



The West Bengal Shops and Establishments Act, 1963

Act 13 of 1963

Keyword(s):

Closed, Commercial Establishment, Employer, Establishment, Establishment for public Entertainment or Amusement, Lock Out, Person Employed, Registering Authority, Shop, Shop Keeper, Wages, Week, Young Person

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West Bengal Act XIII of 1963¹

THE WEST BENGAL SHOPS AND ESTABLISHMENTS ACT, 1963.

AMENDED

West Ben. Act VII of 1965.
West Ben. Act XXIV of 1965.
West Ben. Act XVI of 1981.
West Ben. Act XII of 1984.
West Ben. Act XXIII of 1988.

[2nd April, 1963.]

An Act to regulate holidays, hours of work, payment of wages and leave of persons employed in shops and establishments.

It is hereby enacted in the Thirteenth year of the Republic of India, by the Legislature of West Bengal, as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the West Bengal Shops and Establishments Act, 1963.

(2) It extends to the whole of West Bengal.

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

(4) It shall apply to the areas and to the classes of shops and establishments to which the Bengal Shops and Establishments Act, 1940 applied immediately before the commencement of this Act; and shall also apply to such other areas or to such other classes of shops or establishments as the State Government may, by notification, specify in this behalf.

Short title, extent, commencement and application.

2. In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,—

(1) "closed" means not open for the service of any customer or for any other purpose whatsoever relating to business;

(2) "commercial establishment" means an advertising, commission, forwarding or commercial agency, or a clerical department of a factory or of any industrial or commercial

Definitions.

¹For Statement of Objects and Reasons and the Financial Memorandum, see the *Calcutta Gazette, Extraordinary*, of the 12th July, 1962, Part IVA, page 2125; for proceedings of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, see the proceedings of the meetings of that Assembly held on the 19th and 20th December, 1962; and for proceedings of the West Bengal Legislative Council, see the proceedings of the meeting of that Council held on the 8th January, 1963.

²The Act came into force with effect from the 15th August, 1964, vide notification No. 3393-1.R./1R/1A-3(B)/63, dated the 3rd August, 1964, published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 1964, Part I, page 2045.

³This Act shall be applicable to all classes of excise shops, vide notification No. 5049-1.R., dated the 6th July, 1974.

⁴Clause (2) was substituted for the original clause by s. 2 of the West Bengal Shops and

(Section 2.)

undertaking, an insurance company, joint stock company, bank, broker's office or exchange, an establishment which carries on any business, trade or profession or any work in connection with, or incidental or ancillary to, any business, trade or profession, and includes an establishment of any legal practitioner, medical practitioner, architect, engineer, accountant, tax consultant or any other technical or professional consultant, a society registered under any enactment in force for the time being, charitable or other trust, whether registered or not, which carries on, whether for purposes of gain or not, any business, trade or profession or any work in connection with, or incidental or ancillary to, any business, trade or profession and such other class or classes of concerns or undertakings as the State Government may, after taking into consideration the nature of their work, by notification, declare to be commercial establishments for the purposes of this Act, but does not include a shop or an establishment for public entertainment or amusement;

- (3) "day" means a period of twenty-four hours beginning at midnight;
- (4) "employer" means a person owning or having charge of an establishment and includes an agent or a manager of, and any other person acting on behalf of, such person in the general management or control of such establishment;
- (5) "establishment" means a commercial establishment or an establishment for public entertainment or amusement;
- (6) "establishment for public entertainment or amusement" means a hotel, restaurant, eating-house, cafe, cinema, theatre and includes such other class or classes of concerns or undertaking as the State Government may, after taking into consideration the nature of their work, by notification, declare to be, for the purposes of this Act, establishments for public entertainment or amusement, but does not include a shop or a commercial establishment;
- (7) "half day" means a continuous period of five hours and a half,—
 - (i) in the case of a shop or an establishment for public entertainment or amusement, beginning at the commencement, or ending on the termination, of the ordinary daily working hours of such shop or establishment, as the case may be, and

¹For notification declaring certain undertakings to be, for the purposes of the Act, establishments for public entertainment or amusement, see notification No. 3203.I.R./IR/1A-3(B)/63, dated the 27.7.64, published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 1964, Part I.

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(Section 2.)

- (ii) in the case of a commercial establishment, between the hours of ¹* * * eight o'clock *ante meridiem* and ¹* * * eight o'clock *post meridiem*; 14 of 1947.
- (8) "lock out" and "strike" have the same meaning as in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947;
- (9) "notification" means a notification published in the *Official Gazette*;
- (10) "person employed" used in relation to a shop or an establishment means a person wholly or principally employed in connection with the business of the shop or the establishment, but does not include an owner of the shop or the establishment or the husband, wife, child, father, mother, brother or sister of such an owner who lives with, and is dependent on, such owner;
- (11) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act;
- (12) "registering authority" means the Chief Inspector of Shops and Establishments or any other person ²appointed in this behalf by the State Government as the registering authority for any area;
- (13) "shop" means any premises used wholly or in part for the sale of services to customers or for the wholesale or retail sale of commodities or articles, either for cash or on credit, and includes any offices, store-rooms, godowns or warehouses, whether in the same premises or elsewhere, used in connection with such sale or with the storage of commodities with such sale or with the storage of commodities or articles for the purpose of such sale and also includes such other class or classes of premises as the State Government may, after taking into consideration the nature of the work carried on there, by notification, declare to be shops for the purposes of this Act, but does not include an establishment.

Explanation.—If any doubt arises as to whether any premises are a shop or a commercial establishment or an establishment for public entertainment or amusement, the question shall be referred to the State Government by the registering authority, *suo motu* or on application, and the decision of the State Government thereon shall be final;

- (14) "shop-keeper" means a person owning or having charge of the business of a shop, and includes an agent or manager of, and any other person acting on behalf of, such person in the general management or control of a shop;

¹The words "half past" were omitted by s. 2 of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 1988 (West Ben. Act XXIII of 1988).

²For notification appointing certain persons as registering authorities for the purposes of the Act for the areas specified, see notification No. 3204-I.R./1R/1A-3(B)/63, dated the

[West Ben. Act

(Sections 3, 4.)

- (15) "wages" means wages as defined in the Payment of Wages Act, 1936; 4 of 1936.
- (16) "week" means a period of seven days¹ [beginning at midnight on Tuesday]; and
- (17) "young person" means a person who has completed his twelfth year but has not completed his fifteenth year.

References to time of day.

3. References to time of day in this Act shall be deemed to be references to Indian standard time, which is five and a half hours ahead of Greenwich mean time.

Act or some of its provisions not applicable to certain establishments, shops and persons.

4. (1) This Act shall not apply to—
- (a) offices of or under the Central or State Government, the Reserve Bank of India, any railway administration or any local authority;
 - (b) any railway service, airways service, water transport service, tramway or motor service, postal, telegraph or telephone service, any system of public conservancy or sanitation or any industry, business or undertaking which supplies power, light or water to the public;
 - (c) institutions for the treatment or care of the sick, infirm, destitute or mentally unfit;
 - (d) shops or stalls in any public fair or *bazar* held for a charitable purpose; or
 - (e) stalls and refreshment rooms at railway stations, docks, wharves or airports.

(2) The State Government may, if it thinks fit so to do in the public interest, by notification, exempt, subject to such conditions, if any, as may be specified in the notification, from the operation of any of the provisions of this Act other than those of sections 8, 9 and 10—

- (a) any class or classes of shops or establishments either generally or on such occasion or occasions, in such area or areas and for such periods or periods as may be specified in the notification;

¹The words within the square brackets were substituted for the words "beginning at midnight on Sunday" by s. 2 of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 1965 (West Ben. Act VII of 1965).

²(1) For notification exempting certain classes of shops and establishments from the operation of the provisions of the Act specified, subject to the condition mentioned, see notification No. 3205-I.R./IR/1A-3(B)/63, dated 27.7.64, published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 1964, Part I, pages 2043-2044.

(2) For notification exempting all shops and establishments from the operation of the provisions of section 16 of the Act for a period of 90 days with effect from the 15.8.64, see notification No. 3394-I.R./IR/1A-3(B)/64, dated 3.8.64, published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 1964, Part I, pages 2045.

(3) For notification relating to exemption from certain sections and sub-sections of the Act of shops within the municipal area of Nabadwip for a certain period, see notification No. 3638-I.R./IR/75-18/64, dated 18.8.64, published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 1964, Part I, page 2428.

(4) For notification exempting all classes of shops situated in all the areas from the operation of sections 5(1) and 4(1) of the Act, for a fixed period, see notification No. 4214-I.R./IR/75-27/64, dated 15.9.64, published in the *Calcutta Gazette, Extraordinary* of 1964.

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(Sections 5, 6.)

- (b) any class or classes of persons employed in a shop or an establishment,—
- (i) in a managerial or confidential capacity, or
 - (ii) as a traveller, canvasser, messenger, watchman or caretaker, or
 - (iii) exclusively in connection with customs examination, collection, despatch, delivery or conveyance of goods from or to booking offices for transport by rail, road or air, docks, wharves or airports.

5. (1) In each week,—

- (a) every shop or commercial establishment shall remain entirely closed on, and
- (b) every person employed in a shop or an establishment shall be allowed as holiday,

at least one day and a half day next preceding or next following such day.

(2) No deduction on account of any holiday allowed under sub-section (1) shall be made from the wages of any person employed in a shop or an establishment, and even if such person is employed on the basis of 'no work, no pay', he shall be paid for such holiday the wages which he would have been entitled to had he not been allowed the holiday.

(3) The day and the half day during which a shop or an establishment shall be entirely closed in each week under clause (a) of sub-section (1) shall, subject to the provisions of sub-section (4), be determined from time to time by the shop-keeper to employer, as the case may be, and shall be specified by him in a notice, which shall be displayed in a conspicuous place in the shop or the establishment:

Provided that the day and the half day so determined shall not be altered more than once in any year.

¹(4) The State Government may, if it thinks fit so to do in the public interest, by notification, specify any particular area and the day or both the day and the half day during which all or any class or classes of shops or establishments in such area shall be entirely closed under clause (a) of sub-section (1), and thereupon the day or both the day and the half day, as the case may be, so specified, shall be deemed to have been determined under sub-section (3) by the shop-keeper or employer of every shop or establishment of such class or classes in such area, and the provisions of this Act shall accordingly apply.

6. (1) In no shop shall the hour of opening be earlier than eight o'clock *ante meridiem* or the hour of closing be later than eight o'clock *post meridiem*:

Provided that if the State Government or any officer empowered in this behalf by the State Government thinks fit so to do in the public interest, the State Government or such officer may, by ²notification, change such limits

Holidays in shops and establishments.

Hours of work in shops.

¹Sub-section (4) was substituted for the original sub-section by s. 2 of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments (Second Amendment) Act, 1965 (West Ben. Act XXIV of 1965).

²For notification relating to change, in respect of the classes of shops specified, the limits of the hours of opening and closing, see notification No. 3206-I.R./1R/1A-3(B)/64, dated the

(Section 7.)

of the hours of opening and closing of shops, either generally or for any particular area or fix uniform hours of opening and closing of all or any class or classes of shops in any particular area.

(2) No person employed in a shop shall be required or permitted to work in such shop for more than eight hours and a half in any one day or for more than forty-eight hours in any one week or after the hour of closing of such shop:

Provided that in any day and in any week in which stock-taking, making up accounts or such other business operation as may be prescribed takes place in any shop, a person employed in the shop may be required or permitted to work overtime in such shop so, however, that—

- (i) the total number of hours of his work including overtime work shall not exceed ten hours in any one day, and
- (ii) the total number of hours worked overtime by him shall not exceed one hundred and twenty hours in any one year.

(3) No person employed in a shop shall be required or permitted to work in such shop for more than ¹[five hours and a half] in any one day, unless he has been allowed an interval for rest of at least one hour.

(4) The periods of work and intervals for rest of every person employed in a shop shall be arranged by the shop-keeper so that together they do not extend over more than ten hours and a half in any one day.

Hours of
work in
establish-
ments.

7. (1) In no hotel, restaurant, eating-house or cafe shall the hour of closing be later than eleven o'clock *post meridiem*.

(2) No person employed in an establishment shall be required or permitted to work in such establishment for more than eight hours and a half in any one day or for more than forty-eight hours in any one week or after the hour of closing of such establishment:

Provided that a person employed in an establishment may be required for permitted to work overtime in such establishment so, however, that—

- (i) the total number of hours of his work including overtime work shall not exceed ten hours in any one day, and
- (ii) the total number of hours worked overtime by him shall not exceed one hundred and twenty hours in any one year.

(3) No person employed in an establishment shall be required or permitted to work in such establishment for more than ²[five hours and a half] in any one day unless he has been allowed an interval for rest of at least one hour during that day.

(4) The periods of work and intervals of rest of every person employed in an establishment shall be arranged by the employer of such person so that together they do not extend over more than ten hours and a half in any one day.

¹The words within the square brackets were substituted for the words "six hours" by s. 3 of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 1988 (West Ben. Act XXIII of 1988).

²The words within the square brackets were substituted for the words "six years" by s. 4 of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 1988 (West Ben. Act

XIII of 1963.]

(Sections 8-11.)

- 8. Notwithstanding anything contained elsewhere in this Act,—
 - (a) no young person employed in a shop or an establishment shall be required or permitted to work in such shop or establishment for more than seven hours in any one day or for more than forty hours in any one week; and
 - (b) the periods of work of young persons in a shop or an establishment during each day shall be so fixed that no such person shall work for more than four hours before he has had an interval for rest of at least one hour.

Special provisions for young persons.

8A. Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, benefits admissible to a young person under any other law in force for the time being shall also be enjoyed by a young person under this Act in addition to, and not in derogation of the benefits provided under this Act.

Benefits under other laws.

Explanation.—For the purpose of this section, the benefits admissible under any other law in force shall include the facility of school education an entitlement of residence in the place of work.

9. No child who has not completed the age of twelve years shall be employed in any shop or establishment.

Restriction on employment of children.

10. No young person shall be required or permitted to work in any shop or establishment after eight o'clock *post meridiem* and no woman shall be allowed or permitted to work—

Restriction on employment of young persons or women.

- (a) in any establishment for public entertainment or amusement other than a cinema or a theatre, after six o'clock *post meridiem*, or
- (b) in any shop or commercial establishment, after eight o'clock *post meridiem*.

11. A person employed in a shop or an establishment shall be entitled—

Leave.

- (a) for every completed year of continuous service, to privilege leave on full pay for fourteen days,
- (b) in every year, to sick leave on half pay for fourteen days on medical certificate obtained from a medical practitioner registered under the Bengal Medical Act, 1914, or any other law for the time being in force,
- (c) in every year, to casual leave on full pay for ten days, and
- (d) in the case of woman, to maternity leave in accordance with such rules as may be prescribed:

Provided that—

- (i) privilege leave admissible under clause (a) may be accumulated up to a maximum of not more than twenty-eight days;

Ben. Act VI of 1914.

¹Section 8A was inserted by s. 5 of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments

(Sections 12-14.)

- (ii) sick leave admissible under clause (b) may be accumulated up to a maximum of not more than fifty-six days; and
- (iii) casual leave admissible under clause (c) shall not be accumulated.

Explanation.—In calculating any leave due under this Act, employment in any shop or establishment before the application of this Act shall be taken into account.

Person employed to be entitled to wages for the period of privilege leave in case of termination of service.

12. Any person employed in a shop or an establishment whose services are terminated by or under the orders of the shop-keeper or the employer shall be entitled to wages for the period of privilege leave due to his credit at the time of such termination.

Wages for overtime work.

13. When any person employed in a shop or an establishment is required or permitted to work overtime in such shop or establishment, the wages payable to such person in respect of such overtime work shall be calculated at '[twice] the ordinary rate of wages payable to him, and such ordinary rate of wages shall be calculated in such manner as may be prescribed:

Provided that this section shall not operate to the prejudice of any higher rate of overtime wages granted under any agreement, award, custom or convention.

Explanation.—For the purpose of this section 'overtime work' shall include any work done on any day declared by² notification by the State Government to be a National holiday.

Payment and recovery of wages.

14. (1) All wages payable to a person employed in a shop or an establishment shall be paid not later than the tenth day of the month immediately succeeding that in respect of which such wages are payable.

(2) Where any deduction has been made from the wages of any person employed in a shop or an establishment or any payment of wages to such person has not been made within the date referred to in sub-section (1), such person may, within a period of six months from the date on which the deduction from the wages was made or from the date referred to in sub-section (1), as the case may be, make an application to such officer or

¹The word within the square brackets was substituted for the words "The rate of one and one-half times of" by s. 6 of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 1988 (West Ben. Act XXIII of 1988).

²For notification declaring certain days to be National holidays, see notification No. 3207-I.R./1R/1A-3(B)/63, dated the 27th July, 1964, published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of

XIII of 1963.]

(Section 14.)

authority as the State Government may, by ¹notification, appoint in this behalf, for an order under sub-section (3):

Provided that an application under this section may be admitted after the said period of six months if the applicant satisfies the officer or authority that he had sufficient cause for not making the application within such period.

(3) The officer or authority to whom or to which an application under sub-section (2) is made may, after giving the applicant and the shop-keeper or employer concerned an opportunity of being heard and after making such further inquiry, if any, as may be necessary, by order, direct, without prejudice to any other action which may, under this Act or any other law, lie against the shop-keeper or employer, the payment to the applicant of the amount deducted from the wages or of the wages due, together with such compensation, not exceeding ten times the amount deducted in the former case and not exceeding ten rupees in the latter, as the officer or authority may think fit:

Provided that no direction for the payment of compensation shall be made in the case of delay in the payment of wages if the officer or authority is satisfied that the delay was due to—

- (a) a *bona fide* error or *bona fide* dispute as to the amount payable to the applicant, or
- (b) the occurrence of an emergency, or the existence of exceptional circumstances, such that the shop-keeper or the employer, as the case may be, was unable, though exercising reasonable diligence, to make prompt payment, or
- (c) the failure of the applicant to apply for or accept payment.

(4) If on hearing any application made under sub-section (2), the officer or authority is satisfied that it was either malicious or vexatious, the officer or authority may, by order, direct that a penalty not exceeding fifty rupees be paid by the applicant to the shop-keeper or employer concerned.

(5) Any amount directed to be paid by an order under sub-section (3) or sub-section (4) may be recovered by any Magistrate to whom the officer or authority making the order makes application in this behalf as if it were a fine imposed by such Magistrate.

(6) An appeal shall lie from an order of the officer or authority dismissing any application made under sub-section (2) or giving any direction under sub-section (3) or sub-section (4), if made within thirty days of the date on which the order was made,—

- (a) where the shop or establishment concerned is situated in any area within Calcutta as defined in the Calcutta Police Act, 1866, to the Court of Small Causes, Calcutta, and
- (b) where it is situated in any other area, to the Munsif having jurisdiction over such other area.

¹For notification appointing certain officers to be, within the local limits of their respective jurisdictions, the officers for the purposes of section 14 of the Act, see notification No. 3208-LR/IR/1A-3 (B)/63, dated the 27.7.64, published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 1964, Part I, page 2015.

(Sections 15, 16.)

(7) Nothing in this section shall apply to any person to whom the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, applies under section 1 of that Act.

4 of 1936.

Notice of
termination
of service.

15. (1) The services of a person employed in any shop or establishment, who has been in continuous service for not less than one year in such shop or establishment, shall not be terminated without giving him one month's notice, in writing, showing the reasons of such termination and until the period of notice has expired or until he has been paid, in lieu of such notice, wages for the period of such notice.

(2) The person as aforesaid shall have the right to appeal to such authority and within such period as may be prescribed, either on the ground that there is no reasonable cause for terminating his services or on the ground that he has not been guilty of any misconduct, provided his services have been terminated on such ground.

(3) The decision of the appellate authority on such appeal shall be final.

Registration
of shops and
establish-
ments.

16 (1) Every shop-keeper or employer shall—

- (i) in the case of shops or establishments in existence on the date on which this Act applies—within such date as the State Government may, by notification, specify, and
- (ii) in the case of new shops or establishments, if this Act applies—within such period as may be prescribed,

apply for registration under this Act to the registering authority, in such form together with such fee ²* * * * * as may be prescribed. Every such application shall contain—

- (a) the name of the shop-keeper or the employer;
- (b) the postal address of the shop or the establishment;
- (c) the name of the shop or the establishment;
- (d) declaration of weekly closing days in the case of a shop;
- (e) such other particulars as may be prescribed.

The registering authority on being satisfied about the correctness of the particulars, shall register the shop or the establishment in such manner as may be prescribed and shall issue a certificate of registration in the prescribed form to the shop-keeper or the employer.

(2) The registering authority shall maintain a Register of Shops and Establishments in the prescribed form.

¹Section 15 was substituted for original section by s. 7 of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 1988 (West Ben. Act XXIII of 1988).

²The words "not exceeding one rupee," were omitted in sub-section (1), in clause (b) of sub-section (4) and in sub-section (6) by s. 2(a), s. 2(b) and s. 2(c), respectively, of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 1984 (West Ben. Act XII of 1984).

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(Sections 17-19.)

(3) Every shop-keeper or employer shall display the certificate of registration issued under sub-section (1) in a conspicuous place in the shop or the establishment.

(4) (a) Every shop-keeper or employer shall inform the registering authority in the prescribed form of any change in respect of any particulars contained in the application under sub-section (1) within seven days after the change has taken place:

Provided that the declaration of weekly closing days in the case of a shop shall not be changed more than once in any year.

(b) The registering authority, on receipt of such information and on payment of such fee ¹ * * * * * as may be prescribed, shall, if satisfied about the correctness of the information, make necessary changes in the Register of Shops and Establishments and shall amend the certificate of registration or issue a fresh certificate of registration, if necessary.

(5) A shop-keeper or an employer shall, within fifteen days of the winding up of his business, inform the registering authority in writing. The registering authority, ²[and the employees of the shop or the establishment, as the case may be,] on being satisfied about the correctness of the information, shall remove the name of the shop or the establishment from the Register of Shops and Establishments and cancel the certificate of registration.

(6) A shop-keeper or an employer shall apply to the registering authority in such form together with such fee ¹ * * * * * as may be prescribed, for renewal of the certificate of registration within thirty days after the expiry of three years from the date of the issue or renewal, as the case may be, of the certificate of registration.

17. (1) In every shop or establishment, the shop-keeper or employer concerned shall, for the purposes of this Act, maintain and keep a register of employees in the prescribed form and such other registers, records and documents, and display such notices as may be prescribed and produce them on demand by the Inspector.

Shop-keepers and employers to maintain and keep records, etc.

(2) The register of employees maintained and kept under sub-section (1) may, from time to time, be inspected and signed by the persons employed in the shop or establishment.

18. Every shop-keeper or employer shall furnish every person employed in his shop or establishment with a letter or appointment in such form as may be prescribed.

Persons employed to be furnished with letter of appointment.

19. (1) The State Government may, by notification, appoint such persons or such class of persons as it thinks fit to be Inspectors for the purposes of this Act.

Appointment of Inspectors.

(2) All Inspectors appointed under sub-section (1) shall be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section 21 of the Indian Penal Code.

¹See foot-note 2 on page 488, ante.

²The words within the square brackets were inserted by s.8 of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 1988 (West Ben. Act XXIII of 1988)

*(Sections 20-22.)*Powers of
Inspectors.

20. Subject to rules made under this Act, an Inspector appointed under section 19 may, within the local limits for which he is appointed,—

- (a) enter, at all reasonable hours, with such assistants, if any, as he may consider necessary, being persons in the service of the Government, any premises or place, where he has reason to believe there is a shop or an establishment, for inspecting any certificate of registration, records, registers, documents or notices required to be displayed, or maintained and kept under this Act or the rules made thereunder and require the production thereof for inspection;
- (b) examine any person whom he finds in any such premises or place and who, he has reasonable cause to believe, is a person employed in the shop or the establishment; and
- (c) seize, when so authorised under orders of such superior officer as may be prescribed, or take copies of such registers, records, documents or notices or portions thereof as he may consider relevant in respect of an offence under this Act which he has reason to believe has been committed by the shop-keeper or employer.

Penalties.

21. (1) Whoever contravenes any of the provisions of this Act, shall, on conviction, be punishable with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees for the first offence.

(1A) Whoever contravenes, after the first offence, any of the provisions of this Act, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both:

Provided that for the purpose of this sub-section, no cognizance shall be taken of any conviction upon complaint of an Inspector appointed under section 19, made more than two years before the date on which the commission of the offence, which is being punished, came to the knowledge of such inspector.

Procedure.

22. (1) No Court inferior to a Presidency Magistrate or a Magistrate of the first class shall try an offence punishable under this Act.

(2) No Court shall take cognizance of an offence punishable under this Act except upon complaint made by an Inspector appointed under section 19:

Provided that such complaint shall, in the case of offences punishable under sub-section (2) of section 21, be made with the prior approval of the State Government.

¹Sub-sections (1) and (1A) were substituted for the original sub-section by s. 9 of the West Bengal Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 1988 (West Ben. Act XXIII of 1988).

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(Sections 23-26.)

23 No suit, prosecution or legal proceeding shall lie against any person in respect of anything in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act or the rules made thereunder.

Indemnity.

24. Nothing in this Act shall affect any right or privilege to which any person employed in any shop or establishment is entitled on the date of the commencement of this Act under any law for the time being in force or under any contract, custom or usage which is in force on that date, if such right or privilege is more favourable to him than any right or privilege conferred upon him by this Act or granted to him at the time of appointment.

Saving of certain rights and privileges.

25. (1) The State Government may, after previous publication, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

Power to make rules.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for—

- (a) any matter which may be or is required to be prescribed under this Act;
- (b) the manner of appointment and qualifications of Inspectors appointed under section 19.

(3) Any rule made under this section may provide that any person committing a breach thereof shall, on conviction, be punishable with fine, which may extend to one hundred rupees, and where the breach is a continuing one, with a further fine which may extend to twenty-five rupees, for every day, after the first, during which the breach continues.

26. The Bengal Shops and Establishments Act, 1940, is hereby repealed:

Repeal.

Provided that any weekly closing days or any working hours fixed under that Act and in force immediately before the commencement of this Act, may be continued for a period not longer than three months after such repeal.

Ben. Act XVI of 1940.

¹For the West Bengal Shops and Establishments Rules, 1964. see notification No. 2911-I.R/1R-1(B)/64, dated 13.7.64, published in the *Calcutta Gazette, Extraordinary* of 1964, part I, page 2427.