

THE MINIMUM WAGES ACT, 1948

This Act was enacted, with the object of doing social justice to workmen, who were employed in certain unorganised employment in order to protect them from exploitation by the Capitalist classes. For this central or state government would appoint a competent authority (any number of committees, or subcommittees) to decide about minimum wages and keep revising every five years according to the change in economic growth and standard of living (Sec 2 B, 5) and publish every year in February and August, if there is a change in market price. This appointed committee would ask suggestions, objections and grievances of all affected persons. The Act provides rules and methods for establishment and composition of Central Advisory Board which will advise central and state government in the matter of fixing wages and working hours (Sec 8). The government should provide a day of rest for every 7 days and such a rest day would also be included as a full working day when computing the payment. Whenever an employee works on a rest day, should be paid at a rate not less than the overtime rate. This provision is not applicable to those employment which deals with any emergency, or technically requirement, like medical, electricity or railways. etc.

For non payment of the minimum wages or for contravention of the rules relating to hour of work i.e. normal working days employer shall be punished with imprisonment for a maximum term of 6 months or fine to the maximum extend of Rs. 500 or both. In the preset context there are certain issues which prohibit this Act to give full benefit to those for whom this Act is made. People are poor and illiterate and don't know about their rights. The penalty is also very less.

The Govt. of NCT Delhi, Labour Department's has notified under the Minimum Wage Act, 1948, the following rates of minimum wages applicable for shops, establishments, and factories in Delhi in Feb. 2000

I. Categories	Per Month (in Rs.)	Per Day (in Rs.)
1. Unskilled workers	2419.00	93.00
2. Semi-skilled workers	2585.00	99.40
3. Skilled	2843.00	109.00

II Clerical and Non-Technical Supervisory Staff

1. Non-Matriculate	2612.00	100.50
2. Matriculate & Non-Graduate	2868.00	110.25
3. Graduate & Above	3179.00	122.25