

THE MAINTENANCE AND WELFARE OF PARENTS AND SENIOR CITIZENS ACT, 2007

[Act 56 of 2007, dt. 29-12-2007]

[As amended by the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 (34 of 2019),
dt. 9-8-2019, w.e.f. 31-10-2019 vide SO 2889(E), dt. 9-8-2019]

An Act to provide for more effective provisions for the maintenance and welfare of parents and senior citizens guaranteed and recognized under the Constitution and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Be it enacted by Parliament in the Fifty-eighth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I PRELIMINARY

1. Short title, extent, application and commencement

(1) This Act may be called the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.

(2) It extends to the whole of India¹[xxx] and it applies also to citizens of India outside India.

(3) It shall come into force in a State on such date² as the State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

COMMENTS

This Act is applicable in the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir and it shall also apply to the citizens of India who are outside India.

2. Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

- (a) “children” includes son, daughter, grandson and grand-daughter but does not include a minor;
- (b) “maintenance” includes provision for food, clothing, residence and medical attendance and treatment;
- (c) “minor” means a person who, under the provisions of the Indian Majority Act, 1875 (9 of 1875), is deemed not to have attained the age of majority;
- (d) “parent” means father or mother whether biological, adoptive or step-father or step-mother, as the case may be, whether or not the father or the mother is a senior citizen;

¹ Words “except the State of Jammu and Kashmir” omitted by the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 (34 of 2019), dt. 9-8-2019, w.e.f. 31-10-2019 vide SO 2889(E), dt. 9-8-2019.

² Enforceable in NCT of Delhi w.e.f. 1-9-2008 vide Delhi Gazette Noti. No. F. JD(A)/WO/Sr. Citizen Maintenance Bill / DSW / 2005-2006, dt. 8-9-2008.

- (e) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made by the State Government under this Act;
- (f) “property” means property of any kind, whether movable or immovable, ancestral or self-acquired, tangible or intangible and includes rights or interests in such property;
- (g) “relative” means any legal heir of the childless senior citizen who is not a minor and is in possession of or would inherit his property after his death;
- (h) “senior citizen” means any person being a citizen of India, who has attained the age of sixty years or above;
- (i) “State Government”, in relation to a Union territory, means the administrator thereof appointed under article 239 of the Constitution;
- (j) “Tribunal” means the Maintenance Tribunal constituted under section 7;
- (k) “welfare” means provisions for food, health care, recreation centres and other amenities necessary for the senior citizens.

3. Act to have overriding effect

The provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any enactment other than this Act, or in any instrument having effect by virtue of any enactment other than this Act.

CHAPTER II

MAINTENANCE OF PARENTS AND SENIOR CITIZENS

4. Maintenance of parents and senior citizens

(1) A senior citizen including parent who is unable to maintain himself from his own earning or out of the property owned by him, shall be entitled to make an application under section 5 in case of—

- (i) parent or grand-parent, against one or more of his children not being a minor;
- (ii) a childless senior citizen, against such of his relative referred to in clause (g) of section 2.

(2) The obligation of the children or relative, as the case may be, to maintain a senior citizen extends to the needs of such citizen so that senior citizen may lead a normal life.

(3) The obligation of the children to maintain his or her parent extends to the needs of such parent either father or mother or both, as the case may be, so that such parent may lead a normal life.

(4) Any person being a relative of a senior citizen and having sufficient means shall maintain such senior citizen provided he is in possession of the property of such senior citizen or he would inherit the property of such senior citizen:

PROVIDED that where more than one relatives are entitled to inherit the property of a senior citizen, the maintenance shall be payable by such relative in the proportion in which they would inherit his property.

COMMENTS

This section provides for entitlement for maintenance by a senior citizen including parent who is unable to maintain himself from his own earning or out of the property owned by him against one or more of his children not being a minor and in the case of a childless senior citizen against his relatives who would inherit his property.

This section also provides that a senior citizen including parent who is unable to maintain himself from his own earning or out of the property owned by him, shall entitle for maintenance under section 5 of this Act, against one or more of his children not being a minor and in the case of childless senior citizen against his/her relatives would inherit his property.

5. Application for maintenance

(1) An application for maintenance under section 4, may be made—

- (a) by a senior citizen or a parent, as the case may be; or
- (b) if he is incapable, by any other person or organisation authorised by him; or
- (c) the Tribunal may take cognizance *suo motu*.

Explanation : For the purposes of this section “organisation” means any voluntary association registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (21 of 1860), or any other law for the time being in force.

(2) The Tribunal may, during the pendency of the proceeding regarding monthly allowance for the maintenance under this section, order such children or relative to make a monthly allowance for the interim maintenance of such senior citizen including parent and to pay the same to such senior citizen including parent as the Tribunal may from time to time direct.

(3) On receipt of an application for maintenance under sub-section (1) after giving notice of the application to the children or relative and after giving the parties an opportunity of being heard, hold an inquiry for determining the amount of maintenance.

(4) An application filed under sub-section (2) for the monthly allowance for the maintenance and expenses for proceeding shall be disposed of within ninety days from the date of the service of notice of the application to such person:

PROVIDED that the Tribunal may extend the said period, once for a maximum period of thirty days in exceptional circumstances for reasons to be recorded in writing.

(5) An application for maintenance under sub-section (1) may be filed against one or more persons:

PROVIDED that such children or relative may implead the other person liable to maintain parent in the application for maintenance.

(6) Where a maintenance order was made against more than one person, the death of one of them does not affect the liability of others to continue paying maintenance.

(7) Any such allowance for the maintenance and expenses for proceeding shall be payable from the date of the order, or, if so ordered, from the date of the application for maintenance or expenses of proceeding, as the case may be.

(8) If, children or relative so ordered fail, without sufficient cause to comply with the order, any such Tribunal may, for every breach of the order, issue a warrant for levying the amount due in the manner provided for levying fines, and may sentence such person for the whole, or any part of each month's allowance for the maintenance and expenses of proceeding, as the case may be, remaining unpaid after the execution of the warrant, to imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month or until payment if sooner made whichever is earlier:

PROVIDED that no warrant shall be issued for the recovery of any amount due under this section unless application be made to the Tribunal to levy such amount within a period of three months from the date on which it became due.

COMMENTS

This section *inter alia* provides for making application for maintenance by a senior citizen or a parent and if he is incapable, by any other person or organization authorised by him. The Tribunal may also take cognizance *suo motu*. It empowers the Tribunal to make monthly allowance during the pendency of the proceeding. It provides that an application for monthly allowance shall as far as possible be disposed of within ninety days from the date of the service of notice of the application. It also provides that an application for maintenance made against one or more persons and the children or relative may implead the other person liable to maintain, and the death of one of them does not affect the liability of others.

Under this section, a senior citizen or a parent may file an application for maintenance under section 4 of this Act before Tribunal. The Tribunal shall dispose of the maintenance application within 90 days from the date of the service of notice of the application to the other parties. The Tribunal may issue a warrant in case for every breach of the order or to order to imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month or until payment.

6. Jurisdiction and procedure

(1) The proceedings under section 5 may be taken against any children or relative in any district—

- (a) where he resides or last resided; or
- (b) where children or relative resides.

(2) On receipt of the application under section 5, the Tribunal shall issue a process for procuring the presence of children or relative against whom the application is filed.

(3) For securing the attendance of children or relative the Tribunal shall have the power of a Judicial Magistrate of first class as provided under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974).

(4) All evidence to such proceedings shall be taken in the presence of the children or relative against whom an order for payment of maintenance is proposed to be made, and shall be recorded in the manner prescribed for summons cases:

PROVIDED that if the Tribunal is satisfied that the children or relative against whom an order for payment of maintenance is proposed to be made is wilfully avoiding service, or wilfully neglecting to attend the Tribunal, the Tribunal may proceed to hear and determine the case *ex parte*.

(5) Where the children or relative is residing out of India, the summons shall be served by the Tribunal through such authority, as the Central Government may by notification, specify in this behalf.

(6) The Tribunal before hearing an application under section 5 may, refer the same to a Conciliation Officer and such Conciliation Officer shall submit his findings within one month and if amicable settlement has been arrived at, the Tribunal shall pass an order to that effect.

Explanation : For the purposes of this sub-section “Conciliation Officer” means any person or representative of an organisation referred to in Explanation to sub-section (1) of section 5 or the Maintenance Officers designated by the State Government under sub-section (1) of section 18 or any other person nominated by the Tribunal for this purpose.

COMMENTS

This section provides that an application for maintenance may be made by a senior citizen or parent against any children or relative in any district where the senior citizen or parent resides or where the children or relative resides. It provides that the Tribunal has to issue a process on receipt of an application and the Tribunal will have the powers of a Judicial Magistrate first class for securing the attendance of children or relative. It also provides that the Tribunal may before hearing the application refer the same to a Conciliation Officer for amicable settlement.

7. Constitution of Maintenance Tribunal

(1) The State Government shall within a period of six months from the date of the commencement of this Act may, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute for each Sub-Division one or more Tribunals as may be specified in the notification for the purpose of adjudicating and deciding upon the order for maintenance under section 5.

(2) The Tribunal shall be presided over by an officer not below the rank of Sub-Divisional Officer of a State.

(3) Where two or more Tribunals are constituted for any area, the State Government may, by general or special order, regulate the distribution of business among them.

COMMENTS

This section provides that the State Government may by notification in the Official Gazette constitute one or more Tribunals for each Sub-Division and the Tribunal shall be presided over by an officer not below the rank of Sub-Divisional Officer of a State and where two or more Tribunals are constituted for any area, the State Government may, by general or special order, regulate the distribution of business among them.

The State Government shall constitute one or more Tribunals (for maintenance) for each Sub-Division for adjudicating and deciding the cases for the order of maintenance under section 5. The Tribunal must be presided over by an officer not below the rank of Sub-Divisional Officer.

8. Summary procedure in case of inquiry

(1) In holding any inquiry under section 5, the Tribunal may, subject to any rules that may be prescribed by the State Government in this behalf, follow such summary procedure as it deems fit.

(2) The Tribunal shall have all the powers of a Civil Court for the purpose of taking evidence on oath and of enforcing the attendance of witnesses and of compelling the discovery and production of documents and material objects and for such other purposes as may be prescribed; and the Tribunal shall be deemed to be a Civil Court for all the purposes of section 195 and Chapter XXVI of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974).

(3) Subject to any rule that may be made in this behalf, the Tribunal may, for the purpose of adjudicating and deciding upon any claim for maintenance, choose one or more persons possessing special knowledge of any matter relevant to the inquiry to assist it in holding the inquiry.

COMMENTS

This section provides that in holding any inquiry under this Act, the Tribunal may follow such summary procedure as it deems fit and for the purpose of taking evidence on oath and enforcing the attendance of witnesses and compelling the discovery and production of documents, the Tribunal shall have the powers of a Civil Court.

9. Order for maintenance

(1) If children or relatives, as the case may be, neglect or refuse to maintain a senior citizen being unable to maintain himself, the Tribunal may, on being satisfied of such neglect or refusal, order such children or relatives to make a monthly allowance at such monthly rate for the maintenance of such senior citizen, as the Tribunal may deem fit and to pay the same to such senior citizen as the Tribunal may, from time to time, direct.

(2) The maximum maintenance allowance which may be ordered by such Tribunal shall be such as may be prescribed by the State Government which shall not exceed ten thousand rupees per month.

COMMENTS

This section provides that if children or relatives neglect or refuse to maintain a senior citizen, the Tribunal may on being satisfied of such neglect or refusal, order such children or relatives to make a monthly allowance at such monthly rate for the maintenance of such senior citizen and the Tribunal may order the maintenance allowance as may be specified by the State Government by rules but it shall not exceed rupees ten thousand.

The Tribunal may after satisfaction of case, fix a monthly maintenance of senior citizen or the parent, as the case may be, but the maximum limit for Tribunal is to fix the maintenance of Rs. 10,000.

10. Alteration in allowance

(1) On proof of misrepresentation or mistake of fact or a change in the circumstances of any person, receiving a monthly allowance under section 5, for the maintenance ordered under that section to pay a monthly allowance for the maintenance, the Tribunal may make such alteration, as it thinks fit, in the allowance for the maintenance.

(2) Where it appears to the Tribunal that, in consequence of any decision of a competent Civil Court, any order made under section 9 should be cancelled or varied, it shall cancel the order or as the case may be, vary the same accordingly.

COMMENTS

This section provides that on proof of misrepresentation or mistake of fact or a change in the circumstances of any person, receiving a monthly allowance, the Tribunal may make such alteration, as it thinks fit and the Tribunal may also cancel or vary the order of maintenance in consequence of an order of a Civil Court.

11. Enforcement of order of maintenance

(1) A copy of the order of maintenance and including the order regarding expenses of proceedings, as the case may be, shall be given without payment of any fee to the senior citizen or to parent, as the case may be, in whose favour it is made and such order may be enforced by any Tribunal in any place where the person against whom it is made, such Tribunal on being satisfied as to the identity of the parties and the non-payment of the allowance, or as the case may be, expenses, due.

(2) A maintenance order made under this Act shall have the same force and effect as an order passed under Chapter IX of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) and shall be executed in the manner prescribed for the execution of such order by that Code.

COMMENTS

This section provides that a copy of the order of maintenance and expenses of proceedings shall be given to the senior citizen or parent free of cost and the order of maintenance made under this Act will have the same force and effect as an order passed under Chapter IX of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

The maintenance order passed by the Tribunal has the same effect and force as an order passed under Chapter IX of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and it can be executed as the manner prescribed by that Code. The Tribunal shall provide the copy of the order of maintenance to the senior citizen or to parent, free of cost.

12. Option regarding maintenance in certain cases

Notwithstanding anything contained in Chapter IX of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974), where a senior citizen or a parent is entitled for maintenance under the said Chapter and also entitled for maintenance under this Act may, without prejudice to the provisions of Chapter IX of the said Code, claim such maintenance under either of those Acts but not under both.

COMMENTS

This section provides that where a senior citizen or a parent is entitled for maintenance under this Act and also under Chapter IX of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 relating to the maintenance of wives, children and parents, or senior citizens will have the option to pursue their claim either under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 or under the provisions of this Act.

13. Deposit of maintenance amount

When an order is made under this Chapter, the children or relative who is required to pay any amount in terms of such order shall, within thirty days of the date of announcing the order by the Tribunal, deposit the entire amount ordered in such manner as the Tribunal may direct.

COMMENTS

This section provides that the children or relatives who are required to pay any amount of maintenance ordered by the Tribunal shall deposit the entire amount within thirty days with the Tribunal in such manner as the Tribunal may direct.

14. Award of interest where any claim is allowed

Where any Tribunal makes an order for maintenance made under this Act, such Tribunal may direct that in addition to the amount of maintenance, simple interest shall also be paid at such rate and from such date not earlier than the date of making the application as may be determined by the Tribunal which shall not be less than five per cent, and not more than eighteen per cent.:

PROVIDED that where any application for maintenance under Chapter IX of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) is pending before a Court at the commencement of this Act, then the Court shall allow the withdrawal of such application on the request of the parent and such parent shall be entitled to file an application for maintenance before the Tribunal.

COMMENTS

This section provides that the Tribunal may direct the payment of interest of not less than five per cent. and not more than eighteen per cent. in addition to the amount of maintenance. It also provides that where an application for maintenance under Chapter IX of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 is pending before a Court at the commencement of this Act, then such Court shall allow the withdrawal of such application on the request of the parent or senior citizen.

15. Constitution of Appellate Tribunal

(1) The State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute one Appellate Tribunal for each district to hear the appeal against the order of the Tribunal.

(2) The Appellate Tribunal shall be presided over by an officer not below the rank of District Magistrate.

COMMENTS

This section provides for constitution of Appellate Tribunal by the State Government presided over by an officer not below the rank of District Magistrate.

The State Government may constitute an Appellate Tribunal for each district to hear the appeal against the order of the Tribunal. The President of the Appellate Tribunal must not be less than the rank of District Magistrate.

16. Appeals

(1) Any senior citizen or a parent, as the case may be, aggrieved by an order of a Tribunal may, within sixty days from the date of the order, prefer an appeal to the Appellate Tribunal:

PROVIDED that on appeal, the children or relative who is required to pay any amount in terms of such maintenance order shall continue to pay to such parent the amount so ordered, in the manner directed by the Appellate Tribunal:

PROVIDED FURTHER that the Appellate Tribunal may, entertain the appeal after the expiry of the said period of sixty days, if it is satisfied that the appellant was prevented by sufficient cause from preferring the appeal in time.

(2) On receipt of an appeal, the Appellate Tribunal shall, cause a notice to be served upon the respondent.

(3) The Appellate Tribunal may call for the record of proceedings from the Tribunal against whose order the appeal is preferred.

(4) The Appellate Tribunal may, after examining the appeal and the records called for either allow or reject the appeal.

(5) The Appellate Tribunal shall, adjudicate and decide upon the appeal filed against the order of the Tribunal and the order of the Appellate Tribunal shall be final:

PROVIDED that no appeal shall be rejected unless an opportunity has been given to both the parties of being heard in person or through a duly authorised representative.

(6) The Appellate Tribunal shall make an endeavour to pronounce its order in writing within one month of the receipt of an appeal.

(7) A copy of every order made under sub-section (5) shall be sent to both the parties free of cost.

COMMENTS

This section provides that a senior citizen or a parent aggrieved by the decision of the Tribunal has a right to prefer an appeal to the Appellate Tribunal within sixty days from the date of the order of the Tribunal. This section also provides for procedure for hearing appeals against the orders of the Tribunal. The Tribunal shall make endeavour to decide the appeal within one month from the date of filing of appeal.

The period of limitation for an appeal before Appellate Tribunal against the order of the Tribunal is 60 days from the date of the order of the Tribunal. The Appellate Tribunal shall make an endeavour to pronounce its judgement/order within one month from receipt of an appeal.

17. Right to legal representation

Notwithstanding anything contained in any law, no party to a proceeding before a Tribunal or Appellate Tribunal shall be represented by a legal practitioner.

COMMENTS

This section provides that the legal practitioners shall not participate in any of the proceedings before the Tribunals and Appellate Tribunals.

The legal practitioners be debarred in any of the proceedings before the Tribunal or the Appellate Tribunal.

18. Maintenance Officer

(1) The State Government shall designate the District Social Welfare Officer or an officer not below the rank of a District Social Welfare Officer, by whatever name called as Maintenance Officer.

(2) The Maintenance Officer referred to in sub-section (1), shall represent a parent if he so desires, during the proceedings of the Tribunal, or the Appellate Tribunal, as the case may be.

COMMENTS

This section provides that the State Government shall designate the District Social Welfare Officer or an Officer not below the rank of a District Social Welfare Officer as Maintenance Officer who shall represent a parent if he so desires before a Tribunal or Appellate Tribunal.

CHAPTER III

ESTABLISHMENT OF OLDAGE HOMES

19. Establishment of oldage homes

(1) The State Government may establish and maintain such number of oldage homes at accessible places, as it may deem necessary, in a phased manner, beginning with at least one in each district to accommodate in such homes a minimum of one hundred fifty senior citizens who are indigent.

(2) The State Government may, prescribe a scheme for management of oldage homes, including the standards and various types of services to be provided by them which are necessary for medical care and means of entertainment to the inhabitants of such homes.

Explanation : For the purposes of this section, “indigent” means any senior citizen who is not having sufficient means, as determined by the State Government, from time to time, to maintain himself.

COMMENTS

This section provides that the State Government may establish the oldage homes in a phased manner for senior citizens who are poor. Further, it also provides that the State Government may prescribe a scheme for management of oldage homes including the standards and various types of services provides by them which are necessary for medical care and entertainment.

CHAPTER IV

PROVISIONS FOR MEDICAL CARE OF SENIOR CITIZEN

20. Medical support for senior citizen

The State Government shall ensure that,—

- (i) the Government hospitals or hospitals funded fully or partially by the Government shall provide beds for all senior citizens as far as possible;
- (ii) separate queues be arranged for senior citizens;
- (iii) facility for treatment of chronic, terminal and degenerative diseases is expanded for senior citizens;
- (iv) research activities for chronic elderly diseases and ageing is expanded;
- (v) there are earmarked facilities for geriatric patients in every district hospital duly headed by a medical officer with experience in geriatric care.

COMMENTS

This section provides that the State Government shall ensure that beds be provided for all senior citizens in Government hospitals or hospitals funded fully or partially by the Government as far as possible. It also provides that separate queues be arranged for senior citizens; facility for treatment of chronic; terminal and degenerative diseases; research activities for chronic diseases shall be expanded and also facilities for geriatric, patients in every district hospital shall be earmarked.

CHAPTER V**PROTECTION OF LIFE AND PROPERTY OF SENIOR CITIZEN****21. Measures for publicity, awareness, etc., for welfare of senior citizen**

The State Government shall, take all measures to ensure that—

- (i) the provisions of this Act are given wide publicity through public media including the television, radio and the print, at regular intervals;
- (ii) the Central Government and State Government Officers, including the police officers and the members of the judicial service, are given periodic sensitization and awareness training on the issues relating to this Act;
- (iii) effective co-ordination between the services provided by the concerned Ministries or Departments dealing with law, home affairs, health and welfare, to address the issues relating to the welfare of the senior citizens and periodical review of the same is conducted.

COMMENTS

This section provides that the State Government shall take measures to give wide publicity through public media including the television, radio and the print, at regular intervals, the provisions of this Act. It also provides that the State Government shall ensure that the officers of the Central Government and State Governments including the police officers and the member of the judicial service are given periodic sensitization and awareness training on the issues relating to this Act and effective co-ordination between the services provided by the concerned Ministries or Departments dealing with law, home affairs, health and welfare.

It provides measures for publicity, awareness, etc. for welfare of senior citizens through public media; television, radio and print media at regular intervals, through effective co-ordination between the services provided by the ministries or departments dealing with law, home affairs, health and welfare to address the issues relating to the welfare of the senior citizens.

22. Authorities who may be specified for implementing the provisions of this Act

(1) The State Government may, confer such powers and impose such duties on a District Magistrate as may be necessary, to ensure that the provisions of this Act are properly carried out and the District Magistrate may specify the officer, subordinate to him, who shall exercise all or any of the powers, and perform all or any of the duties, so conferred or imposed and the local limits within which such powers or duties shall be carried out by the officer as may be prescribed.

(2) The State Government shall prescribe a comprehensive action plan for providing protection of life and property of senior citizens.