

## Contractual staff must get at par wages: Supreme Court

Bhadra Sinha, Hindustan Times, New Delhi | Updated: Oct 27, 2016 01:00 IST



The Supreme Court said that temporary workers are entitled to wages at par with permanent employees. (HT File Photo)

In a far-reaching verdict that brings relief to lakhs of contractual employees working in government departments and agencies, the Supreme Court ruled on Wednesday that temporary workers are entitled to wages at par with permanent employees.

A bench headed by Justice JS Khehar based its judgment on the principle of ‘equal pay for equal work’. The rule, it said, constitutes a clear and unambiguous right vested in every employee — whether engaged on regular or temporary basis. The principle has been underscored in various judgments rendered by the SC and is law of the land, it said.

“Any one, who is compelled to work at a lesser wage, does not do so voluntarily. He does so, to provide food and shelter to his family, at the cost of his self respect and dignity, at the cost of his self worth, and at the cost of his integrity. For he knows, that his dependents would suffer immensely, if he does not accept the lesser wage,” read the verdict that came on petitions filed by temporary workers of the Punjab government.

the SC after the Punjab and Haryana high court denied them the pay-scale entitled to a permanent employee.

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It follows the equal pay for equal work principle because it was a signatory of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

“It is fallacious to determine artificial parameters to deny fruits of labour. An employee engaged for the same work, cannot be paid less than another. It is not a matter of mere possibilities. Certainly not, in a welfare state. Such an action besides being demeaning, strikes at the very foundation of human dignity,” the bench said.

It held that the principle of equal pay for equal work would be applicable to all the concerned temporary employees, so as to vest in them the right to claim the pay-scale of regularly engaged government employees, holding the same post,” it said.

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