The Punjab Advocates Welfare Fund Act, 2002

Act 4 of 2002

Keyword(s):
Advocate, Bar Association, Cessation, of Practice, Court, Dependent, Stamp, Vakalatnama

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THE PUNJAB ADVOCATES WELFARE FUND ACT, 2002

[ Act No. 4 of 2002]

[ 15th January, 2002]

PREAMBLE
An Act to provide for the constitution of a Fund and utilisation thereof for promotion of welfare of the Advocates belonging to the State of Punjab and for the matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Punjab in the Fifty-second Year of the Republic of India as follows :-

Section 1 - Short title and commencement
(1) This Act may be called the Punjab Advocates Welfare Fund Act, 2002.
(2) It shall come into force at once.

Section 2 - Definitions
In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, -
(a) "Advocate" means a person whose name has been entered in the roll of Advocates prepared and maintained by the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana under section 17 of the Advocates Act, 1961 and who is practicing as an Advocate and is a member of Bar Association;
(b) "Bar Association" means an association of Advocates, recognised by the Bar Council under section 14;
(c) "Bar Council" means the Bar Council for the States of Punjab Haryana and Union Territory of Chandigarh constituted under section 3 of the Advocates Act, 1961;
(d) "Cessation of practice" means removal of the name of an Advocate from the roll of Advocates maintained by the Bar Council on account of his retirement or death or on account of physical disability or on ground of professional misconduct;
(e) "court" means the High Court of a civil, revenue, criminal, labour or any other Court or Tribunal or authority, by whatever name called, acting in the proceedings of judicial or quasi-judicial nature;
(f) "dependent" means wife, husband, father, mother and unmarried minor children of a member of the Fund and includes his widowed daughter and major children, who suffer from physical disability or insanity and who are maintained by him or such of them who survive on his death;
(g) "Fund" means the Advocates Welfare Fund constituted under section 3;
(h) "Member of the Fund" means an Advocate admitted to the benefit of the Fund and continuing to be a member thereof under the provisions of this Act;
(i) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act;
(j) "regulation" means regulations made by the Trustee Committee with the approval of the Bar council under this Act;
(k) "retirement" means stoppage of practice as an Advocate for reasons other than joining service or for carrying on any other gainful occupation, communicated to and recorded by the Bar Council;
(l) "section" means a section of this Act;
(m) "Stamp" means the Punjab Advocates Welfare Fund Stamp printed and distributed under section 19;
(n) "State" means the State of Punjab;
(o) "suspension of practice" means voluntary suspension of practices as an Advocate or suspension by the Bar Council for profession or other misconduct;
(p) "Trustee Committee" means a Trustee Committee established under section 4; and
(q) "Vakalatnama" means a power of attorney, memorandum of appearance or any other document by which an Advocate is empowered to appear or plead any court.
Section 3 - SECTION
(1) Constitution of Fund. -With effect from the date of establishment of the Trustee Committee under sub-section (1) of section 4, there shall be constituted a Fund to be called the Punjab Advocates Welfare Fund.
(2) There shall be credited to the Fund :-
(a) a grant of two lac rupees on one time basis to be made available by the State Government;
(b) sixty per cent of the funds collected under the Punjab and Haryana Advocates Welfare Rules by the Bar council which are available on the date of commencement of this Act;
(c) all amounts collected under section 20;
(d) any contribution made by the Bar Council;
(e) any voluntary donation or contribution made to the Fund by the Bar Council of India, any Bar Association, any other association or institution, any Advocate or any other person;
(f) grant, if any, made by the Central Government or the State Government or other authority;
(g) any sum borrowed under section 10;
(h) any profit or dividend received from the Life Insurance Corporation of India or any other Company or Corporation authorised by the Government of India in respect of policies of group insurance of the members of the Fund or any profit or dividend received from the insurer;
(i) any interest or dividend other return or any investment made of any part of the Fund; and
(j) all sums collected under section 16 by way of application fees, membership fee or other subscriptions and Interest thereon.
(3) The sums specified in sub-section (2), shall be paid to, or collected by such agencies, at such intervals and in such manner, and the accounts of the Fund shall be maintained in such manner, as may be prescribed.
(4) The Fund shall vest in and administered by the Trustee Committee subject to the provisions and for the purposes of this Act.

Section 4 - SECTION
(1) Establishment of the Trustee Committee. -The State Government may, by notification, establish with effect from such date as may be specified therein, a Trustee Committee to be called the Punjab Advocates Welfare Fund Trustee Committee.
(2) The Trustee Committee shall be a body corporate having perpetual succession and a common seal with power to acquire, hold and dispose of property and shall by the said name, sue and be sued.
(3) The Trustee Committee shall consist of :-
(a) the Chairman of the Bar Council if he belongs to the State of Punjab, otherwise, the Advocate General, Punjab will be the Chairman;
(b) the Advocate-General of Punjab-Ex-Officio member;
(c) the Principal Secretary to Government of Punjab, Department of Home Affairs and Justice or his nominee-Ex-Officio Member;
(d) the Principal Secretary to Government of Punjab, Department of Finance or his nominee-Ex-Officio member;
(e) three other members of the Bar Council belonging to the State of Punjab, nominated by the State Government in consultation with the Advocate General, Punjab, from amongst its elected members;
(f) the Secretary of the Trustee Committee, who will be nominated by the Chairman of the Trustee Committee; and
(g) a practicing Advocate of the State of Punjab to be co-opted by the other members of the Trustee Committee for a period of five years and his term shall be co-terminus with term of the bar Council-members.
(4) A member nominated from the Bar Council under clause (e) of sub-section (3), shall hold office for a term of five years or for the term of his membership in the Bar Council, whichever is less.
(5) Two members to be nominated by the State Government from amongst the Presidents of the recognised Bar Associations.
Section 5 - Disqualification and removal of nominated members

No person shall be nominated and continue as a member of the Trustee Committee under clause (e) of sub-section (3) or sub-section (5) of section 4, if he:

(a) is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent Court; or
(b) is, or at any time has been, adjudicated insolvent; or
(c) is or has been convicted by a criminal court for an offence involving moral turpitude, unless such conviction has been set aside; or
(d) is a defaulter to the Fund; or
(e) is debarred from practicing on the ground of professional or other misconduct; or
(f) Central Act 25 of 1961.--ceases to be an Advocate under the Advocates Act, 1961.

Section 6 - SECTION

(1) Resignation and casual vacancy. -Any member nominated under clause (e) of sub-section (3) or sub-section (5) of section 4 by the Bar Council or the State Government, as the case may be, may resign his office by giving three months' notice in writing to the Chairman of the Trustee Committee and on such resignation being accepted by the Chairman, the said member shall be deemed to have vacated his office.

(2) If any member nominated under clause (e) and co-opted under clause (g) of subsection (3) and nominated under sub-section (5) of section 4, -

(a) becomes subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in section 5; or
(b) is absent without leave from the Trustee Committee for more than three consecutive meetings of Trustee Committee, his seat shall thereupon become vacant.

(3) A casual vacancy of a nominated or co-opted member arising under sub- section (1) or sub-section (2), shall be filled in as soon as possible in the same manner and for the same term as is mentioned in Section 4.

Section 7 - Acts of the Trustee Committee not to be invalidated by vacancy, defect or irregularity

No act done or proceedings taken under this Act or the rules made there under, by the Trustee Committee, shall be invalid merely by reason of, -

(a) any vacancy or defect in the constitution of the Trustee Committee; or
(b) any defect or irregularity in the nomination of any person as a member thereof; or
(c) and defect or irregularity in such proceedings not affecting the merit of the case.

Section 8 - SECTION

(1) Functions of the Trustee Committee. -In the administration of the Fund, the Trustee Committee shall, subject to the provisions of this Act and the rules made there under, -

(a) collect, preserve, manage and utilise the fund;
(b) hold the amounts and assets belonging to the fund;
(c) receive applications for admission or re-admission to the Fund and dispose of such applications within ninety days from the date of receipt thereof;
(d) receive applications from the members of the Fund, their nominees, dependents or legal representatives, as the case may be, for payment out of the Fund, and conduct such enquiry as it deems necessary for the disposal of such applications and shall dispose of the applications within ninety days from the date of receipt thereof;
(e) record in the minutes book of the Trustee Committee its decision on the applications received under clauses (c) and (d);
(f) pay to the applicant amount at the rate specified in the Schedule;
(g) send such periodical and annual reports as may be prescribed to the State Government and the Bar Council;
(h) communicate to the applicant by registered post with acknowledgement due its decision on the application for admission or re-admission to the Fund or claims to the benefit of the fund;
(i) appoint such officers and employees as it may think necessary for carrying out the purposes of this Act on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed; and
(j) do such other acts as are, or may be, required to be done by it under this Act and the rules made thereunder.

(2) The Bar Council or the Trustee Committee may give to the Bar Association such directions as, in its opinion are necessary or expedient for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

Section 9 - Powers and duties of Secretary
The Secretary of the Trustee Committee shall,-
(a) by the Chief Executive Authority of the Trustee Committee and responsible for carrying out its decision;
(b) represent the Trustee Committee in all suits and proceedings for and against the Trustee Committee;
(c) authenticate by his signatures all decisions and instructions of the Trustee committee;
(d) operate the bank accounts to the Trustee Committee jointly with the Chairman of the Trustee Committee or his nominee;
(e) convene meetings of the Trustee committee and record its minutes;
(f) attend the meetings of the Trustee Committee with all necessary records and information;
(g) maintain such forms, registers and other records as may be prescribed from time to time and do all correspondence relating to the Trustee Committee;
(h) prepare an annual statement of business transacted by the Trustee Committee during each financial year; and
(i) do such other acts as may be directed by the Trustee Committee or its Chairman.

Section 10 - SECTION
(1) Borrowing and investment. - The Trustee Committee may, with the prior approval of the State Government and the Bar Council, borrow from time to time any sum required for carrying out the purposes of this Act.
(2) The Trustee Committee shall deposit all moneys and receipts forming part of the Fund in any Schedule Bank or invest the same in loan to any corporation owned or controlled by the Central Government or the State Government or in loan floated by the Central Government or the State Government or in any other manner as the Trustee Committee may, from time to time, decide with the approval of the Bar Council.
(3) All amounts due and payable under this Act and all expenditure relating to the management and administration of the Fund, shall be paid out of the Fund.

Section 11 - SECTION
(1) Accounts and Audit. - The Trustee Committee shall keep and maintain books of accounts and other books in such form and in such manner as may be prescribed.
(2) The accounts of the Trustee Committee shall be audited annually by a Chartered Accountant appointed by it.
(3) The Accounts of the Trustee Committee as audited by the Chartered Accountant together with his audit report, shall be forwarded to the Bar Council by the Trustee Committee and Bar Council may issue such directions, as it deems fit, to the Trustee Committee in respect thereof.
(4) The Trustee Committee shall comply with the directions issued by the Bar Council under sub-section (3);
(5) The Trustee Committee shall pay from the Fund the charges for the audit.

Section 12 - Contribution by the Bar Council
The Bar Council shall contribute to the Fund an amount at such rate, of the enrollment fees realised by it as the Bar Council may from time to time think fit.

Section 13 - Framing of Schemes
The Trustee Committee in consultation with the Bar Council, may prepare schemes for,-
(a) the group insurance of the Advocates;
(b) granting gratuity and retirement benefits to the Advocates enrolled as participating members;
(c) the financial aid to deserving Advocates by way of stipend or on nominal interest repayable in easy instalments;
(d) incentive schemes to provide to those Advocates, who actively participate in the process of legal aid to the poor and weaker sections of the society;
(e) medical insurance of the Advocates;
(f) grant of financial aid to various bar associations in the State for development of their libraries;
(g) granting of financial aid to Advocates on roll in case of serious illness; (h) granting of financial aid to indigent and disabled lawyers;
(i) granting of financial aid to legal heirs of Advocates; and
(j) such other welfare or benefits to the Advocates as it may deem fit.

Section 14 - SECTION
(1) Recognition and Registration of Bar Association.--All associations of Advocates known by any name, functioning in the State of Punjab, shall before the date notified by the Bar Council in this behalf, apply to the Bar Council in such form as may be prescribed for recognition and registration.
(2) Every application shall be accompanied by the bye-laws of the association, names and addresses of the office-bearers of the association and upto date list of its members showing the name, address and date of enrolment and the ordinary place of practice of each member thereof.
(3) The Bar Council may, after such enquiry as it deems necessary, recognise the association and issue a certificate of registration in such form as may be prescribed.
(4) The decision of the Bar Council regarding the recognition and registration of a Bar Association shall be final.
(5) The Bar Council may derecognise a Bar Association for neglect of its duties under this Act or pass such order as it may deem fit:
Provided that no order shall be passed without affording an opportunity of being heard to the concerned Bar Association.

Section 15 - SECTION
(1) Duties of Bar Associations. -Every Bar Association shall, on or before the 15th day of April of each year, furnish to the Bar Council and the Trustee Committee, a list of the members as on the 31st March of that year.
(2) Every Bar Association shall intimate to the Bar Council and the Trustee Committee about, -
(a) any change of the office bearers of the Bar Association within fifteen days from such change;
(b) any change in the membership including admissions and re- admissions within thirty days of such change;
(c) the cessation of practice or voluntary suspension of practice of any of its members within thirty days from the date of such cessation or suspension of practice;
(d) The collection of annual subscription from every member towards the Fund as may be specified by regulations; and
(e) Such other matters as may be required by the Bar Council or the Trustee Committee from time to time.

Section 16 - SECTION
(1) Membership of the Fund and payment there from.--Every Advocate belonging to the State of Punjab practicing in a court may apply to the Trustee Committee for admission as member of the Fund, in such form as may be prescribed.
(2) On receipt of any application under sub-section (1), the Trustee Committee shall make such enquiry as it deems fit and either admit the applicant to the Fund or, for reasons to be recorded in writing, reject the application:
Provided that no order rejecting an application shall be passed unless the applicant has been given an opportunity of being heard.

(3) Every applicant shall pay an application fee of one hundred rupees to the account of the Trustee Committee along with the application.

(4) In the event of rejection of the application, the application fee paid shall be refunded to the applicant.

(5) Where an Advocate is admitted as the member of the Fund, he shall pay to the Fund an amount of rupees one thousand as membership fee either in one installment or two half-yearly instalments of rupees five hundred each within one year from the date of admission and on such payment, the membership of the Advocate concerned shall, subject to the provisions of sub-section (7), be for his life. The membership fee shall be non-refundable.

(6) Every member shall, at the time of admission to the membership of the Fund, make a nomination conferring on one or more dependents, the right to receive the amount which may be due to him from the Fund in the event of his death before the amount has been paid to him. If a member nominates more than one nominee, he shall specify in the nomination the share payable to each of the nominees:

Provided that a member may at any time cancel a nomination by sending a notice in writing to the Trustee Committee along with a fresh nomination.

(7) Every member who voluntarily suspends practice or retires shall, within three months of such suspension or retirement as the case may be, intimate that fact to the Trustee Committee, and if any member fails to do so without sufficient reasons, the Trustee committee, may reduce, in accordance with such principles as may be prescribed, the amount due to that member.

Section 17 - SECTION
(1) Payment from the fund on cessation of practice.--In the event of death of a member, the amount as specified in the schedule will be paid to the nominee or where there is no nominee, to his dependents.

(2) In case of cessation of practice otherwise than death, the member or his nominee, as the case may be, shall be entitled to receive such amount from the Fund, as may be determined by the Trustee Committee.

(3) An application for payment from the Fund shall be preferred to the Trustee Committee in such form as may be prescribed.

(4) An application received under sub-section (3) shall be disposed of by the Trustee Committee after such enquiry as it deems necessary.

Section 18 - SECTION
(1) Restriction on alienation and attachment etc. of interest of member in the Fund.--The interest of any member in the Fund, or the right of a member or his nominee or legal heirs to receive any amount from the Fund, shall not be assigned, alienated or charged and shall not be liable to attachment under any decree or order of any court.

(2) No creditor shall be entitled to proceed against the Fund or the interest therein of any member or his nominee or legal heirs.

Explanation :-
Central Act 15 of 1920. - For the purpose of this section, "Creditor" includes the Government or an official assignee or receiver appointed under the Provincial Insolvency Act, 1920 or any other law for the time being in force.

Section 19 - Printing and distribution of stamps by the Trustee Committee
(1) The Trustee Committee shall cause to be printed and distributed the stamps of the value of the rupees six and with the Bar Council emblem and its value inscribed thereon.

(2) The Stamps shall be of the size 1” x 2” and shall be sold by the Trustee Committee.

(3) The custody of the Stamps shall be with the Trustee Committee.

(4) The Trustee Committee shall control the distribution and sale of the stamps through Bar Associations and Licensed Stamp Vendors in such manner and procedure as may be provided
(5) The Trustee Committee shall keep proper accounts of the Stamps in such form and in such manner as may be provided by regulations.

(6) The Bar Associations and Licensed Stamp Vendors shall purchase the Stamps from the Trustee Committee after paying the value thereof less ten per cent of such value towards incidental expenses.

Section 20 - Affixation of Stamps

(1) Every Vakalatnama filed by any Advocate or member, shall be affixed with one stamp of the value of six rupees in case of vakalatnama filed in the High Court or a Tribunal, the Punjab Board of Revenue or any other quasi-judicial authority in addition to the required Court Fee Stamp and no vakalatnama shall be filed before or received by any Court unless it is so stamped:

Provided that the provision of this sub-section shall not apply to any vakalatnama filed by or on behalf of the Central or the State Government.

(2) The value of the Stamp shall neither be the cost in the case nor be received or collected in any event from the client.

(3) Any contravention of the provisions of sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) by any member of the Fund, shall disentitle him either in whole or in part to the benefits of the Fund and the Trustee Committee shall report such instances to the Bar Council for appropriate action.

Section 21 - Cancellation of Fund Stamps

Every Stamp affixed on vakalatnama under section 20 filed in any court, shall be cancelled in the manner provided under the section 30 of the Court Fees Act, 1870.

Section 22 - Meeting of the Trustee Committee

The Trustee Committee shall meet, at least once in three calendar months or more often if found necessary, to transact business under this Act or the rules made thereunder.

Section 23 - Manner of holding Meeting

(1) On third members of the Trustee Committee shall form the quorum of the meeting of the Trustee Committee.

(2) The Chairman or in his absence, a member chosen by the members of the Trustee Committee present, shall preside over the meeting of the Trustee Committee.

(3) The meetings of the Trustee Committee shall ordinarily be held at the office of the Bar Council.

(4) Any matter coming up before the meeting of the Trustee Committee, shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting at the meeting and in the case of equality of votes, the Chairman or the member presiding over the meeting, shall have a casting vote.

(5) The Secretary of the Trustee Committee shall not have a voting right in the meeting.

Section 24 - Bar of jurisdiction of Civil Courts

No Civil Court shall have jurisdiction to settle, decide or deal with any question or to determine any matter which is by or under this Act require to be settled, decided or dispensed with or to be determined by the Trustee Committee or the Bar Council.

Section 25 - Power to summon witnesses and to take evidence

The Trustee Committee and the Bar Council shall, for the purpose of any enquiry under this Act, have the same powers as are vested in the Civil Court while trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 in respect of the following matters, namely :-

(a) enforcing the attendance of any person or examining him on oath;

(b) requiring the discovery and production of documents;
Section 26 - Appeal against decision of the Trustee Committee
(1) An appeal against any decision or order of the Trustee Committee shall lie to the Bar council. The appeal shall be in the prescribed form and shall be accompanied with the copy of the decision appealed against. The appeal shall be filed within thirty days from the date of the receipt of the order appealed against.
(2) Any appeal preferred under sub-section (1), shall be heard and disposed of in such manner and procedure as may be prescribed.
(3) The decision of the Bar Council on appeal shall be final.

Section 27 - SECTION
(1) Power to amend the Schedule.--The State Government may, by notification, on the recommendation of the Trustee Committee and having due regard to the availability of the amount in the Fund, amend the rates specified in the Schedule.
(2) Before making recommendation, the Trustee Committee shall consult the Bar Council.
(3) Every notification issued under this section shall, as soon as possible after it is issued, be placed on the Table of the Legislative Assembly and if before the expiry of the session in which it is so placed or the next session, the Assembly makes any modification in any such notification or the Assembly decides that the notification should not be issued, the notification shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be, so however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that notification.

Section 28 - SECTION
(1) Power to make rules.--
The State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.
(2) Every rule made under this section shall be laid as soon as may be, after it is made, before the house of the State Legislature while it is in session for a total period of ten days, which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions and if, before the expiry of the session in which it is so laid or the successive sessions as aforesaid, the House agress in making any modification in the rule or the House agrees that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so however that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done or omitted to be done under that rule.

Section 29 - Power to make regulations
The Trustee Committee with the approval of the Bar Council, may, make regulations for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

Section 30 - SECTION
(1) Repeal and Savings.--
The Punjab Advocate Welfare Fund Ordinance, 2001 (Punjab Ordinance No. 6 of 2001), is hereby repealed.
(2) Notwithstanding such repeal, anything done or any action taken under the Ordinance referred to in sub-section (1), shall be deemed to have been done or taken under this Act.

Schedule - SCHEDULE
(See section 17)

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond five years standing but not exceeding ten years</td>
<td>Rs. 1,50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond ten years standing</td>
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Punjab State Acts
NOTIFICATION

The 10th September, 2014.

No.25-Leg./2014.-The following Act of the Legislature of the State of Punjab received the assent of the Governor of Punjab on the 27th Day of August, 2014, is hereby published for general information:-

THE PUNJAB ADVOCATES WELFARE FUND (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2014

(Punjab Act No. 24 of 2014)

AN ACT

further to amend the Punjab Advocates Welfare Fund Act, 2002.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Punjab in the Sixty-fifth Year of the Republic of India as follows:

1. (1) This Bill may be called the Punjab Advocates Welfare Fund (Amendment) Act, 2014.

(2) It shall come into force from the date of publication in the official Gazette.

2. In the Punjab Advocate Welfare Fund Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act)

(i) in Section 4, in sub-section (3)(a), for the words "the Chairman of the Bar Council, if he belongs to the State of Punjab, otherwise, the Advocate General, Punjab, will be the Chairman" the words "The Advocate General will be the Chairman as ex-officio member" shall be substituted.
(ii) in Section 4, in sub-section (3)(b), for the words "the Advocate General of Punjab ex-officio member" the words "The Chairman Bar Council of Punjab & Haryana ex-officio member" shall be substituted.

(iii) in Section 4, in sub-section (3)(g), for the words.

"A practicing Advocate of the State of Punjab to be co-opted by the members of the Trustee Committee for a period of five years and his term shall be co-terminus with the term of the Bar Council-members" the words "three practicing Advocates to be nominated by the Advocate General, Punjab in consultation with the State Government for a period of five years" shall be substituted.

(iv) in Section 4 sub-Section 5 shall be deleted and substituted by "three members to be nominated by the State Government from amongst the Advocates registered with the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana."

3. In the Punjab Advocate Welfare Fund Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act) in the Schedule the amount payable to the member of the Fund under Section 17 for the words "upto five years standing Rs. 1,00,000 Beyond five years standing but not exceeding ten years Rs. 1,50,000/- Beyond ten years standing Rs. 2,00,000/-" shall be substituted the following :-

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4. In the Punjab Advocate Welfare Fund Act, 2002, in the principal Act in section 20, for in sub-section (1), for the words "Rupees eight" the words "rupees fifteen" shall be substituted.

"(1-a) However one rupee from the value of the stamp so affixed on every 'Vakalatnama' shall go to the fund created under "The Cancer & Drugs Addiction Treatment Infrastructure Fund Act, 2013.".

H.P.S. MAHAL,
Secretary to Government of Punjab,
Department of Legal and Legislative Affairs.