



THE STATUTES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

INHERITANCE (FAMILY PROVISION) ACT

(CHAPTER 138)

(Original Enactment: Act 28 of 1966)

REVISED EDITION 1985

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Inheritance (Family Provision) Act

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. Short title and application
2. Interpretation
3. Power for court to order payment out of net estate of deceased for benefit of surviving spouse or child
4. Time within which application must be made
5. Effect and form of order
6. Variation of orders

An Act relating to the disposition of estates of deceased persons and for other purposes connected therewith.

[16th September 1966]

Short title and application

1.—(1) This Act may be cited as the Inheritance (Family Provision) Act.

(2) This Act shall not apply to the estates of deceased Muslims.

Interpretation

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires —

“annual income” means, in relation to the net estate of a deceased person, the income that the net estate might be expected at the date of the order made under this Act, when realised, to yield in a year;

“court” means the General Division of the High Court or a Family Court;

[Act 27 of 2014 wef 01/10/2014]

[Act 40 of 2019 wef 02/01/2021]

“death duties” means estate duty and every other duty leviable or payable on death;

“net estate” means all the property of which a deceased person had power to dispose by his will (otherwise than by virtue of a special power of appointment) less the amount of his funeral, testamentary and administration expenses, debts and liabilities and estate duty payable out of his estate on his death;

“Registrar” means the registrar of the Family Justice Courts;

[Act 27 of 2014 wef 01/10/2014]

“will” includes any codicil or other testamentary document;

“son” and “daughter”, respectively, include a male or female child adopted by the deceased by virtue of an order made under the provisions of any written law relating to the adoption of children for the time being in force in Singapore, Malaysia or Brunei Darussalam, and also the son or daughter of the deceased *en ventre sa mere* at the date of the death of the deceased.

Power for court to order payment out of net estate of deceased for benefit of surviving spouse or child

3.—(1) Where, after the commencement of this Act, a person dies domiciled in Singapore leaving —

- (a) a wife or husband;
- (b) a daughter who has not been married or who is, by reason of some mental or physical disability, incapable of maintaining herself;
- (c) an infant son; or
- (d) a son who is, by reason of some mental or physical disability, incapable of maintaining himself,

then, if the court on application by or on behalf of any such wife, husband, daughter or son as aforesaid (referred to in this Act as a dependant of the deceased) is of opinion that the disposition of the deceased’s estate effected by his will, or the law relating to intestacy, or the combination of his will and that law, is not such as to make reasonable provision for the maintenance of that dependant, the court may order that such reasonable provision as the court thinks fit shall,

subject to such conditions or restrictions, if any, as the court may impose, be made out of the deceased's net estate for the maintenance of that dependant:

Provided that no application shall be made to the court by or on behalf of any person in any case where the disposition of a deceased's estate effected as aforesaid is such that the surviving spouse is entitled to not less than two-thirds of the income of the net estate and where the only other dependant or dependants, if any, is or are a child or children of the surviving spouse.

(2) The provision for maintenance to be made by an order shall, subject to subsection (4), be by way of periodical payments and the order shall provide for their termination not later than —

- (a) in the case of a wife or husband, her or his remarriage;
- (b) in the case of a daughter who has not been married, or who is under disability, her marriage or the cesser of her disability, whichever is the later;
- (c) in the case of an infant son, his attaining the age of 21 years;
- (d) in the case of a son under disability, the cesser of his disability,

or in any case, his or her earlier death.

(3) Periodical payments made under subsection (2) to any one dependant shall not be at an annual rate which exceeds the annual income of the net estate, and, where payments are so made to more than one dependant in respect of the same period, the aggregate of the annual rates at which those payments are made shall not exceed the annual income of the net estate.

(4) Where the value of a deceased's net estate does not exceed \$50,000, the court shall have power to make an order providing for maintenance, in whole or in part, by way of a lump sum payment.

(5) In determining whether, and in what way, and as from what date, provision for maintenance ought to be made by an order, the court shall have regard to the nature of the property representing the deceased's net estate and shall not order any such provision to be

made as would necessitate a realisation that would be improvident having regard to the interests of the deceased's dependants and of the person who, apart from the order, would be entitled to that property.

(6) The court shall, on any application made under this Act, have regard to any past, present or future capital or income from any source of the dependant of the deceased to whom the application relates, to the conduct of that dependant in relation to the deceased and otherwise, and to any other matter or thing which in the circumstances of the case the court may consider relevant or material in relation to that dependant, to persons interested in the estate of the deceased, or otherwise.

(7) The court shall also, on any such application, have regard to the deceased's reasons, so far as ascertainable, for making the dispositions made by his will (if any), or for refraining from disposing by will of his estate or part of his estate, or for not making any provision, or any further provision, as the case may be, for a dependant, and the court may accept such evidence of those reasons as it considers sufficient including any statement in writing signed by the deceased and dated, so, however, that in estimating the weight, if any, to be attached to any such statement the court shall have regard to all the circumstances from which any inference can reasonably be drawn as to the accuracy or otherwise of the statement.

(8) The court in considering for the purposes of subsection (1), whether the disposition of the deceased's estate effected by the law relating to intestacy, or by the combination of the deceased's will and that law, makes reasonable provision for the maintenance of a dependant shall not be bound to assume that the law relating to intestacy makes reasonable provision in all cases.

Time within which application must be made

4.—(1) Except as provided by this section or section 6, an order under this Act shall not be made save on an application made within 6 months from the date on which representation in regard to the deceased's estate is first taken out.

(2) If it is shown to the satisfaction of the court that the limitation to the said period of 6 months would operate unfairly —

- (a) in consequence of the discovery of a will or codicil involving a substantial change in the disposition of the deceased's estate (whether or not involving a further grant of representation);
- (b) in consequence of a question whether a person had an interest in the estate; or as to the nature of an interest in the estate, not having been determined at the time when representation was first taken out; or
- (c) in consequence of some other circumstances affecting the administration or distribution of the estate,

the court may extend that period.

(3) The provisions of this Act shall not render the personal representatives of the deceased liable for having distributed any part of the estate of the deceased after the expiration of the said period of 6 months on the ground that they ought to have taken into account the possibility that the court might exercise its power to extend that period, but this subsection shall be without prejudice to any power to recover any part of the estate so distributed arising by virtue of the making of an order under this Act.

(4) In considering under this section the question when representation was first taken out, a grant limited to trust property shall be left out of account unless a grant limited to the remainder of the estate has previously been made or is made at the same time.

(5) For the purposes of sections 18(2) and 38 of the Probate and Administration Act [Cap. 251] a dependant of a deceased person by whom or on whose behalf an application made under this Act is proposed to be made shall be deemed to be a person interested in his estate.

Effect and form of order

5.—(1) Where an order is made under this Act, then for all purposes, including the purposes of the enactments relating to death duties, the will or the law relating to intestacy, or both the will and the law relating to intestacy, as the case may be, shall have effect, and shall be deemed to have had effect as from the deceased's death,

subject to such variations as may be specified in the order for the purpose of giving effect to the provision for maintenance thereby made.

(2) The court may give such consequential directions as it thinks fit for the purpose of giving effect to an order made under this Act, but no larger part of the net estate shall be set aside or appropriated to answer by the income thereof the provision for maintenance thereby made than such a part as, at the date of the order, is sufficient to produce by the income thereof the amount of the said provision.

(3) An office copy of every order made under this Act shall be sent to the Registrar for entry and filing, and a memorandum of the order shall be endorsed on, or permanently annexed to, the probate or letters of administration under which the estate is being administered.

Variation of orders

6.—(1) On an application made at a date after the expiration of the period specified in section 4(1), or, as the case may be, of that period as extended under section 4(2), the court may make such an order as is hereinafter mentioned, but only as respects property the income of which is at that date applicable for the maintenance of a dependant of the deceased, that is to say —

- (a) an order for varying the previous order on the ground that a material fact was not disclosed to the court when the order was made, or that a substantial change has taken place in the circumstances of the dependant or of a person beneficially interested in the property under the will or, as the case may be, under the law relating to intestacy; or
- (b) an order for making provision for the maintenance of another dependant of the deceased.

(2) An application to the court for an order under subsection (1)(a) may be made by or on behalf of a dependant of the deceased or by the trustees of the property or by or on behalf of a person beneficially interested therein under the will or, as the case may be, under the law relating to intestacy.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

INHERITANCE (FAMILY PROVISION) ACT (CHAPTER 138)

This Legislative History is provided for the convenience of users of the Inheritance (Family Provision) Act. It is not part of the Act.

1. Act 28 of 1966 — Inheritance (Family Provision) Act 1966

Date of First Reading : 23 February 1966
(Bill No. 8/1966)

Date of commencement : 16 September 1966

2. 1970 Revised Edition — Inheritance (Family Provision) Act (Chapter 35)

Date of operation : 1 March 1971

3. 1985 Revised Edition — Inheritance (Family Provision) Act

Date of operation : 30 March 1987

4. Act 5 of 2014 — Subordinate Courts (Amendment) Act 2014 (Consequential amendments made to Act by)

Date of First Reading : 11 November 2013
(Bill No. 26/2013 published on
11 November 2013)

Date of Second and Third Readings : 21 January 2014

Date of commencement : 7 March 2014

5. Act 27 of 2014 — Family Justice Act 2014 (Consequential amendments made by)

Date of First Reading : 8 July 2014
(Bill No. 21/2014 published on
8 July 2014)

Date of Second and Third Readings : 4 August 2014

Date of commencement : 1 October 2014

6. Act 40 of 2019 — Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment) Act 2019

Date of First Reading : 7 October 2019
(Bill No. 32/2019)

Date of Second and Third Readings : 5 November 2019

Date of commencement : 2 January 2021