

Business Standard

Govt working on national policy for domestic workers: Gangwar

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Labour ministry is planning to bring about a national policy to protect the interests of domestic workers and to guarantee them minimum wages and social security which has been pending for almost three years now.

"Discussions are underway regarding a national policy for domestic workers, including women with the aim to protect the domestic workers from abuse, harassment, violence and guarantee them rights in the matter of social security and minimum wages," Minister of State for Labour Santosh Kumar Gangwar said in a written reply in Lok Sabha.

The policy has been hanging fire for nearly three years as it was to be presented before the Cabinet in 2015.

Among others, the policy envisages to make a provision for a minimum salary of Rs 9,000 per month, compulsory paid leave of 15 days in an year and maternity leave benefits to full-time domestic helps.

The policy also includes social security cover and provisions against sexual harassment and bonded labour.

Gangwar was replying to a question if the government has enacted or proposes to enact any law to safeguard the interests of female domestic workers and provide them with social security and other benefits.

The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 is already in place to provide life and disability cover, health and maternity benefits, old age protection to the unorganised workers, he said.

Besides, various departments and ministries of the central government run schemes like Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme and National Family Benefit Scheme. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has schemes of maternity and health benefit, he said.

Gangwar said the centre has recently converged the social security schemes of Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana with Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) to provide life and disability coverage to the unorganised workers including domestic workers in the age group of 18-50, depending upon eligibility.

PMJJBY gives coverage of Rs 2 lakh on death at premium of Rs 330 per annum and PMSBY gives Rs 2 lakh coverage on accidental death besides disability benefits at premium of Rs 12 per annum.

LIC implements these converged schemes, he said.

"The annual premium is shared on 50:50 basis by the Centre and State governments/state nodal agencies. The benefits of these schemes are also available to female domestic workers," Gangwar said.