

The Bengal Rural Poor And Unemployed Relief Act, 1939

WEST BENGAL

India

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Act 10 of 1939

- Published on 20 July 1939
- Commenced on 20 July 1939
- [This is the version of this document from 20 July 1939.]
- [Note: The original publication document is not available and this content could not be verified.]

The Bengal Rural Poor And Unemployed Relief Act, 1939 Bengal Act 10 of 1939 [20th July, 1939.] An Act to provide for the relief of the rural poor and unemployed. Whereas it is expedient to provide for the relief of the rural poor and unemployed; It is hereby enacted as follows :-

1. Short title, extent and commencement.

(1) This Act may be called the Bengal Rural Poor and Unemployed Relief Act, 1939. (2) It extends to those parts of [West Bengal] [Words Substituted for the word 'Bengal' by the Indian Independence (Adaptation of Bengal and Punjab Acts) Order, 1948.] in which the Bengal Village Self-Government Act, 1919, is in force. (3) It shall come into [force] [This Act came into force on 1.9.1939 published in the Calcutta Gazette, Extraordinary, Part I of the 17.8.1939, page 2035.] on such date as the [State] [Word Substituted for the word 'Provincial' by the Adaptation of Laws Order, 1950.] Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette appoint.

2. Definition.

- In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context, the words "chaukidar", "circle officer", "district board", "district magistrate", "union", "union board" and "union rate" shall have the same meanings as in the Bengal Village Self-Government Act, 1919.

3. Poor Fund and Poor Boxes.

(1) In every union there shall be a Poor Fund (hereinafter referred to as the Fund), to which shall be paid all sums received as voluntary contributions and all other receipts referred to in section 13. (2) For the purpose of collecting such contributions and in addition to such other methods of collection as may be determined by the committee referred to in section 4, Poor Boxes shall in the

manner determined by the committee, be placed in the office of the union board and in such other place in the union as the committee may determine.(3)There shall be two [separate] [Words Substituted for the words 'different kinds of' by Bengal Act 2 of 1941.] locks for each Poor Box, the key of one of which shall remain in the custody of the President of the Committee and the key of [the other] [Words Substituted for the words 'another lock' by Bengal Act 2 of 1941.] in the custody of such member of the committee as may be appointed by the committee for this purpose.(4)The Poor Box shall be opened in the presence of at least three members of the committee, and the contents thereof counted and entered in Form I in the Schedule to this Act under the initial of the members present.(5)Subscriptions and contributions otherwise collected shall also be entered in Form I in the Schedule to this Act and to each subscriber or contributor there shall be given in writing a receipt for the amount received from him.

4. Poor Fund committee.

(1)The Fund shall, in each union, be managed by a committee, which shall consist of the members of the union board ex officio, together with such other persons, not exceeding five in number, as may be co-opted by the members of the union board from among contributors to the Fund.(2)The president and vice-president of the union board shall be ex officio president and vice-president, respectively, of the committee.(3)At any meeting of the committee three members thereof shall form a quorum.

5. Custody and accounts of the Fund.

- All contributions to the Fund shall remain in the custody of the president of the committee.(2)The accounts of the Fund shall be maintained by the president of the committee in Form I in the Schedule to this Act and shall be audited annually by the circle officer at the times at which the accounts of the union board are audited.

6. Poor and unemployed list.

(1)Every committee shall prepare and maintain a poor and an unemployed list (hereinafter referred to as the List) in which shall be entered -(a)the names of all persons (other than dependents), within the union who are not assessed to union rate ; and(b)the names of all wage-earners (other than dependents) who have been unemployed for a period exceeding one month and have no means of subsistence other than their wages.(2)Any person whose name has not been entered in the List, may apply to the committee to have his name so entered and the committee shall on such application pass such orders consistent with this section as it thinks fit.(3)The List shall be prepared and maintained in Form II in the Schedule to this Act, and shall, after such inquiry as the committee thinks fit, be checked and revised in all its particulars by the committee once in every quarter.(4)The List shall be open to inspection by the local public during the office hours at the office of the union.

7. Reports by chaukidars.

- During periods of distress and at such periods of the year as may be decided by the committee, each chaukidar shall, within the area of his jurisdiction, visit daily the houses of all persons named in the List, and if he finds that any such person or any dependent of any such person has been without food for a period of more than twenty-four hours, he shall immediately report the fact to the president of the committee or, in his absence, to the Vice-President thereof or in the absence of both the president and the Vice-President to such other member of the committee as may be authorized by the committee to receive such reports.

8. Payment of relief.

(1) On receipt of a report submitted under section 7 or by any other reliable person, the president or Vice-President or such other member of the committee, as the case may be, after such inquiry, if any, as he thinks fit, and with the least possible delay, shall grant relief from the Fund to each person whose name has been so reported. (2) Such relief shall be granted at the rate of not more than two annas per diem for each person or above the age of twelve years and half an anna per diem for each person below the age of twelve years, and shall not ordinarily be granted for a period exceeding five days at any one time: [Provided that the committee may, at a meeting thereof, direct that such relief be granted - (i) for a period exceeding five, but not exceeding ten, days at any one time; (ii) in the form of clothing or other articles.]

9. Issue of loans.

(1) If any person of or above the age of sixteen years whose name has been reported under section 7 or section 8 is able-bodied, the committee shall attempt to provide him with employment and may, in addition to any relief granted to him under section 8, advance to him from the Fund by way of loan a sum not exceeding five rupees, for the purpose of enabling him to secure employment. (2) Every such loan shall be repayable without interest at any time within six months of the date of issue. (3) If any such loan is not so repaid, it shall be realized in the manner provided for the realization of arrears of union rate under the provisions of the Bengal Village Self-Government Act, 1919, together with interest calculated at a rate per annum of six and a quarter per centum: Provided that any such loan or portion thereof may be remitted by the committee if two-thirds of the members of the committee so recommend in writing. (4) An account of every loan shall be maintained in Form III in the Schedule to this Act.

10. Action where the Fund proves inadequate.

- If at any time the committee is unable from the Fund to meet the needs of such poor or unemployed persons within the union as require relief, it shall report the fact to the district magistrate and shall send to the sub-divisional magistrate a copy of such report; and at the same time the president of the committee shall summon a meeting of the inhabitants of the union for the purpose of securing contributions to the Fund.

11. Power to fine and dismiss chaukidars.

- Any chaukidar failing to submit, in the manner provided, the report referred to in section 7 shall be liable to be punished with fine or, in cases of gross neglect of duty, with dismissal, in the manner provided in the Bengal Village Self-Government Act, 1919, for the fining and dismissal of chaukidars.

12. Quarterly statement.

- A statement in Form IV in the Schedule to this Act shall be submitted by the committee to the circle officer at the end of each quarter.

13. Power of State Government, district boards and union boards to contribute to the Fund.

- The [State] [Words Substituted for the word 'Provided' by the Adaptation of Laws Order, 1950.] Government, and any district board or union board to the extent of its jurisdiction, may contribute to the Fund at any time, and any such contribution shall be disbursed by the committee in accordance with any conditions that may be attached to the contribution.

14. Statistics.

- The Committee shall collect and submit such statistics as may from time to time be called for by the district board or the district magistrate.

15. Rules.

- The [State] [Words substituted for the word 'Provided' by the Adaptation of Laws Order, 1950.] Government may make [rules] [Rules published in the Calcutta Gazette, Extraordinary, Part I of the 17.7.41, Pages 1779-1780.] for the purpose of giving effect to the objects of this Act. The Schedule Form I (Section 5)

Receipts (including loans repaid)		Expenditure (including loans issued.)		Name and address of payee.		Signature or left thumb impression of payee	Amount of relief	Amount of loan	Total Balance
Date	Opening balance	Details of receipt.	Amount Total						

Form II[Section 6(3)]

Part I – Persons not assessed to union rate

Name and father's name. ¹	Address ²	Occupation ³	Able-bodied	Disabled
Over 12 years	Over 12 years	Under 12 years		
M ⁴	F ⁵	M ⁶	F ⁷	8

Part II – Unemployed persons

Name and father's name. ¹	Address ²	Occupation ³	Able-bodied	Disabled
Over 12 years	Over 12 years	Under 12 years		
M ⁴	F ⁵	M ⁶	F ⁷	8

Part III – Section 2(4)]

Issue Recoveries

Date ¹	Name and Address ²	Amount ³	Date ⁴	Details of receipts ⁵	Amount ⁶	Balance ⁷
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Part III – Section 2(4)]

	Receipts	Expenditure					
Opening balance ¹	Subscriptions ²	Loans repaid ³	Total ⁴	Relief granted ⁵	Loans issued ⁶	Total ⁷	Closing balance ⁸

[Proviso Substituted by Bengal Act 2 of 1941.]