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Government may double minimum wage, revise formula

AUG 04, 2017, 12.24 AM IST

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NEW DELHI: **India** may see a doubling of **minimum wage** nationally to about Rs 18,000 per month as the **labour** ministry is set to relook at the formula currently used to determine the floor level.

The ministry is expected to take into consideration a proposal to double the units or individuals considered per family to six from three at present by including dependent parents as well as considering each child as one unit.

Currently, husband, wife and two children in a family are considered three units, based on which minimum wage is determined for **agriculture** and non-agriculture workers under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. The Act is applicable to 47 central sector establishments and includes both agriculture and non-agriculture workers in the country.

Labour minister **Bandaru Dattatreya** on Thursday said that a committee will be constituted to relook at the norms of fixation of minimum wages in the country. A decision to this effect was taken at the first meeting of the minimum wage central advisory board reconstituted recently. The last meeting of the board happened in 2010.



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"The Minimum Wage Act of 1948 is very old and the norms under the Act are not up to today's requirement of basic living. Hence a new committee will be shortly set up to revise the norms of fixation of minimum wages," Dattatreya said, adding that terms of reference of the committee will soon be finalised.

According to Dattatreya, the primary issues that will be looked at include number of units per family, inclusion of dependent parents and treatment of women and children on a par with men. The labour ministry has nearly doubled the minimum wage for agriculture labourers including those hired on contract in March this year, six months after a 42% increase in minimum wages for non-agricultural labourers in August 2016 to Rs 350 a day for unskilled workers, translating into a monthly salary of Rs 9,100 per month.



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Consequently, an unskilled agriculture labourer will be entitled to get a minimum wage of Rs 300 per day in C-category towns, up from Rs 160 now, or Rs 8,658 per month, while those in B and A category towns will get Rs 303 and Rs 333 respectively. Reiterating that labour code on wages will address most of wage issues, Dattatreya said he would table wage code bill in **Parliament** in the ongoing session.

"Besides, I will soon write to chief ministers of all states to constitute the state level minimum wage advisory boards so that no state pays below universal minimum wage," he said.

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