

Domestic workers demand welfare board and fixed salary

TNN | Feb 27, 2017, 07.03 PM IST



BHUBANESWAR: In order to protect the interests of domestic workers, All Odisha Domestic Labourers Association (AODLA) on Monday demanded the state government to constitute a welfare board. They also urged the state government to form a domestic workers' policy to protect their rights. There are around 12,000 domestic workers in the capital city only.

"Though most households depend largely on domestic helpers but neither they get adequate remuneration nor respect. They and their family members struggle really hard for a dignified life in the society. The incidents of humiliation, torture and abuse are innumerable. It is high time that they should come forward as an association and demand their rights," said president of the association Pratap Sahu.

The domestic workers demanded to fix a minimum monthly or daily wage for them, identity cards, and recognition as labourers. They also demanded creche facility for their children when they go to work, free treatment facility at ESI hospital, compensation for mishap during workplace and free education facility for their children.

"There is no uniformity of tasks performed by domestic workers. Some do cooking and cleaning while many have to do taking care of children and elderly persons also. The time, hours of work and working conditions also varies. But the remuneration depends on the bargaining power of the worker. The government should fix a minimum wage for domestic workers like Karnataka and Maharashtra and formulate a policy or law," said Sukanti Behera, 52-year-old, who has been working as domestic worker in the city for last 30 years.

Sources said, the Centre has proposed a draft policy for domestic workers and fixed the monthly salary for full-time skilled labour at Rs 9000. The AODLA has demanded the state government to fix their monthly salary at Rs 16,000 a month.

City mayor Anant Narayan Jena said, "Most households and offices will come to a grinding halt without these domestic workers. We can go to work and remain tension free about our kids and old parents due to them. Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation will provide all possible help and support to domestic helpers and ensure that they get all benefits of schemes and cards like Aadhar, ration card."

Chairperson of Odisha Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board, Subas Singh said, "Domestic workers form a large section of the labour workforce but have been neglected over the years. We would surely propose the government to come up with a separate welfare board for them."