitled to sick leave with full wages for a total period of eight days in a year and such leave, if not availed of by a domestic worker during that calendar year, may be carried forward, but the total accumulation of such leave shall not exceed sixteen days at one time.
- (3) Every domestic worker engaged in domestic work shall be entitled to ten days festival holidays with full wages in a year, and the days and dates for such festival holidays shall be agreed between the domestic worker and the employer in the beginning of the calendar year.
- (4) A female domestic worker engaged in domestic work shall be entitled to six weeks maternity leave

7 Wages During Leave or Holiday Period

- (1) For each day of the leave or holidays allowed to a domestic worker under subsections (1), (2) and (3) of section 6, the domestic worker shall be paid at the rate equivalent to the daily average amount, which, during the three months period preceding the leave or holidays, was being paid to the domestic worker.

- (2) A domestic worker, who has been allowed leave under subsection (2) of section 6 for any period not less than four days, shall, before the leave begins, be paid his wages for the period of the leave allowed.

8 Minimum Wage

- (1) Every domestic worker shall be paid such wages within such period of time as may be provided in the letter of employment, but such wages must in no case be less than the wages specified by the Government under the Act.
- (2) No employer shall pay to a domestic worker, remuneration payable, at the rates less favorable than those at which remuneration is paid to the domestic workers of the opposite sex performing same work or work of a similar nature or of equal value

9 Maternity Benefits

A female domestic worker engaged in domestic work shall be entitled to maternity benefits with a minimum amount equivalent to six weeks wages in the prescribed manner but not less than the minimum wages notified by the Government.

10 Accommodation

- (1) Every employer, under express terms and conditions of employment, shall ensure to provide for the accommodation for live-in domestic workers who stays at place of work at his free will.
- (2) Every employer shall ensure decent living conditions for a live-in domestic worker.

11 Medical Examination, Vaccination and Inoculation

Every employer, on yearly basis, shall ensure medical examination of a domestic worker in a household by a registered medical practitioner and such domestic worker shall also be vaccinated and inoculated against such diseases at such intervals as may be prescribed, and the expenses, if any, of such medical examination, vaccination and inoculation shall be borne by the employer.

12 Notice of Certain Accident

Where in any household, an accident occurs which causes death or bodily injury whereby any domestic worker injured is prevented from resuming his work in the household during the forty-eight hours after the accident occurred, or which is of any nature which may be prescribed in this behalf, the employer of the domestic worker shall send a notice thereof to such authorities, in such form and within such time, as may be prescribed.

13 Termination of Employment

The termination of employment shall be subject to one month's prior notice in writing either by the domestic worker or by the employer and in lieu of the notice, one month's wages shall be paid calculated on the basis of average of wages earned during the preceding three months.

14 Restoration of Possession of Property to Domestic Worker

(1) Upon termination of employment, personal

belongings and identification documents of a domestic worker or his family shall not be retained, and if any belonging or property of a domestic worker is not returned to him, the aggrieved domestic worker may apply to the Dispute Resolution Committee for restoration of the possession of such property and the Dispute Resolution Committee may, after giving the employer a reasonable opportunity of being heard, direct the employer to restore to the applicant the possession of the said property within such time period as may be specified in the award.

- (2) Whoever, being required by the Act to restore any property to the domestic worker or his family, omits or fails to do so, within time specified in subsection (1), shall be liable, on conviction before a Magistrate, to a fine not exceeding ten thousand rupees and restoration to the applicant the possession of the said property.

15 Relinquishing of Right

Where a domestic worker relinquishes any right conferred by this Act, whether made before or after the commencement of this Act, the relinquishment shall be null and void in so far as it purports to deprive him of such right.

16 Recommendation of Minimum Wages for Domestic Workers.

- (1) The Board shall, upon a reference made to it by the Government, recommend to it, after such enquiry as the Board thinks fit, the minimum

rates of wages for domestic workers employed in households.

- (2) In its recommendations under sub-section (1), the Board shall indicate, whether the minimum rates of wages should be adopted uniformly throughout the Province or with such local variations for such localities as are specified therein.
- (3) In pursuance of a direction under sub-section (1), the Board may recommend minimum rates of wages for all classes of domestic workers in any category or capacity and, in such recommendation, may specify —
 - (a) the minimum rates of wages for —
 - (i) time work;
 - (ii) piece work;
 - (iii) on call work;
 - (iv) over time work; and
 - (v) work on the weekly day of rest and for paid holidays; and
 - (b) the minimum time rates for domestic workers employed on piece work so as to guarantee minimum wages on a time basis for such domestic workers.
- (4) The time rates recommended by the Board may be on hourly, daily, weekly or monthly basis.
- (5) The rates recommended under this section for overtime work and work on paid holidays shall not be less than the minimum rates fixed for such work under any other law for the time being in force.

17 Power to Declare minimum Rates of Wages

Upon receipt of a recommendation of the Board under section 16 of the Act, the Government may proceed as per the procedure laid down under section 6 of the Minimum Wages Ordinance, 1961 (XXXIX of 1961).

18 Time and Conditions of Payment of Wages

- (1) The wages of every domestic worker shall be paid before the expiry of the fifth day, after the last day of the wage-period in respect of which the wages are payable.
- (2) No wage period, so fixed, shall exceed one month.
- (3) Where the employment of any domestic worker is terminated by employer, the wages earned by him/her shall be paid before the expiry of the second working day from the day on which his employment is terminated.

19 Prohibition to Pay Below the Minimum rate of Wages

- (4) All payments of wages shall be made on a working day.
- (5) All wages shall be paid in current coin or currency notes or in both.
- (1) No employer shall pay any domestic worker wages at a rate lower than the rate declared under this Act to be the minimum rate of wages for such domestic worker.
- (2) Any employer who contravenes the provisions of this section shall be liable, on conviction

before a Magistrate of the first class, to a fine not exceeding ten thousand rupees, and if the court trying such contravention by order so directs, shall also pay to the domestic worker concerned such sum as may be specified in the order to represent the difference between the amount actually paid to such domestic worker and the amount which would have been paid to him had there been no such contravention.

- (3) All claims of a domestic worker relating to wages or claims arising out of deductions from wages against the employer, as the case may be, shall be settled and recovered in the same manner as is provided in the Minimum Wages Ordinance, 1961 (XXXIX of 1961).
- (4) If the Authority hearing any application under this section is satisfied that no amount to be paid as wages is due from the employer to the applicant, it shall reject the application; and if the application, in the opinion of the Authority, is malicious or vexatious, the Authority when rejecting it, may direct the applicant to pay a penalty not exceeding five thousand rupees to the employer.
- (5) An appeal against a direction made under sub-section (3) or subsection (4) under this section may be preferred, within thirty days of the date on which the direction was made, before the Labour Court constituted under the Punjab Industrial Relations Act, 2010 (XIX of 2010), within whose jurisdiction the cause of action to which the appeal relates arose —
 - (a) by the employer, if the total sum directed to be

paid by way of wages exceeds twenty thousand rupees:

Provided that no appeal under this clause shall lie unless the memorandum of appeal is accompanied by a certificate of the authority to the effect that the appellant has deposited with the authority the amount payable under the direction appealed against.

- (b) by the applicant directed under subsection (4) of this section to pay a penalty.
- (6) The decision of appeal shall be final and shall not in any manner be questioned by any person in any court or before any authority.

20 Registration of Domestic Workers

Every domestic worker, in order to benefit from the fund, shall make an application for registration in a manner as prescribed by the Governing Body, and every such domestic worker shall be provided by the Governing Body with a security number and identity card, which shall be renewable after completion of every three years: Provided that none of the domestic workers shall be eligible to get more than one security number and identity card.

21 Registration of Employers

Every employer shall make an application for registration in a manner as prescribed by the Governing Body, and every such employer shall be provided with a registration number, which shall be renewable after completion of every three years.

22 Fund

- (1) To provide social protection, safety and welfare measures to domestic workers, the Government shall establish a fund to be called “Domestic Workers Welfare Fund».
- (2) The Fund shall consist of:
 - (a) all grants and loans as may be made to the Fund by the Government;
 - (b) all sums received by the Fund from other sources as may be decided upon by the Government and all voluntary contributions from the philanthropists;
 - (c) income from the investments made and properties and assets acquired from the Fund; and
 - (d) proceeds of loans raised by the Governing Body.
- (3) The Fund shall be applied to:
 - (a) financing of measures including education, training and skill development;
 - (b) benefits for domestic workers provided in subsection (6) of section 4 of the Act;
 - (c) any money in aid of any scheme for the welfare of the domestic workers; and
 - (d) meet the expenditures in respect of the cost of management and administration of the Fund.

23 Functions of the Governing Body

The functions of the Governing Body shall be the same as laid down under the Provincial Employees’ Social

Security Ordinance, 1965 (X of 1965) and the rules made thereunder.

24 Manner of Claiming Benefits

- (1) All claims for benefits under this Act shall be made within such times as may be prescribed, and in such form and manner, and shall be accompanied by such documents, information and evidence as to entitlement, as may be provided in the regulations laid down by the Governing Body.
- (2) The payment in respect of benefits shall be made in such manner, and at such time and place as may be provided in the regulations.
- (3) The payment in respect of benefits under the Act, shall be made from the Fund in the prescribed manner.

25 Resolution of Disputes

- (1) The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, constitute a Committee at the lowest tier of the local government to be called the Dispute Resolution Committee for the effective enforcement of the Act.
- (2) The Dispute Resolution Committee, having such number of members and composition as may be prescribed, shall be headed by the head of the lowest tier of the local government concerned or such other officer as may be notified by the Government.
- (3) All disputes or complaints arising out of and in connection with enforcement under the Act

shall be heard and resolved through an award by Dispute Resolution Committee: Provided that every such dispute shall be presented within 30 days from the date on which the dispute arises.

- (4) Any party aggrieved of the award made under subsection (3), may, within 30 days of the date on which the award was made, prefer an appeal before the Appellate Authority.

26 Appellate Authority

- (1) The Government shall appoint an Appellate Authority in each District to hear and decide the appeals preferred against the award of a Dispute Resolution Committee.
- (2) The Appellate Authority may confirm, modify or reverse the award of a Dispute Resolution Committee.

27 Powers of the Dispute Resolution Committees and Appellate Authorities

Every Dispute Resolution Committee and Appellate Authority shall, while holding an enquiry regarding a dispute or complaint under this Act or the rules made thereunder, have same powers as are vested in a Civil Court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Act V of 1908), in respect of the following matters, namely:

- (a) enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him on oath;
- (b) compelling the production of documents and material objects;
- (c) issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses; and

(d) such other matters as may be prescribed.

28 Power to Issue Directions

The Government may, from time to time, issue such directions to employers as may be necessary for the effective enforcement of the provisions of the Act.

29 Power to Remove Difficulties

If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of the Act, the Government may, by order published in the official Gazette, make such provisions, not inconsistent with the provisions of the Act, as appear to it to be necessary or expedient for removal of the difficulty.

30 Tax Treatment of the Income of The Fund

The income of the Fund including capital gains shall be exempt from Income Tax within the meaning of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001.

31 Penalties

- (1) An employer who fails to comply with or contravenes any provisions of the Act other than section 3, shall, on conviction, be punishable with fine which for the first offence may extend to five thousand rupees, and for a second or subsequent offence with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees.
- (2) Whoever knowingly contravenes the provisions of section 3, shall be liable to punishment with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month if he employs a child under the age of 12 years and in case of a child under 15 years by fine which may extend to Rs fifty thousand

but which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees.

- (3) Any employer or any such person who willfully obstructs an Inspector in the exercise of any power in compliance of section 37, or fails to produce on demand thereunder any evidence, statement or other document, shall be punishable with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees.

32 Presumption

A child present in a household along with one or both of his parents who are employed therein shall not be presumed to be in employment within the meaning of the Act unless proved.

33 Prosecution

No prosecution under the Act or any rules made thereunder shall be instituted except by or with the previous sanction of the Dispute Resolution Committee.

34 Trial of Offence

No Court, inferior to that of a Magistrate of the first class, shall try any offence under the Act or the rules made thereunder.

35 Labour Inspectors

- (1) The Government may notify Labour Inspectors of the respective areas of jurisdiction for the purposes of ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Act.
- (2) An Inspector notified under subsection (1) shall be deemed to be a public servant within the

meaning of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 (XLV of 1860).

36 Functions and Powers of Inspectors

- (1) No household shall be subjected to inspection except on receipt of a complaint and on direction of a Dispute Resolution Committee.
- (2) An Inspector on direction of Dispute Resolution Committee may, for the discharge of any functions under the Act or the rules made thereunder—
 - (a) file a case through the public prosecutor in the Court of competent jurisdiction; and
 - (b) exercise such other powers conferred upon him as may be necessary for carrying out the purposes of the Act.

37 Protection of Actions Taken Under the Act

No suit, prosecution or other proceedings shall lie against any person for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done in pursuance of the Act or rules made thereunder.

38 Rules

The Government may make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Act.



[1] This Act was passed by the Punjab Assembly on 23 January 2019; assented to by the Governor of the Punjab on 25 January 2019; and was published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), dated 25 January 2019, pages 1767-74.



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